

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
106 Hancock Road  
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

**CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD**

**School Board Meeting**

**Thursday, August 12, 2021**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Physical Location: SAU #1 Board Room**

**Livestream Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZEhljHQeoE>**

**Minutes**

**BOARD**

Rich Cahoon (7:20), Keira Christian,  
Richard Dunning, Alan Edelkind,  
Jim Fredrickson, Katherine Heck,  
Janine Lesser, Kevin Pobst,  
Liz Swan, Tim Theberge,  
Jerome Wilson

**ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.  
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.  
Tim Grossi, Facilities  
Lori Schmidt, B.A.  
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.  
Carrie James, H.R.  
Larry Pimental, PES

**1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Tim Theberge called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II (7:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.)**

Katherine Heck moved to enter into Non-Public session at 7:04 p.m. for a student matter. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Dick Dunning motioned to exit non-public session at 7:14 p.m. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

Janine Lesser moved to seal the minutes of non-public session in perpetuity. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

**3. Public Comment**

Tim Theberge shared the rules for public comment. Each speaker will be given two minutes to speak and may speak once.

Diana Greer, Peterborough resident, shared that she made the choice to attend school remotely last year for various reasons. They worked to reduce the risk of contracting COVID. If the choice to wear masks is provided, she would also like a remote option. Nashua will be requiring masks. Why not universal masking while starting in the blue phase?

Robert Walling, Greenfield, asked that masks be worn while in class learning. Transmission is high, variants are scary. He cannot miss work. He asked the board to require masks.

**4. Re-Opening Plan**

Kimberly Saunders shared a presentation titled "Revised Reopening and Recovery Plan".

The plan has been revised. A 78% response rate of the survey has been received. 80% of staff have responded to the survey. 1,639 responses have been received. 62.4% of students will return regardless of masking requirements. 28.7% of students will be fully vaccinated. 45.2% of respondents are too young to get vaccinated.

When looking at the high school, 68% will return regardless of mask requirements, 15% only if masks are required, 17% only if masks are not required.

Middle School, GBS 70% will return regardless, 11% if masks re required, and 19% if masks are not required. 95.4% of GBS staff are fully vaccinated. 61% will attend regardless, 22% if masks are required, and 17% if masks are not required. SMS statistics were shared as well.

Elementary - 56% regardless, 19% if masks are required, 25% if masks are not required.

Community transmission, positivity rates, and vaccine coverage will be monitored.

The plan outlines how decisions are made. New cases over the previous 14 days per 100K people in the Greater Monadnock Public Health Region, if greater than 100 and less than 500, would cause a move from the blue phase to the green phase.

Green to Yellow Phase would be impacted by new cases per 100K greater than 500.

Yellow to Red Phase can only happen by a decision of the School Board, Executive Order, or if the NHDHHS determines such.

Other considerations include where cases are located, what is available for outdoor space, if local medical facilities and personnel are in surge, continue to monitor cases by town, and continue to monitor cases within each school.

Where does the data come from? It comes from the [COVID19nh.gov/dashboard/map](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19nh.gov/dashboard/map) website. The CDC information is being used for isolation or quarantining.

With regard to masking, on busses, per CDC order it is our understanding that anyone riding public transportation must wear a mask. The federal government has oversight here.

In the blue phase, masks will be optional indoors and outdoors. In the green phase, mask use for indoors will be made based on the NHDHHS matrix. Outdoors will be optional.

A Decision Matrix was shared for the use of facemasks indoors based on the level of community transmission and COVID-19 transmission within a facility. Exceptions can be made if there are high levels of vaccination rate. The number would have to be 80% of the population to have been vaccinated.

Mask Matrix Indicators were shared. Potential Additional Indicator, SASS (Safe at School Screening), includes randomized testing of asymptomatic individuals.

COVID-19 Monitoring Team Concerns – they strongly recommend masking indoors for all K-12. They would like to see a change in the blue to green phase to reflect the beginning of green to be 50 per 1000K and a 5% positivity.

Board Considerations – look at the levers e.g. are these clear enough, is the low or high enough? Will these provide the understanding of recommendations you have been looking for?

When it comes to masking, when/if to begin masking

Remote options – does the board want to have the administration develop these? Quality of education needs consideration.

SASS – should we explore doing this?

Additional facilities staffing needs – labor intensive to implement tents.

Overall Plan – return to revise?

We know that we can put in layers of multiple mitigation strategies to stay in school. We know we can be in school until the 500 is a reality.

Pods and cohorts have shifted to reduce, but not eliminate, contact.

We cannot ask teachers grades 5-12 to do what they did last year. We don't have the space to spread 6 feet everywhere but we do for 3 feet.

Rich Cahoon asked where the board considerations and decision points between specific numbers come from.

Kimberly Saunders said that blue represents our new normal; mitigation strategies but relaxed.

Green represents moderate to substantial spread. 50 is the higher end of moderate.

With modified pods, in the case of infections in a school, only households in close contact should quarantine.

Kimberly Saunders said that this plan will help us have students in school and to layer mitigation strategies to minimize the number of students that need to be home but still contact trace.

The number of students whose parents said that they would not send them is approximately 300 students. What does it mean financially to the district? It is north of \$1M in adequacy in both situations. We would need to estimate adequacy of \$1.1M less in revenue.

Jim Fredrickson said that October 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment will impact the following school year.

Dick Dunning said that the boards primary responsibility is to make sure that our students can come to school under the most normal circumstances for as long as possible. Requiring masks indoors is the safest way to go. Decisions can continue to be made moving forward. He shared his concern with the loss of education with students not in class. As data comes in, we can reevaluate.

Kimberly Saunders said that the board has a statutory obligation to provide a safe environment for students. Tim Theberge shared a statement from Dr. Kriebel, Peterborough School Board Rep. It said that starting school without requiring students to wear masks would be a disservice. Tim read Dr. Kriebel's complete statement.

Kevin Pobst said that he is less impressed with what we know about COVID transmission than what we don't know. It is not what you know but more about what you don't know about disease and transmission. He shared an example of his from the past where a student from a former state had a heart condition. They died of the flu because of the heart condition. He said that he does not want to make a decision that would cause an unknown to become known.

**Dick Dunning moved to move to the green zone at the opening of school and to reevaluate one month later. Jerry Wilson second.**

Katherine Heck said that the State passed an amendment to their adequacy calculation for this year. They might extend that formula for a future year. The survey reflects that the same number of students, masks or no masks, will not attend school.

Kimberly Saunders said that she has not learned of any decision like that. The State has taken on the extra responsibility to provide \$4,200 each for. We are no longer the only people that the state needs to make sure they have more money for. They usually back into the formula to find funds elsewhere.

Rich Cahoon asked what the number is in the Greater Monadnock Area? 101 is the approximate. If we adopt Dicks motion and drop below the threshold what would be next? The board would meet and consider the data.

62% of the ConVal at large is fully vaccinated.

This motion moves us from blue to green with a reevaluation one month after school opening.

Kimberly Saunders said that the board may want to adopt or make changes before voting.

Janine Lesser asked if we are in the green phase is it masks K-12. The only place that would not be masked or have the opportunity not to mask would be the high school based on vaccination rates at the high school.

Janine Lesser further asked about remote options. Does the board want to have administration develop this? Janine said that she wondered if a remote option would be acceptable to those that would not attend. It differed by level. Kimberly Saunders said that the time needed to develop a robust remote learning model would be extremely difficult if not impossible for August 31<sup>st</sup>. There is not an option for remote learning currently.

Alan Edelkind asked the reason for Dick's motion was mask related or other.

Dick Dunning said that it is about accepting the changes in the plan. Moving into green addresses the issues that need to be addressed. Dick said that he is not an advocate of remote learning. We need our students back in school. Masking on the bus makes sense. We should accept the changes in the plan and then further to begin.

**Katherine Heck moved to accept the plan as presented to the board. Dick Dunning second.**

Jim Fredrickson asked what the legal obligations are should students not attend to provide remote options when there is no State of Emergency.

Kimberly Saunders said that we have no responsibility to provide remote instruction absent a State of Emergency.

Tim Theberge said that he is appreciative of this plan maintaining regular bussing.

Katherine Heck said that the plan is very comprehensive and that she was pleased with the options available. She asked for clarity about moving in and out of phases.

Kimberly Saunders said that a better understanding was asked, the recommendation would be to the board. The only time we would move is for an emergent situation.

The recommendation would come from the COVID Monitoring Team to move from one phase to another to the board. Kimberly would call the board together should it be required.

Tim Theberge said that it is ultimately this boards final decision to make changes moving in phases other than an emergent situation.

Janine Lesser said that she is not comfortable with mask optional language in the green phase. It would not be optional for indoors but would be for outdoors. When faced with choosing between losing students or the safety of students, we must go with the safety of students.

Rich Cahoon said that if the plan is adopted, masks would not be required outside. Confirmed.

Liz Swan asked about playing outdoor sports regardless of proximity.

The NHIAA is on track to start the fall season on time and that masks would not be required on the field of play but also counts volleyball inside as a sport not requiring masks.

Clarity was asked about mask wearing in the green phase. The confusion is that we are no longer moving in and out of phases with the COVID Monitoring Team but only with the board.

Discussion took place about the options available for masking. The matrix on masking on page 14 should be used in conjunction with the matrix on page 15.

Issues with the plan existed with transportation. We would be removing vaccinated 16 year old or older students to drive to school during winter months. Is it the same. No, those restrictions would be removed.

Rich Cahoon said that he wants to know the specific "why" that decisions would be made.

Dr. Saunders said that it is believed, based on experience, what action is needed to decrease the virus.

The Greater Monadnock Regional Health Area was defined by sharing a map. It is a geographic catchment area.

NHDHHS uses three categories, CDC uses four categories, and ConVal developed four phases.

The State has combined the two middle categories. It is substantial controlled and substantial uncontrolled.

The ConVal Monitoring Team has been following the CDC and the DHHS is slightly different.

Kimberly suggested that the board infuse what they would like into the decisions and remove the matrices.

Jim Fredrickson recommended that Dick modify his motion to say green phase and masks are mandatory.

**Katherine Heck amended her motion that we remove the table from page 14 and page 15. Dick Dunning second.**

Tim Theberge said that green or anything to the right means masks. Confirmed.

Tim said that if by next week, that 100 threshold is lower, than 100, the language on masking is still "if" or is it clear.

Jim Fredrickson said that during yellow masks would be required. He said that should be added to the green phase.

Rich Cahoon said that if the matrices are removed the motion is not necessary. This motion is about adopting this plan as amended.

Kimberly referenced page 37 and 38 should remove the verbiage referencing the matrices. Confirmed.

Janine Lesser asked how often the COVID-19 Monitoring Team will meet. Kimberly said that they have been meeting on Tuesday and Thursdays and will set their new schedule on Tuesday.

The motion on the floor is to approve the plan with the amendment to strike two tables and language strikes to comply.

**Unanimous.**

Back to Dick's motion: **Open in Green Phase and reevaluate one month after school begins. The board meeting that aligns is October 5<sup>th</sup>.**

**Jerry Wilson second.**

Kevin Pobst asked how one month after was arrived at. Dick said that one month allows enrollment to be known and a good basis to decide.

Kevin asked about the shape of the curve at this point and where one month puts us.

Rich Cahoon said that he was opposed to the one-month interval. We should be able to change it as needed.

Dick Dunning said that it allows a time frame to work. If the Superintendent comes with a different recommendation, the board can make a different decision by requesting a special board meeting. Dick said that he will stay with his motion.

Kevin said that the motion should read that we will enter the school year in green without the month.

**Dick Dunning withdrew his motion. Jerry Wilson withdrew his second.**

**Dick Dunning moved to open school in the green phase. Katherine Heck second.**

Kimberly Saunders said that she is confident about the ability to layer mitigation strategies and keep kids in schools.

This plan is clear that there are no remote options.

**In favor of opening in green phase: Unanimous.**

Is there a recommendation of pursuing SASS? Kimberly said that she wants the board to know that it is a resource available. Not in the best interest of district to pursue because sample size in some schools is too small.

Rich Cahoon shared his concern with trying to lay out the change. Masks matter, but vaccinations matter more. What exactly are the levers?

Rich said that he wants to commit to people that if we get to a specific vaccination rate that something happens next. Kimberly said that she understood the vaccination rate to be related to students. She will follow-up and report back on Tuesday.

Rich wants to be able to tell people what the requirements are.

Keira Christian suggested that students might be singled out because of the proportion of students to adults. Some staff are not in the general population of a classroom.

**Rich Cahoon moved that based on what Kimberly Saunders finds out from DHHS as to what constitutes 80% of which population that we unmask.**

**Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.**

Cost information for facilities was asked with regard to tents.

Dick Dunning said that our school buildings have implemented circulation systems that advocate for making sure that the environment is safe for students and staff by circulating the air. With that and masking, he feels safe to open schools.

Rich Cahoon said that there is a perception that being inside was not the same as being outside. He asked for clarification. Kimberly said that we did not have any confirmed transmission within schools. Could someone have contracted it and we did not know? Yes.

Rich Cahoon further shared a concern as to why students were not in tents in the spring.

Relative to remote options, if students will not return, do we want to consider an option? Concern with not offering an option were shared.

Katherine Heck asked what are other districts doing. Are others offering a remote option? We voted not to offer a remote option.

Kimberly reported that several districts on the coast are considering remote options.

Kevin asked if funds could be carried into 22/23. The response was that only dollars can be encumbered with a very specific purpose. If it is unreserved fund balance, it has to return to the taxpayers.

## **5. Position Justifications**

A recommendation for two combined K-1 classes at GES, rather than ask for an additional second grade teacher, is requested.

The justification to add a teacher at AES is made and requested.

**Katherine Heck moved to accept one classroom teacher addition at AES. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.**

Kimberly Saunders will send out the plan again with the changes, to families to review. A survey will follow. Could the survey include vaccination rate information thresholds? Confirmed.

Rich Cahoon thanked administration for making the necessary changes on short notice.

## **6. Public Comment**

None.

## **7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II (If Required)**

**a. Negotiations**

**b. Legal**

**c. Personnel**

Five-minute recess was called at 9:13 p.m.

**Katherine Heck motioned to enter into non-public in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II at 9:20 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Katherine Heck moved to exit non-public session at 9:29 p.m. Rich Cahoon second. Unanimous.**

**Janine Lesser moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for 5 years. Keira Christian second. Unanimous.**

**Katherine Heck motioned to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok