

School Facilities Working Group 7/14/2020

9:00 a.m. via Zoom

Goals

Short term goal:

Serve as School Committee input to the town leader group putting together a capital improvement plan for maintenance & repair to school buildings

Long term goal:

Work on developing a process to determine the facilities solution to meet our elementary school building needs - to include clarification on what a future MSBA process may look like

Agenda

1. Call to Order: 9:05 a.m. Attendees: Brian Blake, Sara Gilliam, Chub Whitten, Sean Fitzgerald, Jonathan Mitchell, Sheila McAdams, Jeff Carovillano, Tom Gallagher, Carl Nylen, Sheila Halloran, Colleen Fermon, Chris Rais.
2. Citizen Comments: none.
3. Approval of July 1, 2020 meeting minutes: approved
4. Review of Commissioner's Guidance:

Update from Colleen Fermon, Director of Public Health for Ipswich:

Total of 70 cases in town to date. First event date March 14, last confirmed case was June 4. Current positive state rate of positivity is 1.4%. Further information is available on the town website under a COVID-19 link, includes graphics that provide a breakdown of gender and age demographic for the recorded positive cases. Following the standard protocol of procedures laid out by the Department of Public Health. DESE will be providing guidelines for handling classroom/grade level/school closures if/when case thresholds are reached. Question re: whether hydration stations will be able to be used, and flushing the water systems after a prolonged period of unused. Ensuring that the school cafeterias are in compliance with new guidelines/requirements. Playground safety will fall under the responsibility of Facilities. Colleen will be involved in the reopening committee moving forward. In-school screening procedures but no universal temperature checks, promoting testing when students or staff present symptoms. Question of testing capacity and the potential surge of testing with accompanying financial implications in the fall. Testing results currently vary between 48 hours to 5 days.

Growing MTA pushback against the recently released DESE guidelines for fall reopening. If we move to a 6-ft model instead of 3-ft model, that could likely rule out a full reopen. Finding locations within each school for an isolated COVID-19 room per DESE requirements. Setting up our plans so that we're able to pivot depending on the changing situation. Determining our values and priorities and keeping them at the forefront of the plans and pivot points, with the acknowledgement that no plan will be perfect. What can we put in place that will endure throughout the pivot points - scheduling, etc. What are the barriers and how can we overcome those - like utilizing other spaces. Key cornerstone component - consistent and frequent communication/check-ins with caregivers and students.

Nimble grant group - 8 teachers, Brian and Tracy, Amy and Keith. Includes a good cross section of staff like a school psychologist, adjustment counselor, special education teacher. This group is looking at different remote learning models that have been successful, how to build up our district's remote learning model, reviewing family and staff survey data. Also will be looking at hybrid models to be able to make recommendations. Reality is that remote learning will suffer without the establishment of family-teacher relationships that were so vital when we did remote learning this spring.

The cost of implementing the adaptations necessary to a full reopen - full reopen is the most expensive of the three options specifically for facilities.

Brian is sending out another parent survey this week to determine preference of families for reopening strategies.

Establishing a timeline for next steps. Top agenda item for our next meeting - determining the scope and membership of this group. Timeline. Further DESE recommendations - especially transportation and after school care.

5. Discuss school reopening scenarios and implications
6. Review of reopening worksheets
7. Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 21, 2020, 9am - 10:30 am
8. New Business: none
9. Adjourn: 10:48 a.m.

Action Items

- Establishing a timeline for next steps. Top agenda item for our next meeting - determining the scope and membership of this group. Timeline. Further DESE recommendations - especially transportation and after school care. Communication plan. Filling in template from DESE. Inviting new working group members to our next meeting.

Next Meeting

- Tuesday, July 21, 2020, 9:00 am - 10:30 am via Zoom