

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
70 Waterford Street
Gardner, MA 01440

COVID-19 Ad Hoc Sub-Committee Meeting
Monday, January 25, 2021
Zoom meeting at 5:30pm
(Available by Zoom for Public Participation)

Minutes

Members Present: Ms. Pelavin(Chair), Rachel Cormier, Anne Hurst, Robert Swartz

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Mark Pellegrino (Superintendent), Becky McCaffrey (School Nurse Leader)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Ms. Pelavin, the Chair.

The meeting opened with discussion regarding the current COVID 19 case numbers in the community and state. Mrs. McCaffrey has developed graphs/charts that were reviewed. Discussion was had regarding the fact that there is still the outbreak at the prison and those numbers are counted in our community numbers by the state. She reported that once those numbers were pulled out of the totals, the community cases were now back down to what they were in December if not lower. It was noted that there were 4 staff members positive and 4 staff quarantining with 2 symptomatic at that point. Regarding the students, there was 1 student who was positive who would be in the hybrid model and 7 students that have been fully remote all school year. There are 11 students quarantining, not related to school exposure, and 2 students had been reported as symptomatic. Mrs. Pelavin noted that in looking at the graph since the week of Christmas, there were 10 more students who are fully remote that had tested positive than hybrid students. It was discussed that no one had been in the buildings since then but the remote students had many more cases. Mrs. McCaffrey commented that she was wondering if that was due to the fact that hybrid students are learning the protocols at school so they are more used to following the procedures. Mrs. McCaffrey reported that she and the Nurse Tina Rusak had been looking at the current numbers for the upcoming week and that she was predicting the community cases would be around 69 cases without the prison numbers. Previously that number had been up around 100. Mrs. McCaffrey explained that the test positivity rate was under 10% when the prison and Long Term Care Facility numbers were extracted. She reiterated that with those types of numbers and the community cases numbers being lower, it made sense to transition back to hybrid in person learning.

The safety committee meeting updates were provided. Meeting time will be changing in order to allow the Board of Health and Dr. Sweeney to participate more regularly in the meetings. Dr. Sweeney had taken part in the most recent meeting on January 22, 2021. Mrs. McCaffrey noted that even if the Board of Health member or Dr. Sweeney were not at safety committee meetings she was regularly speaking with both about the community numbers.

Mrs. Pelavin discussed that there is a new chart that the CDC had designed regarding in person learning. At the safety meeting, Nurse Tina had provided information in that and showed that we were in the higher risk category because of community numbers but that we had 5 out of the 5 mitigating pieces that help to lower the risk.

Vaccinations were also discussed. It was noted that the Governor had set a date for Phase 2 to begin on February 1, 2021. Teachers are included in Phase 2 so Mrs. McCaffrey said she would be working with the Board of Health and the Superintendent regarding that. Discussions were had around timing and suggestions of what planning could be done to make the process easier for teachers and staff.

Next meeting was scheduled for February 22 at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment

Mr. Swartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Cormier to adjourn. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.