

**BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020**

The Operations Committee met on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 via Webex online meeting platform

Present: Committee Chair Eric Carlson, Karen Vibert, and Chris Wilson

Also Present: Jill Browne, Timothy Callahan, Dr. Catherine Carbone, Mike Dietter, Jennifer Dube, Peter Fusco, Kristen Giantonio, Thomas O'Brien, and Allison Wadowski

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Carlson

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 24, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

On a motion by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Chair Carlson, it was unanimously voted to approve the June 24, 2020 meeting minutes.

3. UPDATE ON NEMS BUILDING PROJECTS

Timothy Callahan Presented:

- NEMS Ceiling Tiles: Contractor – Conn Acoustics
 - Project is progressing well
 - Custodians are following behind the contractors; as they finish a room, the custodians go into it and do their summer cleaning
- NEMS Gym Floor: Contractor – Kenvo Floors
 - This project is moving ahead
 - Abatement is complete
 - Install of the new floor has begun
- There are no change orders on either project and both projects are on schedule and under budget

4. FEASIBILITY DISCUSSION

- Chair Carlson indicated the need to reassess discussion of the feasibility study during the process of working on the reopening plans. He suggests tabling the discussion until the Bristol Public Schools is back to normal operations.

On a motion by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Vibert, it was unanimously voted to table the feasibility study until a later time.

5. COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

Jill Browne Presented:

What is the Community Eligibility Provision?

- The community eligibility provision (CEP) is a no-fee meal service option for schools and school districts with a high rate of students who receive government assistance
- Reduces food insecurity while eliminating the stigma of subsidized meals for students
- Eliminates the administrative burden of collecting applications while minimizing cashier duties
- Once accepted, schools may remain in the program for 4 years. The district may opt-out of this program at any time
- All students receive free breakfast and lunch. Research shows that students who participate in the subsidized National School Lunch & Breakfast Program demonstrate improved student achievement and improved attendance
- Household applications for free and reduced-price meals are eliminated

Who qualifies for the Community Eligibility Program?

- Students directly certified through certain federal programs (SNAP, Free Medicaid, TANF) are then calculated against school enrollment to determine the school's Identified Student Percentage (ISP)
- Schools with eligible ISP of 40% or greater qualify for CEP

Calculating the claim rate

- CEP multiplies the ISP by a factor of 1.6 to calculate the Free Claim Rate

Calculating Revenue

- Reimbursement for breakfast – Free, \$2.20; Paid, \$0.31
- Reimbursement for lunch – Free, \$3.43; Paid, \$0.34

Reviewed the school ISP percentages

- Enrollment at all of the schools is 7,521
- All schools show an increase of students that are participating in one of the three assistance programs, except Hubbell
- The percentage of ISP has also gone up at every school except Hubbell – even so, Hubbell still qualifies
- This year there are two additional schools that have exceeded the 40% threshold; Edgewood and Mountain View
- On its own, NEMS (39.29%) does not qualify for the CEP but our other middle school does as well as the K-8 schools causing an inequity
- Bristol Eastern (37.64%) also does not qualify on its own another inequity because the other high school does participate in the free breakfast and lunch
- There are feeder schools that go to Eastern that had been receiving free breakfast/lunch throughout and no longer are offered that provision causing a change to the families
- District wide the ISP is at 47.45% up from last year which was 44.4%
- Recommended consideration of district wide CEP

On a motion by Commissioner Vibert seconded by Commissioner Wilson, it was unanimously voted to send to the full board to approve to go district wide with the CEP.

- Chair Carlson stated during these uncertain times this is a good time to go ahead with this.

6. OPERATIONS AND REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Jill Browne, Dr. Catherine Carbone, and Peter Fusco presented:

Classroom Layouts

- Social distancing between student workstations of 6 feet, when feasible, will be maintained. Desks must face in the same direction, classrooms with tables will require students to sit only on one side of the table.
- Space between the teacher and students will be maximized to reduce the risk of increased droplets from teachers during instruction
- Teachers will wear face coverings or masks upon entering the school building. Teachers and staff providing instruction and services for students with hearing impairments will wear clear masks and face shields. For teachers who stay seated, a physical barrier may be utilized
- Floor markings will be installed to illustrate social/physical distancing

Cohorts

- A “cohort” is a group or team of students and educators with consistent members that stay together throughout the school day. BPS will cohort students in Pre-K – grade 9 where possible. The purpose of cohorting is to limit the number of students who are exposed to or may be diagnosed with COVID-19. Maintaining stable cohorts helps to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- A system for cohorting and recording attendance/participation has been established.
- Cohorts are not based upon any demographic or disability criteria. Teachers and support personnel will restrict mixing between teams.
- Teachers will change classrooms and rotate areas for teaching instruction instead of student groups.
- Schools will maximize other safety precautions where cohorts may have contact, such as more closely monitored use of facial coverings, hand washing and sanitizing between cohorts.
- Students that eat lunch or breakfast in their classroom will be asked to wipe down their desks before and after eating.
- Cohorts will be assigned a specific entry and exit that remains consistent day to day.
- BPS will consider a similar design for assignment of restrooms, classrooms, and outside space where it is possible to restrict primary use to a single cohort, or a consistent group of cohorts.

Foot Traffic, Hallways, and Shared Areas

- Where possible, foot traffic and stairwells will be one-way. Foot traffic will be designated throughout the school.
- BPS will designate entrance only and exit only doors, wherever feasible.
- BPS will install markings on floors to illustrate foot-traffic expectations
- Schools will stagger passing in the hall by changing student schedules

Outside Time and Playgrounds

- Exposure from playground and fitness equipment will be minimized by use of hand sanitizer, and disinfecting fitness equipment or other smaller outside equipment after each group of students’ use.

- Class cohorts will be assigned recess time in designated play areas.

School Functions

- Full school, grade level or class assemblies are postponed until a further date.
- Open house and back to school parent events will be held virtually.
- Professional conferences are postponed (both in person and virtual).
- Review the testing calendar and anticipate impact.
- Parent-teacher conferences will be held virtually.
- All field trips are postponed until a future date.

Responsibilities for Maintenance and Facilities

To ensure our schools and facilities are prepared for reopening and safe for students and staff, the following measures will be implemented:

- Hard surface cleaning protocols on high touch areas including student desks, door handles, and common areas will occur frequently throughout the day.
- Locker rooms will not be used during school hours.
- Bristol Boys and Girls Club before/after school program will follow cleaning protocols and each space will be cleaned after each session.
- OSHA standards to protect workers from potential exposure to COVID-19 will be reviewed by all employees.
- BPS human resource policies and practices were reviewed and are consistent with the public health recommendations and existing state and federal workplace law. For more information on employer responsibilities, visit the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission websites.

Reopening of Facilities Before the First Day of Classes

- In preparation of the reopening of schools, BPS has reviewed the DPH Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting schools during COVID-19 and is compliant with all guidance measures.
- BPS will be compliant with DPH return to service guidance for building water systems by August 2020.
 - Currently working with Rob Longo from the Bristol Water Department to assisting the BPS meeting the goals of having the water systems flushed and compliant.
- School floor plans were reviewed to consider spacing and size of student cohorts.
- All water and ventilation system inspections will be completed during the month of August 2020 prior to the reopening of schools.
- All schools will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to the reopening of schools.

Ventilation

- BPS has reviewed the DPH guidance for school systems for the operation and non-central ventilation systems during the COVID-19 pandemic and has followed all requirements.
- Regular inspection of building systems will ensure systems are operating appropriately. A schedule to inspect and perform preventative maintenance, remediation (including necessary filter replacements), and repairs before will be maintained.
- BPS will refresh stale indoor air by opening windows when appropriate.
- Increased ventilation rates and increased percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the ventilation systems will occur where possible. Air conditioning units will be adjusted to

maximize fresh air intake into the system, blower fans will be set at low speed and pointed away from room occupants.

No-Touch Usage

- Where possible, no-touch items such as doors, trash cans, and bathroom fixtures will be installed; where no-touch technologies are not available, doors will be propped open in accordance with the fire and safety codes, and trash lids will be removed.

Training Related to Facilities

- All staff and students will be trained in the following COVID related strategies:
 - Stop the spread
 - Face coverings
 - Social distancing
 - Recognizing COVID symptoms
 - Cleaning protocols
 - Hygiene practices
- Schools will ensure substitutes or others who may enter the school outside of the first day or typical calendar start receive proper training.
- Training materials or videos will be available to parents/guardians and posted on school websites.

Bathroom Protocols

- BPS will maximize use of disposable towels in lieu of hand dryers, due to ventilation considerations.
- BPS has reviewed school floor plans and considered ahead of time the best way to use, assign, and access the bathrooms.
- BPS has identified one separate bathroom near the isolation room that would be used in conjunction with any individual who began experiencing symptoms while at school.
- BPS will plan and communicate ways to maximize social distancing in multi-stall shared bathrooms. Bathrooms will be assigned to student cohorts, if possible.
- Increasing cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms will be consistent with CDC disinfecting and cleaning guidelines.
- A trash can and paper towel roll will be placed by the bathroom door to prevent students and staff from touching the handle with their hands.
- Touch-free single use paper towel dispensers, garbage bins, faucets, urinals, and toilets have been installed where possible.
- Storage of personal items within the bathroom is prohibited.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Are children allowed their water bottles? Will water fountains be made not to use?
 - Water fountains will not be used. Students may use their own personal water bottle.
- What about the students with sensory issues or autism; will wearing a mask be a problem for them?
 - If there are conditions that prevent the students from wearing a mask, they will be provided with face shields and/or individual desk shields.

- How will fire drills be handled?
 - The Bristol Public Schools will continue to have monthly fire drills to maintain compliance. All fire drills will be practiced within their cohorts.
- Is there any possibility or consideration regarding having air purifiers in rooms where students may have a medical condition or be high risk due to an underlying conditions or in all classrooms for that matter?
 - Peter Fusco will be assessing every classroom to ensure the appropriate ventilation has occurred. If the proper ventilation is not acquired, the exploration of an air purifier will be implemented.
- Will no-touch sanitizers be provided in all classrooms?
 - Yes.
- Will testing for staff be done on a regular basis?
 - There is currently no system wide testing plan. Consultation with Marco Palmeri, the Director at BBHD is to have staff and parents to do self-assessments daily
- If it is not safe to hold a public meeting, how is it safe for students to return to school?
 - Currently following the guidelines which limit public meetings to no more than 25 people.
- How are we going to support the staff who contract COVID-19?
 - Staff and families will be alerted immediately and it may result in a cohort of students and staff staying and learning at home throughout the duration of the illness.
- In an effort to make everyone aware, are we following the Governor's suggested direction to reopen schools?
 - We have created a reopening plan that will meet all the requirements that were identified in the Connecticut Adapt Achieve Advance Plan. At this time there has not been a recommendation to the State Department of Education, but we have a plan that will allow us to open under any condition. We will wait and see about the health of our community before making our recommendation to the state.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- None at this time

9. NEW BUSINESS

- None at this time

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before the committee. The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tara Landon