

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

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**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](http://www.andovertv.org). **Public Participation via email:** [scremote@andoverma.us](mailto: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.

#### **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 Ewing, 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 15<sup>th</sup> (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 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M.

## **C. Policy EBCFA-Face Coverings: 1<sup>st</sup> 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