

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Keith Atchinson, Secretary
Tana Jolley

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Justin Phaiah
Carolyn Hackbarth

Mission: The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

The Brooklyn Board of Education held a special meeting virtually on July 29, 2020. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Atchinson, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Hackbarth, and Mrs. Jolley. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, were also present. Members of the teaching staff and public were also in attendance.

This meeting is scheduled to be broadcast through Brooklyn CT Board of Education YouTube Channel.

This meeting is a continuation of the meeting that began on July 22, 2020 and was disrupted. It will begin where the last meeting left off.

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to report.

3. Board Representatives to other Committees

None to report.

4. Old Business

a. PV Projects Update

Mrs. Buell stated that the solar project is moving along. There is staging set up around both buildings at the elementary and the middle school. Tree removal

has begun where trees have been removed that will impact the solar production due to shading or near the buildings. Pine trees that had algae growing on them and are dying were also removed. It has been a very clean and neat process. They expect to be on the roof by the end of the week. Mrs. Buell stated that they will be putting together a press release to the public providing an update to where they are with the project.

5. New Business

a. Draft Reopening Plan 2020-2021

Mrs. Buell stated the draft reopening plan has been discussed on many levels through Zoom meetings with parents, certified and noncertified staff, administrators, custodians, secretaries, and nurses. She continues to have communication with area superintendents, administrators and at the state level as well. This draft plan was due to the state last Friday, July 24, 2020. It was submitted to the state. Mrs. Buell stated it is an organic plan, it will be changing as we receive guidance from the State Department of Education.

Mrs. Buell stated that the Adapt, Advance, Achieve document was updated and there was an additional addendum added to it, which Brooklyn Public Schools plan doesn't reflect. Mrs. Buell wanted to go over the plan for those that may not have had a chance to read or look at it yet. Mrs. Buell presented the plan to the Board previously. She would like the Board to endorse the plan, but is not required by the state. The state will look at the plan and provide feedback as needed.

Mrs. Buell continued to state that we are all happy to have students return to school. We want to do it in the healthiest way possible and keep students in school as long as we can. This means following as many mitigation strategies in order to reduce the transmission of the virus. Brooklyn's priorities are the health and wellness of students, which includes having the students return to school, connecting with students, and supporting their social emotional well-being. There will be curriculum implemented from preschool through grades 8 addressing wellness, equity for all students, diversity and social justice issues. The goal is to increase the digital literacy of our students as well.

Mrs. Buell stated that the plan has 3 parts to it: Full Reopen, Hybrid Model, and Distance Learning. The initial part is for all students to return to school. The Governor and the Commissioner of Education want to start with a full reopening, but may not be able to do so in all areas and may have to start with the hybrid model. More guidance will be coming.

Mrs. Buell stated there is really four pieces to the plan:

- Full Reopen - all students return to school

- Hybrid Model - if the virus becomes more prevalent in this area, and have to social distance even further
 - Full Distance Learning Model - everyone goes home and students will receive daily lessons in their core subject areas
 - Parent Opt-Out - if a parent chooses to not send their child to school, they can opt-out. Parents need to inform the school district that they wish to opt-out, keeping their children home. The district will then provide them instruction through the distance learning model.
- Mrs. Buell stated this gives the parents choices.

Mrs Buell continued discussing the plan, which provides mitigation strategies to decrease the transmission of the virus. The primary focus for the Brooklyn Public Schools is to cohort children, one group of children where they aren't crossing over to another cohort. The students will be in a class or homeroom cohort where they will spend their day and receive their instruction. According to the CDC and the state, the least amount of mixing students is better in order to reduce the transmission of the virus. Masks are required to be worn in the school building and on the school bus that covers your mouth and nose. There will be mask breaks: a break in the morning, lunch break and recess/outdoor break and an afternoon break. Guidance that was given today, preschool students will not be required to wear face masks in class. Mrs. Buell stated this was received today, is not included in our plan, and she will revise and resubmit the plan.

Mrs. Buell stated they've talked about teaching students about hygiene with hand washing, how to put a mask on and off, etc. Using signage and using visual supports to help with understanding of social distancing. They are developing strategies that have signs for one way in the hallway, which side to be walking on, little dots (fun designs, animals, geometric shapes, skip counting, etc.) on the floor to indicate how far six feet is from the next student when standing in the hallway. She stated they are working on protocols on when to use the bathroom, how many students are in the bathroom, where and how do you wait if there are already two students in the bathroom. Staff is working on making mini commercials through different media on how to teach students these procedures. The school nurses are working on commercials as well on how to know if your child is well enough for school, what to do if your child is sick, and what good hand washing looks like. Both schools will have protocols and guidance for students.

Mrs. Buell shared with the Board a picture she put on Brooklyn Public Schools Facebook page of what a sixth grade classroom would look like. There are 16 student desks in the classroom with desk shields. Mrs. Buell explained that the desk shields will be used when students eat lunch in their classroom, which will form a barrier for when the students remove their masks to eat to help with the reduction of spreading the virus. She shared a picture of a third grade class as well. This class also had 16 student desks with desk shields. She stated the desk

shields will not be used all day. If the students are wearing face masks and maximizing the social distancing, then the desk shields will not be needed. The desk shields are for mealtime.

Mrs. Buell discussed how recess will be spread out by grade level and classes around the school grounds. This is to help with reducing the mixing of cohorts so if a child or staff member gets sick, it doesn't spread in multiple cohorts.

Mrs. Buell stated bus monitors will be on the bus to support students to board the bus in an orderly fashion, making sure students are wearing a mask, filling the back seats first and moving forward. When students are getting off the bus, the students in front will get off first and the students in the back of the bus will be the last ones off. This will help with reducing the amount of students crossing over one another on the bus. The guidance right now from the state, buses can be filled to near capacity. Mrs. Buell stated she is encouraging parents to transport students to and from school to help with the number of students on a bus and will help with reducing their child being exposed to other children; one less cohort that their child would be a part of.

Mrs. Buell stated that the instructional day needs to be adjusted in order to achieve a healthy educational environment. Each morning there will be a 45 minute delay to the instructional day. Instead of school starting at 8:30, school will be starting at 9:15. This will allow for teachers to have their planning period to prepare lessons for students that are in school as well as recording a 10-15 minute mini lesson. Students that are in the distance learning model, will be able to view the recorded mini lesson on the next day and receive instruction from a teacher that will be coordinating the distance learning.

Mrs. Buell explained the students that opt-out and are using the distance learning model, and if we eventually end up with the full distance learning model will look the same. All students will be on a schedule, for example math class may start at 9:15. The student will log in, and have math class. The instructor will see them and take attendance, share the lesson with them and give the assignment for math. At 10:00, students log into their next class, attendance will be taken, receive lesson and assignment will be given. The students will be held to a schedule and responsible for checking in at a certain time. Mrs. Buell stated she discussed with the Board about challenges working families may have. She stated they are working on a schedule that will provide some support for students and parents that might need to work on a second shift.

Mrs. Buell stated the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation will continue to offer the before and after school program. Due to school starting 45 minutes later, she is aware that parents are used to dropping off their children at 8:30 and may not be able to drop them off at 9:15. She is coordinating with the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation to offer drop-off spots for students to come in from 8:30 to 9:15. She

doesn't want the later start of 45 minutes to negatively impact parents. Parents will need to sign-up and will be at no cost to families. Mrs. Buell shared a picture of the middle school auditorium where students may be sitting when being dropped off at 8:30. There were pieces of yellow paper taped to seats indicating where students would be sitting in the auditorium. In the model she shared, it can accommodate approximately 80 students.

Mrs. Buell discussed other mitigation strategies with ventilation and increasing air flow in air handlers, requiring windows to remain open, not using hand dryers, fans are to blow air out of the classroom not blow air around the classroom. She also discussed opening the building up to have air exchange in the morning and afternoon, before students arrive and after they leave for the day. These strategies are recommended and will be used to help assist with air flow.

Mrs. Buell stated the amount of traffic in the building will be reduced in the office, nurses office, and hallways. She's had conversations with the nurses, they will be following guidelines from the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH). Isolation rooms will be created, so if a student isn't feeling well and might have symptoms of coronavirus, they will be in the isolation room being monitored, parents will be called, and the student will go home. Parents will be informed on what to look for if their child isn't feeling well, they should stay home and the same will be required for staff.

Mrs. Buell explained that each one of the schools is working on schedules and rotations. Students will still receive art instruction, music instruction without singing or playing wind instruments. At the middle school, grades 6, 7 and 8 will have Spanish instruction. There will be STEAM instruction at the elementary school as well.

Mrs. Buell stated we need to be prepared. The reopening plan has a structure in place so that we can shift quickly from all students in the district to possibly a hybrid model, back to all students or maybe a distance learning model. When it's safe for students to return, we can adjust back to another one of the models. She explained the district had discussed creating healthy schools by addressing student's emotional, academic well-being. We need to build a connection with the students and make sure they are ready to learn.

Mrs. Buell explained the phrase social distancing, is really physical distancing. She stated we will physically distance while creating opportunities and promote social interaction. We want students to socialize and connect with each other and some of the curriculum will focus on that.

Mrs. Buell stated that breakfast and lunch will continue to be served. If we end up in a hybrid model where half a class comes to school a couple days and the other half comes in the other couple days, when students are not in school, they are

distance learning. Meals are still going to be served for breakfast and lunch for all students including hybrid and distance learning models.

Mrs. Lyons wanted to add that if anyone has questions or comments, they can email them to buell@brooklynschools.org or call into the meeting at 860-774-9732 x1 during the public comment section.

b. Insurance Policy for Chromebooks

Mrs. Buell stated every child needs to have a chromebook or some sort of device to prepare for a hybrid model or the distance learning model. She stated they need to plan for chromebook damage. Other school districts have an annual fee for insurance coverage. She has discussed this with administrators a few times about the option of a \$20 annual fee for an insurance coverage that would help offset the cost of repairs. This is something Mrs. Buell would like the Board to think about. This fee would be held in an account by the Brooklyn Board of Education and if a student has no repair costs at the end of 8th grade, they have put in \$80, maybe they could sell the chromebook at a reduced price to the student. Mrs. Buell recommends the Board request the \$20 insurance fee and if parents or families cannot afford it, there could be a sliding scale. The Board wants to think about this and discuss it at the August meeting.

c. Change in minimum wage

Minimum wage will increase from \$11/hour to \$12/hour on September 1, 2020. Currently we pay substitute paraprofessionals minimum wage. Non-certified substitutes make \$12.14/hour (\$85 a day), and certified substitutes make \$13.57 (\$95 a day). During 2020-21 substitute paras will work 6 hours and make \$60/day. Next year we would need to adjust this rate.

Mrs. Lyons stated she knows it's been done in the past and they've looked at what other districts or towns are paying their subs. She stated they need to remain competitive or people may choose to go to a different school. We won't have enough subs if they go to another school. Mrs. Buell is going to check with area towns and bring it to the next meeting.

d. Calendar Update

Mrs. Buell stated the Connecticut State Board of Education passed a resolution to waive up to three days of the school year to provide staff and families with additional time to build capacity to safely transition back to in-person classes. Therefore, the current requirement is for 177 days/900 hours for the upcoming 2020–2021 school year. Mrs. Buell stated that students are in school for 182 days. If we were to use 3 additional days for professional development, it would be beneficial for staff. Mrs. Buell stated she has spoken to the administrative team as

well as the school nurses and they feel that they need to prepare for staff to be able to respond to the virus. Mrs. Buell is proposing to increase the first five days of professional development which would be August 24, 2020 through August 28, 2020 and the first student day would be Monday, August 31, 2020.

Mrs. Lyons asked if there would be any impact on the teacher contracts. Mrs. Buell stated that the teachers will still be working the same number of days.

Motion to approve the revised calendar to reflect 179 student days and the first five days of professional development, August 24, 2020 through August 28, 2020, and preparation for the reopening of schools. The first student day would be Monday, August 31, 2020.

(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

e. Building use by outside agencies

Mrs. Buell stated that the school has policies that allows other agencies to use the building, such as Brooklyn Parks and Recreation, Scouting organizations, etc. Mrs. Buell stated that if they are going to be very careful about letting visitors into the building and keeping students in their cohorts, what would the school need to do to safely bring people back into the building? Does the Board want to take that risk to do that? For an outside agency to use a classroom or the cafeteria, Mrs. Buell stated we would need to ensure that the area being used is cleaned before they came in, make sure they are following the procedures and guidelines, and then we would need to clean and disinfect when they are done. Mrs. Buell stated that Brooklyn Schools doesn't currently charge for that if it is a nonprofit or local organization. Do we continue to open the doors and continue doing it at no cost? Mrs. Buell worries about opening the building during the pandemic time. She would like the Board to consider suspending the board policy around building use to restrict the use or to add additional requirements around that.

Mrs. Lyons stated it makes sense. She stated it also adds another cohort for students and if they miss scouts this year, it's less exposure for the children.

A motion was made that the Board of Education will suspend the Board of Education Policy 1330, 3514 and 3515 which relates to restricting access to building use, use of equipment and fees related to building use until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic and strict additional requirements to clean buildings multiple times per day and before/after use by outside agencies until determined not to cause undue burden on the Board of Education custodial staff.
(Jolley/Perkins-Banas)

Mr. Phaiah asked what kind of restrictions completely, no one in the building? Mrs. Lyons and Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that no use of the school outside of school, at least during the pandemic. Mr. Phaiah asked is it minimal impact, how many groups actually use the building? Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated it creates another layer of not knowing and everyone is working so effortly to keep the cohorts to a minimal amount and to clean and disinfect as needed, it's another cost. Mr. Phaiah agreed.

No further discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Mrs Buell stated that she has received a request from a parent or parents for the Board of Education to consider payment for high school other than our designated high schools. Mrs. Buell stated that we do have many public high schools that we allow students to attend, but Brooklyn does not provide transportation to. The school the parent or parents are requesting is for Marianapolis Preparatory School. Mrs. Buell stated this is not a public school and does not abide by the same requirements of public schools. Mrs. Buell was asked to bring this to the Board. Mrs. Buell continued that one of the counter arguments the parent has requested is that Brooklyn Public Schools pays for tuition to Woodstock Academy, which the parent referred to as a private school as well as Norwich Free Academy (NFA), which is also a private school. Mrs. Buell explained that neither one of these schools are fully private, they are recognized by the state and they follow the state guidelines for length of school year with minor differences and they are not the same as a private school. Mrs. Buell stated that the Board of Education Policy states that we pay tuition to any of our designated high schools for any child and beyond that the Board will need to consider tuition. The parent would like feedback from the Board of Education.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas asked if Mrs. Buell sought legal guidance on this issue? Mrs. Buell stated she spoke to the district attorney and their recommendation to the Board of Education is that the Board should not be engaging in paying tuition to any private school and that our designated high schools and NFA do not qualify as a private school. The recommendation is to not pay tuition. Mrs. Buell stated that the Board has the ability to discuss this further, but Mrs. Buell believes they should be following the recommendation from their legal counsel.

Mrs. Lyons stated she agreed with Mrs. Buell. She asked if any other Board members had any additional questions and asked if they understood what the issue was? The Board understood and agreed with legal counsel. Mrs. Buell stated that she will reply to the parent and let them know that she brought their request to the Board and the Board has denied their request to pay tuition for Marianapolis Preparatory School.

Mr. Atchinson asked if there needs to be an official vote?

f. Approval of Superintendent's Contract

Mrs. Lyons stated that they went into executive session at the last meeting, June 24, 2020, and they did a review of the superintendent, Mrs. Buell. They discussed renewing her contract for 3 years and also discussed increasing the salary and the copay for insurance. Mrs. Lyons stated that the Board should renew the superintendent's contract.

Motion was made to renew the superintendent's contract for an additional 3 years.
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Lyons stated that they appreciate Mrs. Buell's leadership.

Mrs. Buell has received communication from Mr. Atchinson that he has been trying to speak during the meeting and seems the Board wasn't able to hear him. The issue was resolved.

Mr. Atchinson stated that he just wanted to add to what Mrs. Lyons had stated about public comment. In Zoom, people can raise their hand and the Board can see them there and he can field their questions.

Mr. Atchinson asked if the Board needs to take an official vote on the Marianapolis discussion? He stated that all Board members agreed, but didn't take an official vote. Mr. Otto stated that he didn't see that item on the agenda. He continued stating that this is a special meeting and if it's not on the agenda, the Board can't be discussing it at this meeting. Mr. Atchinson stated that he was fine with that.

6. Public Comment

Mrs. Lyons stated questions or comments can be emailed to buell@brooklynschools.org or they can call 860-774-9732 x1.

Becky Knox stated that she's a parent who will have trouble getting her kids to school with the time differential. She stated when she received the letter informing them that there would be a program for them, she called the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation department to get more information. She was told they weren't going to have a program like that. Was that something that was discussed afterwards that might have been corrected? She stated she was told that it would be a conflict of interest to have a before and after school program and a half hour differential for parents that are going to need help. Mrs. Lyons stated the program with the recreation department came out from concerns from parents and it's something the town is working with the school to provide. The 45 minute delay in starting school also presented another problem for parents. This is when the cooperation of the town came into play to offer that program. Mrs. Knox stated

that when she called the recreation department they stated that the program could not be established. She thought maybe the recreation department wasn't aware of what was being offered or what was being told to parents. Mr. Atchinson thanked her for her comment and asked Mrs Lyons if she heard Mrs. Knox state that the recreation department may not know about the program yet. Mrs. Buell stated she will work on it.

Kelly Coddling stated that she received a one page summary of the plan. She's wondering if they are planning to post the complete plan that was submitted to the state so they can read the specifics. Mrs. Lyons stated the plan is posted on the website, but she will check into that. Mrs. Lyons also stated that it is on the town's website. If it's not on the school website, it will be updated.

Mr. Otto stated he has some questions. He asked Mrs. Buell if prior academic performance of students is going to be considered in cohorts? He believes it would be a great opportunity to group students together of comparable academic performance rather than having normal groupings that they have during normal times. Mrs. Buell stated it makes sense. Mr. Otto said the complete plan is on the town's website and that it states the start time for school is 9:30 not 9:15. Mr. Otto stated he's worried about our neighboring school district that is concerned with not having enough substitute teachers due to teachers becoming ill or isolating themselves. Schools can quickly run out of substitute teachers. He stated that district is considering changing the requirements from a college degree to a high school diploma to broaden the population of substitute teachers. He stated the minimum wage will play into this as well. Mrs. Buell wanted to comment on substitutes. She stated the state has changed the requirements to allow substitutes to be high school graduates and it will broaden the pool. She is concerned about what happens when multiple people get sick and if she'll have enough staff to run the school. Under the current NDDH guidelines, people that are showing signs of symptoms of covid have to go home and quarantine for 10 days, it will be a hardship for families that have children that go home for 10 days and for staff that would need to go home as well. She stated there will be a significant impact and some of the challenges about maintaining a full reopening and having all kids in. We may run out of staff and students. Mr. Otto asked do we need to take action, rather than being concerned of the possibility that action will have to be taken in the future. Mrs. Buell stated that they are in the process of hiring teachers.

Mrs. Buell stated that a question came in from Chuck Hart about hiring teachers. Mrs. Buell stated that the substitute postings stay open on a regular basis and as people get into the sub pool, Mrs. Buell stated they have them come in and interview them. She stated that the principals stay on top of that. They are currently interviewing for a variety of different positions. Mrs. Buell stated that if anyone is interested in applying, they can go to the Brooklyn Public Schools website and go under job opportunities, you will be able to apply.

Chuck Hart asked if we're looking to hire new teachers, is that the case? Are all the current teachers returning for the school year? Mrs. Buell stated they are hiring because

they need to have additional space for students to spread out and there have also been some retirements and resignations that they are working on filling those vacancies.

Joanne Lambert had a question on equity. If a parent is choosing to partake in distance learning because they do not want to send their child to school, how will the students be evaluated and graded? She stated when we did the distance learning in the spring, it was a pass/fail. Is there going to be the same type of grading and assessment system for students that are actually in school and students that are distant learning? Mrs. Buell stated she asked permission from the Board Chair to respond to questions because normally during the public comment, it isn't a question and answer session. But given the situation, we will be allowed to respond. Mrs. Buell stated students will be graded the same as students in schools and as distance learning. Students will be given the same assignments and will be on the same grading system.

Amy Landis asked what might happen to band and sports? Mrs. Buell stated that band will not be happening. There will be music instruction, but no band instrumental instruction. Mrs. Buell stated with athletics, they are still working with CIAC around guidance they may have. She does not anticipate traveling out of town. If we are keeping students cohorted during the day, Mrs. Buell doesn't want to mix with other towns. She will provide more guidance once they make determinations about sports.

Amy Landis asked about parent drop-off. It sounds like there will be more families dropping off, will the process need to be changed in the morning due to the large number of parents dropping off students? Mrs. Buell stated that they are working on that at both schools. Additional guidance will be going out, they are still working on the best way to do it. They are discussing changes with bus drop-offs as well as parent drop-off. There will be additional drop-off locations to spread out students going in different doors depending on their grade level. Arrival and dismissal will be slow for a while because health and safety come first.

Amy Landis asked in regards to subs, will the process still be the same using the automated system to contact subs about jobs that are available? Mrs. Buell stated the same system will be used.

Michelle Parameter asked about building restrictions and will the PTO be able to use the building for meetings? Mrs. Buell stated she knows it's a school organization, but the PTO will not be able to use the building based on the fact that they are reducing the number of visitors into the building.

Michelle Parameter stated she knows Mrs. Buell has mentioned that there will be no singing and no playing wind instruments during music class. Has a decision been made on BMS band at this time? If one chooses to distance learn, will they still have the opportunity to be included in the band? Mrs. Buell already stated that band will not be happening.

Michelle Parameter asked how are the cohorts being chosen? Mrs. Buell stated the same as they have been chosen in the past. She stated that class lists are determined on student needs, friendships, parents are making requests that if their children are going to remain in the same cohort all day, they would like their child to be with some friends. Mrs. Buell stated teachers are taking that into consideration. The whole team meets to discuss the cohorts. Mrs. Buell wanted to talk about cohorts. She stated when we pivot to hybrid model, a class will be broken into 2 groups A and B. She stated that they have started looking at that grouping and stated that the goal would be for families that have children in multiple grades, will have the same A cohort regardless of the grade or the same B cohort regardless of the grade. This will be so parents will know that their children will be going to school on the same day. Mrs. Buell stated that our plan does say AABB with Friday as all students being at home for distance learning regionally. It may be changed to a wednesday.

Mrs. Buell stated there was another question in regards to sports. Can a student who distance learns participate in the school team? She stated that we don't know the answer to that as of yet. Mrs. Buell stated some districts are saying yes, some are saying no. She doesn't know if a parent keeps their child home to avoid the cohorts of kids, whether or not they would be sending their kids into a mixed cohort to be on an athletic team. Mrs. Buell stated they are waiting on more guidance from CIAC, and then decisions will be made.

Chuck Hart asked if a teacher needs to quarantine and their students also have to quarantine, are they going to be considered to be home sick or will they be distance learning? Mrs. Buell stated this why we need to be prepared to pivot directions to 1 to 1 devices if we have to quarantine, they can take it home and distance learn. It would be counted as a school day and students will be expected to log into their school day.

Mrs. Buell read a question from an email. Almost all medical offices require temperature checks, why isn't the school requiring temperature checks on students and staff at the start of the day when entering the building? Mrs. Buell stated under the guidance from the State Department of Education and their medical experts, they have indicated it's not a strong enough predictor. When students are waiting on the bus to get off or waiting in the heat or cold to get into the building, temperatures will fluctuate. It's not a strong enough indicator. Mrs. Buell stated we will have enough touchless thermometers in the building, not a requirement at this time. As staff enter the building, they are assuring us that they are healthy and not showing symptoms.

Mr. Otto asked in the event a case of the virus shows up in the school in a cohort and at least one teacher is exposed, the cohorting of the students will be an aid to contact tracing. Is the school taking responsibility for contact tracing outside the school? Mrs. Buell stated that they will be working with the local department of health and they will be responsible for the contact tracing. Mrs. Buell stated our nurses will be in direct communication with NDDH about any cases or suspected cases that pop-up in the school.

Mrs. Buell wanted to talk about the school's plan and the concerns as they relate to physical distance in our classrooms and the CDC guidelines. Earlier Mrs. Buell shared a 3rd grade classroom photo as well as a 6th grade classroom photo where each had 16 desks in the classroom. Some classrooms have 14, 16, or 17 students in them. The state guidelines vary, but say they are going to follow the CDC guidelines of 6 feet apart for social distancing. They also say we can have near capacity on the bus and that isn't 6 feet apart. In the classrooms they are 3 to 4 feet apart. Mrs. Buell stated that when she submitted the plan to the state, she stated that there are some trouble spots, but is planning for a healthy environment. She also shared with the state that we aren't able to maintain 6 feet apart on a bus or during fire drills. We want to evacuate students as quickly as possible if there is a fire. Physical distance has to be maintained between students and staff as much as possible. She stated she wants to keep everyone healthy to be able to teach and learn. We aren't required to have 6 feet between the desks, but we have to maximize the space spreading students out as much as possible. There are about 100 students that have opted out for either distance learning or homeschooling across all grade levels. If a parent decides to have their child return to school, we will require 72 hours notice to plan for that student's return. Mrs. Buell mentioned that if space becomes an issue, we may use the gymnasium as a classroom even though it's not ideal but does provide opportunities for increasing space and having the physical distance between students and staff. Other options include the cafeteria and the library as well.

Christy Sansone is wondering how often the students will have to move and how much they'll be asked to stay at their desks. What is the plan for movement? Mrs. Buell stated that students won't be at their desks all day. The instructional day has been shortened to a six hour day. There will be arrival and dismissal, lunch and recess, and mask breaks with the ability to go outside. Mrs. Buell stated that there will be time for movement and other opportunities for teachers to have a stretch break, keeping the physical distance. Some students may need to have an additional mask break.

Amy Chase is asking what efforts are being made about meeting the emotional needs during the pandemic? Will social workers meet individually with students? Will there be increased attention to mental health via curriculum, etc? Mrs. Buell stated when looking at social emotional learning and social emotional learning curriculum, the professional development will be for all teachers prior to the start of school. Mrs. Buell explained that we are looking at that. Children come from all different situations. By the time students return to school, it will be five months since they've been away from school in different settings. We know that students will be needing support and we will support the students in both schools.

Mrs. Jolley stated as far as kids wearing masks, Mrs. Buell mentioned that preschool doesn't have to wear masks, but everybody else does? Has there been any added guidance as to why that is the case? Also with the school not being air conditioned in the classrooms in past years she stated she's brought in personal fans, but if they can't have fans blowing around and students are stuck in masks, are our teachers going to be trained in oxygen deprivation or heat stroke? These are added health concerns when you're

putting a mask on your face, it adds heat. She stated Mrs. Buell mentioned asthmatic students will have some accommodations to remove masks as needed. Mrs. Jolley stated it can get very hot in the classrooms at the beginning of the school year and students are sitting wearing masks, what will be in place for the safety of that? Mrs. Buell stated that there has been ongoing conversation with the nurses. They've discussed how to make students understand how to not become overheated. Students sometimes get overheated at recess from running around. The nurses will be helping with guidance for what staff should be looking for to help monitor that for students. Mrs. Buell is aware there is no air conditioning, personal fans are not an option. If the temperature is high like it has been, we may have a shortened day due to the heat. We can get the air exchanged by opening up the building when the mornings are cooler. Mrs. Buell did get a quote for air conditioning last year and was something that couldn't be entertained. We will monitor the temperature day to day. There was discussion with the nurses about putting a water mister outside to help cool students down and regulate their own body temperature. Mrs. Buell stated the question why prek doesn't need to wear masks and older kids do need to wear masks was new guidance received today. The new addendum for the Adapt, Advance, Achieve plan is related to how much difficulty children will have to put masks on and more help from adults and the ability to manage having a mask on. Mrs. Buell stated a student with asthma can't just remove a mask as needed, they will need to leave the classroom to have an additional mask break. In order to follow the guidelines, when in the school and the classroom, masks stay on.

Monica St. Jean asked are you going to be asking for their decision on an in person versus distance learning or are we to be contacting someone to alert you of our decision? Mrs. Buell stated there was a survey sent out through school messenger and approximately 400 people have responded to the survey. Right now we are planning on students being in school. If families are choosing a different option, please let us know. There will be more communication going out and reminders will be sent out as well.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Jolley)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Board Clerk