



ANDOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SC ROOM Key: *I.O. = Information Only; A.R. = Action Request*

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021
SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE ROOM

** Please note that public comment – either during the Public Input agenda item or on specific agenda topics – should follow School Committee [policy BEDH](#) *Public Comment at School Committee Meetings* and [policy BEDH-E](#) *Guidelines for Public Comment*, including limiting remarks to 3 minutes.**

I. School Committee Meeting – Call to Order **6:00 PM**

II. Executive Session

Motion and vote to meet in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A, section 21(a) for the following purpose: Purpose (2) to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, namely Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Committee. Purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with unionized personnel, namely the Andover Education Association (AEA) Unit A, Occupational and Physical Therapists Association, and SEIU Local 888 - School Food Service because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:30PM.

I. Resume Regular Meeting **7:30 PM**

- A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag
- B. Recognitions/Communications I.O.
- C. Public Input
- D. Response to Public Input
- E. Education I.O.
 - 1. Opening Day
 - a. Highlights and Enrollment
 - b. Personnel Update (J. Porter)
 - 2. COVID Mitigation Strategies Update
 - a. HVAC Update (P. Szymanski)
 - b. Plan for Quarantine Students (Dr. Parvey)
 - c. Contact Tracing (R. Casper)

F. New Business

- 1. Policy - Update Title IX Officer A.R.
 - a. Policy ACAB: Sexual Harrassment - Update Title IX Officer
 - b. Policy AC-R: Nondiscrimination And Harassment Prevention
- 2. SEIU 888 Food Services MOA – Driver/Porter A.R.
- 3. AEA MOA – HPE SLP permanent substitute A.R.

This is the SC posted agenda for the upcoming meeting to the best of our knowledge at the time of posting; however, other agenda items may arise; therefore, the SC reserves the right to discuss additional items if merited.

The mission of the Andover Public Schools, in partnership with the entire Andover community, is to educate by engaging and inspiring, students to develop as self-reliant, responsible citizens who are thinkers, problem solvers, and contributors prepared to participate in an evolving global society.

G. Continuing Business

1. Asst. Super For Teaching & Learning transition agreement update

A.R.

H. Consent Agenda

1. Grants/Donations to District
2. SC Meeting Minutes: August 9 and August 16 SC Meetings

A.R.

I. Adjournment

The School Committee intends to hold in-person meetings when practical in accordance with evolving health and safety regulations. Members of the public who attend School Committee meetings in person must wear a mask in compliance with School Committee policy [EBCFA Face Coverings](#).

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Monday, August 9, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Participants from the School Committee: Chair Susan McCready, Asst. Chair Lauren Conoscenti, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Sharon Scully

Also present: Superintendent Dr. Parvey, Asst. Superintendent Sara Stetson, Business Manager Paul Szymanski, Town Health Director Tom Carbone, Asst. Health Director Amy Ewing, APS physician Dr. Chan.

I. Regular Meeting

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson McCready called to order the meeting for Monday, August 9, 2021 at 5:03 PM. The Regular School Committee Meeting will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or streamed: www.andovertv.org. **Public Participation via email:** scremote@andoverma.us

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag.

B. Recognitions & Communications

None

C. Public Input

Dara Obbard, 6 Marie Drive, urged the School Committee to approve the universal mask mandate in the schools for the upcoming school year. We need to commit to universal masking for the common good, due to the variant strain of Covid-19.

Rachel Giaimo, 20 Korinthian Way read her testimony stating that we are no longer in a State of Emergency so does our SC or Town have the right to mandate masks in School? Per CDC data children are more likely to die from other causes. When masking was started, it was to protect the most vulnerable population. For proper development, kids need normal interaction with teachers and their peers. No one is saying to prohibit masks in school, but to let families choose for themselves. Andover should not impose greater restrictions than what DESE advises.

Elizabeth Plansky, 237 Holt Road, as a mother of a child who has significant health issues, masking is not an inconvenience. There are significant long-term effects of COVID, and transmitting the Delta variant is much more of a concern for her family.

Heather Nichols, 81 High Street, wrote in about the late arrival of her children's bus last year and with the changes to the start times this year for elementary students means her children won't get home until much later. Is there any consideration being given to adding more busses?

D. response to Public Input

Dr. Parvey said we will no longer have B-runs. The School Committee will provide an update at a later meeting date. The School Committee will provide an update at a later meeting date.

E. Education

1. Health Update: Covid 19 Protocols

a. Mask Discussion

Per DESE, remote learning is not an option for the upcoming school year. Information on precautions for Covid was provided by Health Director Tom Carbone, Asst. Health Director Amy Erwing, Director of Nursing, Rita Casper, and APS physician Dr. Chan.

Director Tom Carbone provided statistical information in the number of cases from March 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. Our July 2021 cases were more than May and June of 2021 combined. From July 22-28, 2021, there were 10 positive cases for those age 0-11. They expect to see cases rise after Labor Day as people get back into their routine and students return to school.

The total percent of residents vaccinated is just short of 70%, and greater than 95% of 16-19-year olds are vaccinated.

Rita Casper stated that they will be monitoring the information very closely. With the transmission of the Delta variant it affects those vaccinated and unvaccinated. Some effective strategies to decrease transmission include:

- Wearing of masks by all staff and students indoors, except designated mask breaks and when eating.
- Contact tracing, which will continue per DPH protocols.
- Testing of students and staff if presenting with COVID symptoms, regardless of vaccination status.
- Staff and students are asked to self-monitor and stay home with illness.
- We continue to strongly emphasize the benefit of vaccination and plan to offer to COVID clinics in the fall.

Strategies should be re-evaluated in November, or sooner, if warranted.

Incorporating all of these strategies collectively will help to keep cases down to a minimum. While remote learning was not the desirable option, and presented mental health concerns for many students, it did provide an opportunity for students that had to quarantine. However, per DESE, all students are required to be in school. Because we cannot maintain social distancing or utilize remote learning, we must recommend following the other strategies during the school year.

Dr. Kenneth Chan said masks are an important part of lowering transmissions. He was hopeful back in June that we would not have to talk about all these measures but with the Delta variants we have to reassess our measures.

SC Remote: Lauren Conoscenti read the emails submitted by several residents encouraging the School Committee to mandate universal masking for the upcoming school year.

- Some commented that we must consider that we are part of a community and must protect our most vulnerable.
- Some commented that mandatory mask wearing eliminates the risk of bullying in the schools.
- Some conveyed their concerns about the Delta variant and rising cases nationwide, especially for children too young to be vaccinated.

Emails submitted by others who did not wish to mandate masking.

- Some commented that students should be able to breath freely.
- Some commented that children have been known to transmit COVID but at a very low rate.
- Some commented that parents should be permitted to make the choice for their child.

Other emails

- Questions on policies for the upcoming year and if the District will make all the guidelines transparent.
- Will the SC hold an open meeting if they choose to vote on mandating masks?

Susan McCready said that by law, all School Committee Meetings have to be held in public session. Tom Carbone reported that the metrics in the presentation will be posted on the Town's Health Division COVID-19 page and they will continue to add to that data and are also available through the State's website.

Rita Casper reported that any individual who is unvaccinated and has been less than 3 feet away if in contact with a positive case will be quarantined. DPH and DESE will be sending updates, but we just don't know when. We still need to do contact tracing and keep social distancing requirements. If you are vaccinated and have no symptoms you do not need to quarantine. If you are considered a close contact you would have to be tested and be evaluated.

Lauren Conoscenti thinks about some of the options that were removed and how schools are now left with fewer protections, especially for kids who can't get the vaccine. Considering that masks work best when everyone is wearing them, she feels it does not make a whole lot of sense for some kids but not all kids to wear masks.

Tracey Spruce is mindful of all the information we heard from the medical community on the mental health problems with children that developed over the past year. We know that masking doesn't just protect the wearer but those around them. Tracey is in support of universal mask wearing in the schools.

Susan McCready appreciates the information provided by Rita Casper, Dr. Chan, Amy Erwing, and Tom Carbone.

B. Other Protocols

Dr. Parvey said we need to consider that some of student activities starting August 15th (i.e. Marching Band). They are not recommending or requiring masks outdoors.

Susan McCready said it is in the best interest of all for the School Committee to have a boiler plate policy that we want to move forward with a face mask policy. The previous policy expired at the end of the school year.

Tracey asked whether there are other categories that should be included for accommodations, are we appropriately accounting for various situations our students might face? Rita Casper will take a look at it.

Susan McCready and Dr. Parvey recognize that extra-curricular activities are starting and because there isn't an opportunity for the School Committee to reconvene this week, they will schedule a very short meeting for Monday, August 16th at 7:00 P.M.

C. Policy EBCFA-Face Coverings: 1st Reading if needed

The Committee will provide a draft of the reading to send out to the public.

F. New Business

1. Approval of Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Dr. Parvey is seeking approval for the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. She reported that the process was rigorous and included a survey that was shared with staff and administration asking for information on qualities that were used for interview questions. There were eight candidates interviewed with four rounds, the second round required a performance test, the third round involved a 1:1 interview and the 4th round was a panel that interviewed the candidates.

Dr. Julie Riley was the candidate that rose to the top. She comes to us from Manchester-Essex where she is the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology. Julie has extensive knowledge of curriculum and will also support the high school through the NEASC process.

Dr. Riley is excited to be in attendance tonight and thanked the Committee for such a rigorous interview process. She feels honored and excited about the road ahead and we have a fantastic opportunity moving forward.

Lauren Conoscenti moved that the Andover School Committee approve the appointment of Dr. Julie Riley as Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning subject to the parties reaching an agreement of an employment contract. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

2. COO vs Asst. Superintendent for Finance & Administration Job Title Change

Paul Szymanski is filling this position until a new hire is identified. An amended job description and title change is being presented to the Committee for their approval. Dr. Parvey said this is a very hard position to fill and it is best to have a title that is recognizable by other Districts. The suggested changes were not substantive but she does welcome the discussion.

Mr. Szymanski said that it was important to note that duties and responsibilities that were not listed in the previous job description have been included, such as the hiring and oversight of a custodial supervisor as well as the responsibility of oversight of the Collins Center.

Shannon Scully wants to make sure that it is clearly defined that the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration is responsible to oversee the role of the District Data Analyst.

Lauren Conoscenti moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve a change in position title from Chief Operating Officer to Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. Scully-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

G. Consent Agenda

1. Grants/Donations to District - None
2. Minutes from SC Meetings: May 20, 2021 and June 3, 2021

Paul Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Tracey Spruce.

Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, S. McCready-Y.

Motion passes 5-0.

H. Adjournment

At 7:04 P.M. on a motion by Paul Murphy and seconded by Lauren Conoscenti, the Andover School Committee adjourned from the meeting of Monday, August 9, 2021.

Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, S. McCready-Y.

Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Monday, August 16, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Participants from the School Committee: Chair Susan McCready, Asst. Chair Lauren Conoscenti, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Sharon Scully.

Others participating: Superintendent Dr. Parvey, Asst. Superintendent Sara Stetson, Business Manager Paul Szymanski and AHS Liaison Jeffrey Connors.

I. Regular Meeting

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson McCready called to order the meeting at 6:30 PM and the Committee immediately voted to meet in Executive Session. The Regular School Committee Meeting will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or streamed: www.andovertv.org.

II. Executive Session:

Tracey Spruce moved to meet in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. chapter 30A, section 21(a), for the following purpose: Purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with unionized personnel, namely the Andover Assistants Organization because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: S Scully, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, and S. McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

III. Regular Meeting Resumed at 7:08 PM

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson McCready called to order the meeting for Monday, August 16, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag.

B. Recognitions & Communications

Dr. Parvey announced that they have finalized negotiations with Dr. Julie Riley who will start full-time on September 13, 2021 as the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning.

Tracey Spruce asked to have a discussion on pool testing on the next agenda. Per DESE, there is state funding and staffing.

IV. Public Input

Lauren Conoscenti reported that all emails are related to the agenda item.

Prior to commencing public input, Susan McCready gave a brief recap of the August 9th meeting. The presentation made by Dr. Parvey, Tom Carbone, Amy Ewing and Rita Casper and Dr. Chan is attached to last week's meeting agenda. In this presentation,

recommendations were made to the Committee for how best to keep staff and students safe while maintaining the best educational support to students and while maintaining school fully in-person. Data presented on August 9th by Mr. Carbone on Covid cases in Andover were also reviewed.

Many emails regarding masks have been received by the School Committee

Helena Han, 2 Farwood Drive has two children at Bancroft. She is very concerned about the Delta Variant and the effect on younger children who cannot be vaccinated, and agrees with the recommendations made by the health care professionals. Families have been encouraged to wear face masks. She feels the face mask practices last year were perfect, worked, and kept everyone safe.

Stephanie Barry, 124 Chestnut Street has a rising 3rd grader and a kindergarten student. They just returned from the Berkshires and it was a perfect vacation because everyone around them wore a mask and heard no one complaining about wearing masks. It was the exact opposite of what she has seen and heard in Andover. She is asking members of the community to do more to keep all of us safe. Masks work best for everyone if everybody wears them. She requests that the School Committee vote to mandate mask wearing.

Shane Griffin, 14 Sherry Drive. Thank you for pushing for an in-person school year. He does not believe masks are the right move for our children and disagrees with the data presented. He believes mask mandates have had no correlation to the numbers and that there is no actual hard science showing that masks do anything. Unless the kids wear the masks properly, the policy will fail. He also believes mask wearing causes physical health issues. Mask mandates can make us feel good, but we should be promoting a healthy lifestyle for our children. Children are less susceptible to Covid than vaccinated adults. Follow actual science rather than political science.

Jason Liss, 151 Chestnut Street. Spoke as an advocate of personal freedom one of the most important characteristics of a community interested in the well-being of its members. In particular, he believes in the freedom to not be put at risk for foolishness and myth. The idea that there are long term consequences of mask wearing for children is a myth. Every opportunity for the virus to mutate is a risk. An effective measure that has no down side is now the topic of heated discussion. It is easy to say that masks are not necessary. Rather than taking the easy way out, he is happy for his family to participate in a fully masked community that cares for each other.

Danny O'Toole, understands it has not been an easy year and a half. Gov. Baker has given us the opportunity to decide what to do about wearing of masks. He has three girls who were heavily impacted during the pandemic. Students need social connections. Two of their daughter's friends' groups collapsed. Believes masks partly responsible as they hide facial expressions and cues and impact students socially. We can't say there is no negative, it can affect people emotionally and psychologically.

Rachel Giamo, 20 Korithian Way, is not anti-vaccination or anti-mask and believes what's best for children is for them not to be masked. We need to update our guidelines and follow

DESE guidance as advised. Why did Andover need to follow DESE/DPH recommendations last year and this year is following CDC and AAP? As a School Committee you have control over about 6 hours of a student's day, not the rest of the day. She believes it is a myth that masks prevent the virus from spreading. What kept children healthy was that they were not in school that much last year. If you decide to vote yes on mask wearing please set a timeline for revisiting policy.

Peter Chavez, 49 Porter Road. The biggest impact on his kids last year was being remote all year. Having kids in-person is the best option. Avoiding any moves back to remote is an absolute goal. Masks are simple, cheap proven method of reducing transmission.

V. **Response to Public Input**

Paul Murphy thinks there is so much information out there and we try to do the best we can. We need to open schools and keep them open as long as we can and masks seen to be the best option. We are in a moment where we must be "not for self" – it's not about my family or your family, it's about our community and keeping ourselves as safe as possible.

The one thing Tracey Spruce responded to was the importance of mental health and socializing. The past year has been a disservice to students being isolated. If we don't have masks, we may face further quarantines and isolation for our kids.

Lauren Conoscenti said there were a few folks who mentioned the need to revisit the policy. She reiterates that if we do put a policy in place, it would not be forever.

Shannon Scully thanked everyone who provided feedback. There has been a lot of input. We're all tired of the pandemic but we are making the best decisions we can during another difficult year. Her estimation is that the feedback is overwhelming in favor of some level of mask policy.

Amy Ewing appreciates all the people who spoke tonight and values the discourse. This is not an easy decision and there is no perfect answer. We want kids to be back in school, and stay in school.

Rita Casper is hopeful we are going to move in a direction of improvement over time, we are making significant progress. We have received guidelines from DESE/DPH regarding quarantine and isolation and there is distinction in protocols if you are wearing masks or not. By wearing masks, the number of close contacts is reduced. The focus is to keep our students in school with their friends and to be educated and socialize, and we can manage to do that with masks. Our numbers are still climbing and we will continue to monitor this closely.

Rita Casper also spoke briefly on the best masks to wear. KN95s and N95 should be for hospital use or acute care. We encourage staff and students to wear surgical masks or cloth masks that should fit properly and changed daily.

Susan thanked everyone for their input and for being respectful in engaging in comments about mask wearing. We have to do what is for the collective good for our school system.

Lauren Conoscenti summarized the nearly 50 comments sent in via SCremote. She listed the names and addresses of the six individuals who submitted comments against mask wearing and the 40 comments submitted in support of mask wearing. The Committee have all had a chance to read the comments. They also received four specific questions received on SCremote.

1. Has there been any discussion about mandatory masks except one classroom per grade where masks are optional. 2. Please explain what metrics will be used to determine when masks would not be required. 3. If you decide on universal mask wearing, how would exemptions be handled. 4. Are there plans for the District to implement the test and stay option so students will not be quarantining for any length of time.

Regarding Question 1, Dr. Parvey responded that we have not thought of that. Rita Casper said that one of the reasons behind mask wearing is that we know is that Covid can be transferred to mask wearing and no-mask wearing, no class can be excused from that. If there is a class where everyone is unmasked, unless individuals are vaccinated, a distance of 6' is required. We also know that our spacing is not the way it was last year. We will not be in a hybrid model this year and distancing will be a factor.

Regarding Question 2, Rita Casper said we don't have enough information yet as to how this Delta variant is going to progress. At this point, we are still seeing an upward trend and that every age group is being affected. Amy Ewing said we are still on the upward trend; it is something we are going to have to watch.

Regarding Question 3, these exemptions are described in the policy.

Regarding Question 4, This will be discussed in more detail at the meeting of August 26th.

a. Policy EBCFA Face Coverings – 2nd reading and vote

Edits made to the first reading were posted on-line so the public could see them. This is the language that we had in the policy in the past and offers latitude in operational issues to make decisions. Participants who the wearing of face-masks is not possible due to health challenges, accommodations must be approved by the building principal and school nurse. Face shields may be used in certain instances.

In the spirit of wanting flexibility to make changes and not be tied to a School Committee meeting, it was suggested that authority may be delegated to the Superintendent in consultation with the School Committee Chair, the Director of Nursing, and Andover Director of Public Health to amend or temporarily suspend the policy in accordance with the Center for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, DESE, and Department of Public Health, which Dr. Parvey also reviewed and approved.

The Mass. Association of School Committees released a face coverings policy. Last year Andover created their own using their policy as a basis for our policy taking all of their references and putting them at the end of the policy. We are following the order that masks are worn on any school provided transportation and required when going into any health office in a school building.

Jeffrey Connors would advocate mask wearing to protect student's health both emotional and physical. If we do use these preventative measures, students would be able to see their friends more often.

Tracey Spruce moved for the Andover School Committee to approve Policy EBCFA Face Coverings as presented and amended. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. Scully, T. Spruce-Y, L Conoscenti-Y, P Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

VII. Adjournment

At 8:36 P.M. on a motion by Paul Murphy and seconded by Lauren Conoscenti, the Andover School Committee adjourned from the meeting of Monday, August 16, 2021. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y. S. McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary