

Wakefield School Board Minutes

September 14, 2021

Held in the Paul School Library

Approved

| BOARD MEMBERS | | ADMINISTRATORS | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Bob Ouellette, Chair | ✓ | Pam Stiles, Superintendent | ✓ |
| Relf Fogg, Vice Chair | ✓ | Michael O'Neill, Business Administrator | ✓ |
| Mary Collins | ✓ | Anne Kebler, Special Ed/Coordinator | |
| Sheena Robbins | ✓ | Kristen White, Principal | ✓ |
| Caitlin Gelinias | ✓ | Chad Strout, Assistant Principal | |

Audience: Sandra Taliaferro, Heather Dube, Tiffany Thorne, and Mary Soares with Clearview TV.

Chairman Ouellette called the meeting to order at 5:00. Those present joined in the flag salute.

Public Comment

None

Old Business

Covid Update

Mrs. Stiles said there have been some increase in Covid cases at the school and felt the Board should meet a week early and address this now. She reported that the county positivity rate is 7.8%. There are currently 19 cases in Wakefield as of 9-14-21. Last year the school was not in session until later in September. There were 13 cases the whole year, most in November, December and January. There was a total of 8 staff cases throughout the year. Currently there are 9 cases known in the school. Last year, a building-wide ionizing system was installed which kills viruses, germs, etc. Rochester grades K-6 wear masks indoors but may take them off when seated and socially distanced.

1. When can someone return who was showing symptoms of a viral or respiratory infection? The person receives an ~~approved~~ COVID-19 test that is negative, the person is fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours and improved symptoms

Untested – That person must stay home for 10 days from onset of symptoms and the person is fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours and improved symptoms. IF YOUR CHILD TESTS POSITIVE. YOU MUST CALL THE SCHOOL NURSE.

2. The NH Department of Public Health is no longer requiring contact tracing for positive cases in schools. However, families may have a higher level of comfort knowing if their child was in close contact. While not required, families will be notified if their child was a close contact. Additionally, administration from Paul School will notify families when a positive case has been reported in a classroom but no one will be excluded from school as a result. Families should self-monitor for symptoms as a precaution. Mask wearing is optional for grades 7-12.

The school now has a Covid Advisory Team made up of the nurse, administration, union and teachers who have offered their input. According to the Advisory Team feelings about wearing masks are mixed. It is optional now and those who wish to wear them are doing so. Mrs. Stiles told the Board that they are to make the decision for the wearing of masks or not wearing masks and when as this is a change to the plan the Board approved. Mr. Fogg stated he feels that masks should be optional, recommended by not required. Mrs. Gelinas said the number of cases in the school now is concerning and masks worked last year. Mrs. Stiles said all nine cases are children. The Board discussed their options. The Board wanted to make their decision based on a teacher/staff/parent and community view taking all views into consideration. Mrs. Robbins feels that if the Board chooses masking, she would like to consider an end time. Mrs. Gelinas would like to consider when they can't socially distance, they wear their masks. No masks outdoors was the general consensus. Mrs. Collins felt that those who had been vaccinated shouldn't be treated any differently, it's a personal decision between the family and their doctor. Mr. Ouellette believes we should stay the course and see how things go from here.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Robbins, to approve number one and two (above). (Vote 4-1)

Mrs. Robbins made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to utilize masks indoors for staff and students. Masks may be removed when socially distancing and seated three feet or more or if they're eating. Masks would be optional outside and this would be in effect through Friday, September 24th at which point masks can return to optional pending a decrease in cases by that date within our school. (Vote 3-2)

Mrs. Stiles will pass this information on to parents.

Transportation

1. School will begin at 8:40 instead of 8:30. The high school and elementary bus pick up times in the morning will not change. Buses will arrive no later than 8:30, allowing time for breakfast. Children can still be dropped off at 8:15 and report to the gym paras will also cover the drop-offline and crosswalks. No additional compensation will be needed for the 8:15-8:20 coverage as they will begin their day at 8:15. The current duty teachers will assume coverage at 8:20. Children will be allowed to go to the homeroom at 8:20. Staff covered under the Wakefield Teachers' Agreement will report to school by 8:20 instead of 8:10. The school schedule will alter everything by 10 minutes. School will dismiss at 3:10 instead of 3:00. a. Buses will leave the HS at 2:15 instead of 2:20. This will allow adequate time for the buses to arrive at Paul School on time. Paras may be asked to work past their contracted time of 3:15 and they will be compensated for that time. Staff covered under the Wakefield Teachers' Agreement will end their day at 3:30 instead of 3:20. Paras (who do not have dismissal duty) will end their day at their current contracted time of 3:15. ABA tutors will have no change to their current contracted time.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to approve the changes in scheduling that are being brought to the Board by our Superintendent, (Vote 5-0)

Mrs. Robbins thanked the Administration for putting these plans together and also the staff that is willing to be flexible.

Public Comment

Mrs. Taliaferro thanked the administration for getting things done so efficiently. Last year mask wearing was way too constrictive. When there is a case in her office everyone wears a mask for ten days. She'd like to be concerned with the cases in the school not the town or county. Mrs. Thorne said she has four children who were tested this morning, one was negative and she's waiting for test results for the others. She asked if the negative one could return to school. It was recommended that that child be kept home until the results were known for the other three. If one of them have Covid they all must stay home for the stated time. Mrs. Dube stated the cost of the test is about \$150 and she wanted to know if there is a plan for those who can't afford to get tested. Mrs. Stiles will look into the possibility of reimbursing people for testing. Mrs. Stiles explained how children that are home are getting their work.

The Board, by consensus struck the word "approved" from number 1. Mr. White appreciated that this is short term and will be reassessed.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins to have the next School Board meeting on September 28th at 6:00. (Vote 5-0) The Facilities Subcommittee meeting will be at 5:15.

Adjournment

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to adjourn the meeting at 6:02. (Vote 5-0)

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next School Board meeting,

Priscilla Colbath
School Board Secretary