

HOOKSETT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING – August 17, 2021

Approved

HOOKSETT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING Tuesday, August 17, 2021 – 6:00 pm.

LOCATION OF MEETING: David R. Cawley Middle School Media Center

CALL TO ORDER

Greg Martakos, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Greg Martakos, Wayne Goertel, Jill Godbout, Jason Hyde, Lindsey Laliberte, Jim Sullivan and Amy Tremblay

Superintendent Rearick, Assistant Superintendent Polak and Principals.

PROOF OF POSTING – William Rearick

REOPENING PLAN UPDATE 2021 – 2022

This was prepared through information attained from DHHS webinars.

As we look to the 2021-2022 school year, we continue our commitment to a safe and meaningful opening of school that aligns with CDC, state and local health guidelines and recommendations. **The Underhill, Memorial and Cawley schools will open for full-time in-person learning for all students on September 2, 2021.** From our experience this year, we recognize that in-person learning is the best way to provide services to our students to meet their educational needs as well as for staff and student mental health needs. This document outlines our plan for full in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

This opening plan was developed in part to satisfy federal COVID related grant requirements, and also to communicate with the Hooksett School community the expectations for the coming school year. The plan will be reviewed by the School Board every six months to ensure we are continuing to deliver the best practices/services for our school community.

The plan was developed from input by the SAU staff, school administration, teachers, school board and parents. The plan was reviewed at the June 2021 Hooksett School Board meeting for comment and is posted on the district website with an optional survey for comments and suggestions. The survey is open to anyone in our community to take. Our website and school board meetings are open to the public as well.

When planning the best use of the ESSER II / III funds, the Hooksett School Board reviewed the proposal by the SAU in a public meeting in which the community was welcome to attend. Everyone in attendance was welcome to

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speak to the spending in public comment. The needs identified for ESSER funds include

facility needs such as HVAC upgrades, and additional cleaning /disinfecting supplies and personnel; personnel, materials and professional development to identify and fill learning gaps; contracted intervention services; and supports for student and staff mental health.

Our top priority is the safety of everyone in our school buildings. We will continue to collaborate with the NH Department of Health and Human Services in regard to contact tracing, isolation and quarantine as needed. We have found that over the year some of our new procedures have served us well, and we will keep some of them in place as they have assisted us in becoming more efficient, focused and safe.

Screenings

Families and staff will not be asked to report daily screenings; however, both students and staff will be asked to stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that students are well when they come to school. Staff and students who have symptoms should also contact their primary care physician for further instructions.

COVID-19 In School

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school Principal will notify the NH Department of Public Health. Those who have been in contact with the positive individual will be asked to “self-observe” and may continue to attend school as long as they remain asymptomatic. Those who are considered household contacts will be asked to “self-quarantine” as determined by NH DPHS.

Bus Transportation - CDC Order to wear masks

Students will continue to be assigned seating on the school buses. Buses will continue to be sanitized between all bus runs. Per CDC Order passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems. (For more information see Frequently Asked Questions). Masks will be provided for students who do not have their own.

Parents/Visitors/Volunteers

Visitors will be allowed into the Hooksett schools following protocols; all visitors must sign in upon entering and indicating that they have no signs or symptoms of COVID.

Lunches

Lunches will be served in the cafeteria as long as appropriate spacing can be maintained. We will continue to use the ordering system that will require students who would like to receive school lunch to order lunch in advance based on our provided menu, and that meal will be ready for them once in the cafeteria. This system will allow for better ordering and less food waste throughout the year. This system will still allow the use of the “My School Bucks” payment option.

Physical Activity

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Recess is scheduled for students in grades K-5. Students may interact with other assigned cohorts during recess. Our physical education classes will take place in the gymnasium or outside as appropriate. Band and Chorus will resume as normal and may require social distancing as well as instrument shields for additional mitigation. Extracurricular activities will be returning in full, and we will look to Tri-County Athletics for any guidance in sport programs. All other activities will follow school protocols.

Classrooms

Student workstations will be spaced 3' apart in all grade levels as appropriate. There may be a reduction of classroom furniture, if necessary, to accommodate spacing of student workstations. Individual plexiglass dividers will be available in all classrooms for use at the discretion of the teacher. Our intent is to return to a more traditional classroom environment.

Facility Precautions

Frequent cleaning will occur in hallways and bathrooms throughout the day. Nighttime cleaning will be completed using normal cleaning practices along with spray disinfectant. Our HVAC system filters will be replaced more frequently to help promote clean air. When possible, windows will be opened to help with the circulation of fresh air.

Masks

Any person entering our facilities has the option to wear a mask at any time due to any concerns they may have. The district will provide disposable masks at the entrance of each building. Students and teachers are encouraged to wear a mask if they are feeling sick while at school until they leave the building. If there is a significant rise in community transmission of COVID-19, masks may be recommended for all occupants of the school building.

Hand-washing and Respiratory Etiquette

The Hooksett schools will have signs reminding students and staff of healthy practices such as coughing/sneezing into your elbow, frequently sanitizing/washing hands for at least 20 seconds and staying home when sick. Students and staff will sanitize hands (wash hands or use hand sanitizer) upon arrival to school, when changing location and before and after eating.

Remote Option

Any family that requires a remote option should contact the school principal who will assist them in contacting Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) for enrollment in Grades K-8. If a student is asked to self-quarantine, a remote learning option will be provided during their absence.

The Hooksett School District will continue to utilize NH Division of Public Health Services for guidance on re-opening protocols, screening, travel, self-quarantine and self-isolation for staff and students, and any other related practices. Our procedures will continue to be updated based on the ever-evolving CDC and NH DPHS guidance; input from educators, students,

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families, and community partners; and learning from our own implementation and that of others.

We hope that this plan provides you with information that helps to outline the Hooksett School District reopening in September 2021. Additional information regarding the 2021-2022 school year will be available in August.

Please go to www.hooksett.sau15.net comment on the 2021-2022 reopening plan.

J. Godbout: What will schools look like in a reentry plan?

W. Rearick: It will look more like it did pre-covid however we will try and maintain a 3-foot distance. We will have student eating lunch in the cafeteria. We will no longer require lunch in the classroom. The students will move from class to class.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Chair Martakos asked the public to limit their comments to 3 minutes.

Craig Liatos, 6 Laurel Road: Thanked the Board for their work which is much appreciated. The welfare of the community is the goal without infringing on personal rights. Those who support masks are choosing to listen to what the CDC and medical community. Those that disagree with wearing masks certainly have the right to disagree with the medical community. I think both sides should look at the potential outcomes and how each would affect us as individuals and as a community. If we require mask and the medical community is incorrect in advising them, the one outcome would be a slight inconvenience for our children. Since the start of the pandemic, I have not once heard a child complain about wearing a mask. If we don't wear masks and the medical community is right in requiring them, it is much more likely that the Delta variant will spread throughout our schools and community since those that contract it will bring it home and effect our family members especially those that are older or immune compromised. Why not give the medical community the benefit of the doubt and require masks at least to start the school year? We know it works based on results from last year, and who better to listen to than medical professionals in a health crisis. For the sake of our kids, isn't better to be safe than sorry. Better to be pro-active than re-active. The spread is much worse than it was in the spring and the Delta variant is twice as contagious. Kids are making up a large portion of those infected and our schools will be full making up for those that were remote last year. Younger children do not have the option to receive the vaccine; shouldn't we take any reasonable precaution we can to limit this virus from spreading and prevent it from spreading within our schools. It scary to think that more than 400 children have died in this country and more than 1/100 who contract it suffer from long term effects such as multi-system inflammatory syndrome. If the virus hits a sizable portion of our school, it is possible that many would suffer severely or worse. If this happens while masks are not mandated, it will be extremely regrettable that a simple preventative method was not taken. Even if no kids endured significant effects, schools could easily become major contributor to the spread of the virus, which could affect any one of us including our most vulnerable citizens. Yesterday Governor Sununu said the fall surge is going to be pretty significant. He also said in regard to vaccines that they are

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leaving no stone unturned. Shouldn't we be doing the same thing to make sure our kids are as safe as possible from this devastating virus. Thank you and I look forward to a safe and productive school year.

John Pieroni, 26 Autumn Drive: Thank you for your work. Wearing masks isn't fun. I know this because I have been wearing masks for my job for 50 years. I started as a medic in the service and a respiratory therapist. For the last 40 years I have worked in the cardiac surgery OR. We wear masks. Why? To protect others. We did have a choice to wear them. We had to. It's what you do to keep people safe. We know it works. I don't understand why the district isn't going to follow the CDC guidance to wear masks. I know it's not fun. We communicate effectively with the masks. I think you should reconsider this. The Delta virus is rising. We are lucky in NH, but it is coming forward. Children don't have a choice to get vaccinated. I have 2 grandchildren in the school system, and I would like to keep them safe. Be pro-active. Start the school year with it. If it isn't a problem, take it back. It is better to start with it. I know how difficult it is to make a decision that goes against your own opinion but follow the science.

Derek Gelinas, 123 University Circle: Cases are already rising. We are at November levels in August. If we get kids in the school that are infected with Delta, then we will see a lot of kids infected. Three feet of space sounds great but I have children and I don't see that last more than 5 minutes. Asking little kids to stay 3 feet from each other at all times is an impossibility. I don't want kids to wear masks all the time, but I think it will be hard to back if we have to. As a compromise, let's start the year with masks and if we are wrong, we can take them off. None of the kids in the school, unless they are 12 or older will be vaccinated.

Dawn Derouseaux, 1465 Hooksett Rd Unit 274: I am a mother of a 4th grader at Memorial. I was happy to hear that our children would have a choice to wear masks this upcoming school year. It will save me time and money trying to find a private school for my daughter that had the same option. With just a little over 2 weeks before school starts, I am here to assure my daughter that this choice is still in effect. I have had multiple kids from my neighborhood in my house, ages 7-12 all summer long and listened to their experiences of what school was like. I don't know where the previous gentleman that spoke got his information but every single child in my neighborhood had the same story about not wearing a mask. Each child from the age 7-12 shared their story that they were scared they were going to get someone sick, or they would get sick because they took their mask down because they sneezed or couldn't breathe. The fact that they couldn't play with their friends was another part of the conversation. I agree 100% that if you are high risks, you should wear a mask. My child is a healthy child. I am not worried about my child getting COVID. The statistics out there say there have been zero deaths in the State of New Hampshire for children under the age of 19. There have been 4.2 million children with COVID with .008% that have passed away which is under 400 out of 4.2 million. The flu in 2018 took the lives of almost 600 kids. There were no mask mandates. This wasn't even a conversation. I am hoping that if the mask work, your child can wear one. My child has a hard time wearing a mask and should be allowed to breath freely in school.

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Amy Mercier, 35 Goffstown Road: I have a child in Underhill and Memorial. I appreciate your time and energy in considering what is best for our children. I understand there has been consideration and requests to implement a mask mandate again. I am sure you understand the immense roll teachers and staff play in promoting not only a child's academic success but their emotion and social well-being which will reach far into their emotional and success confidence and interpersonal skills as adults. I urge you to make decisions that consider the multitude of layers that their health and well-being and reflect the data and numbers that can be used to calculate risk rather than making decisions out of fear. Fear as you know comes from and perpetuates catastrophic thinking, worse case scenarios and an obsessive list of what if scenarios that ignore fact and probability equations. Although I understood the need to require masks when COVID was a novice threat, we had little knowledge or defenses to protect ourselves. I also urge you to balance physical health risks with emotional health and how certain obstructions may prohibit healthy development in young children. If the goal here is to stop any risk, though science shows that most kids experience mild to little symptoms. So, at what cost. It is important to consider the cost to our kids if they were to be deprived at this young age of natural social experiences through play, body language and facial expressions. How can they possibly learn to communicate or accurately read the situation, gain reassurance and build connections and trust with others if they see anxious eyes and expressionless covered faces. I am not asking parents who are still afraid of the virus to send their children to school without a mask. If that allows them to manage their discomfort and risk and allows their children to access in person learning I hope, we all withhold judgment and offer support and understanding of this decision. Likewise, I am asking those that support mask wearing for another school year, dispute the cost I highlight now, also do not impose their opinion onto us who prefer a return to normalcy for our children's learning environment. Now that we have a greater understanding on how to manage and treat the virus, and most importantly the option to be vaccinated for 12 and older, which are primarily the age groups that face a greater risk of illness. If your personal situation or choice requires you take precautions, I hope that you do what is best for your family. But the same way we have a choice to wear seat belt or not, or smoke or not, most of us have a choice to vaccinated or not now and therefore the obligation we all faced last year to collectively manage risk the only way we knew how has shifted to some level of personal choice. Although the media is not helping us to promote resiliency, and reduce anxiety and fear, I want us all to consider what we are doing to our children, what messages we are sending them if we are constantly told that while laughing and playing, while standing too close, hugging, showing off smiles and sharing items are all wrong or bad and they are going to harm themselves or someone else. We are harming our children...

(G. Martakos imposed the 3-minute limit.)

Josiah Smith, 36 N. Reading Street: I am a parent of two (2) children in the Hooksett School system and I respectfully ask that this be entered into the minutes tonight. I would like to address the letter released by the Superintendent's office on 7/28/21 stating that we are implementing a mask optional policy. It is my opinion that this is 100% the correct course of action. All current guidance issued by the State's leading epidemiologist Dr. Chan has been absolutely clear there is no scientific reason that would require mask mandates of any kind as we enter this school year. It is very concerning to me to see the recent uptick in mask

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mandate proponents on local social media groups. So, I would like to first propose a data driven argument for making masks optional. Hooksett has incredibly high vaccination rates as we discovered tonight; 75.56% and very low transmission rates for school age children (66 of which all have recovered). Additionally, while every death is tragic, the mortality rate for children of school age is astronomically low, only 354 cases in the US. From a purely scientific approach, masks mandated in the Hooksett schools just wouldn't make any sense. I completely understand the desire to keep our children safe. I share that desire however how are we defining safety. Is it safe to not be able to see a look of approval or encouragement on their teacher's face, no. Is it safe for our kids to constantly be engaging with peers without being able to express emotion or empathy on their faces? No, it is not. Is it safe for children with certain special needs or those with physical breathing impairments to constantly have obstructed airflow, no. Please don't miss interpret what I'm saying. I believe COVID-19 is a serious problem and I understand that wanting to protect our children from that perceived threat. My argument is that the data does not support creating countless other long-term issues for our children when the threat is practically non-existent. I would like to leave you with a slightly different point of view than is typically presented here. I am an 8-year army veteran with a combat tour to Afghanistan in 2013. During my second month of deployment my first child was born. I remember sitting in a tent in the middle of the desert saying to myself, now I have a real reason to be here. I will always make sure that this boy is truly free. I don't tell you this story for accolades of any kind, I only share it to highlight that the freedom to choose our own paths, make our own decisions are the core pillars of the fabric of our nation.

Please respect the rights of the people in our community to decide what is right for them. Our freedom still matters. Lastly, let me make it abundantly clear that if the current guidance of optional masks is reversed, parents of Hooksett will expect you to justify that decision at the next meeting. Please keep that in mind as you prepare to vote tonight. I thank you again for your time and your dedication to serving your community. Please insure with your votes that you preserve the rights of parents to make the right decisions for their families.

Jeannette Cote, 10 Viewpoint Dr: I also would like to thank this Board. I know it is hard to listen and try to represent everyone. I am a mom and an educator. I've worked with families and educators for more than half my life. My life revolves around my children and educations. It is what I do. I know there is a lot of division and unrest around masking children in schools. As a mom, and I know probably most moms have a gut instinct. And that gut instinct is what I use when it comes to situations that affect my children. My children do not wear masks because I believe in building a strong immune system through nutrition, supplements and exercise. This also includes exposure to viruses. They must be exposed so their bodies know how to fight them. Building a strong immune system does not include breathing through a contaminated face covering harboring bacteria, viruses, and fungi for 8 hours or more per day. As an educator I lived and worked through the Spring of 2020, and I worked and lived through the chaos that was 2021. I know it; I lived it; I understand it. I spent a lot of my time in classrooms and for those that say this did not affect kids; it absolutely did, and it broke my heart every day. Especially for littlest learners. They couldn't read facial expressions, they could not learn from their teacher, they were spaced all apart in their classrooms, at a time when they were supposed to learn to socialize, to learn to read, to

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identify speech patterns. I also have a child here tonight that can absolutely attest to the fact that masks affected him. Masks do not belong on healthy children. There are real adverse effects on physical, learning and social well being I witness them as I just told you. Some may argue that kids are resilient, they adapt to change. Of course, they are resilient. But why do we continue to ask them to be? Why do we continue to ask them to constantly adapt to change? Why do we teach them that they are a threat to the health of their peers and their families? Children are not at any more risk than the flu. They are not super spreaders and that is a fact. Parents know their children. Parents know what their children can handle. Parents know their children's emotional and physical limitations. Parents do not have to be infectious disease experts to know this. If we begin to undermine parental choice, what will be next. Where does the line get drawn? Parents have God given rights to make the best decisions for their children and no government entity can strip them of those rights. We have a constitution that protects this. In the State of New Hampshire, we operate under local control. We elect Board members. You all have the responsibility to make policy decisions.
(G. Martakos imposed the 3-minute limit)

Megan Hebert, 512 W. River Road: I am the mother of a 9-year son named Thomas. We have been in Hooksett since Kindergarten. I am here today, not to give facts online or any like that but just to share what my son has gone through with having to wear a mask in school. One of the things that might be called a slight inconvenience, but I don't see it that way would be shortness of breath when he is walking home from the bus. The bus stop drops him off at the bottom of the hill and he has to walk up the hill. You can see the bus stop from the window. I drive down to the bottom of the hill to pick up my son because the second he gets off the bus, he can't walk up the hill without stopping to catch his breath. He is 9. He should be able to walk up a hill without having to catch his breath. He was in class one day and almost fell asleep sitting at his table because he could not breath. Again, with the breathing, it was hard to breath because he was so hot. He also plays sports. He plays football. He plays Spring football. This spring he had a hard time playing his Spring sports because he was getting so out of breath. That has not happened before. This is not his first season of football; he has played since kindergarten. He has a hard time recognizing his classmates when we see them out in public which he might not be physically hurt by it but emotionally he is. You should be able to recognize you peers and your teachers. He also at 9, got acne on his face. He's 9. He has never had acne before. Summertime he hasn't has his mask on; he doesn't have acne anymore. His immune system is what is going to keep him safe and health. Putting that mask on him is taking away from that. That is what I am here to defend. To defend their experience while they are in school.

Kelly Garpy, 4 Grandview Dr: I want to thank the Superintendent especially who in his July letter recognized and stated that masks wearing had an emotional and a social impact on the school community which it very much did. I also will continue to do whatever it takes to not go back to mask mandates. I also want to thank the members who have been advocating for mask choice for our children and who have been focusing on the data and the science, which in the end the data clearly states that children are not greatly affected by COVID virus. Like people have stated tonight. 354 children have died, which I'm not going to say only have died because that is very sad but that is in 18 months and all of those children had underlying

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health conditions. There was not one healthy child. If you want to do the research, it is all there for you. However, there are many other preventable deaths in this country. My husband is a firefighter and unfortunately has to see way too many accidental drownings, drug overdoses and suicide. Suicide rates in children have skyrocketed since the pandemic and the blame is COVID protocols put in place since the pandemic. Masks especially have created a sense of loneliness and isolation for our children. Children are meant to thrive in an environment where they can touch, play, hug, and see their friends smiling faces and expressions. Without this, how do we expect our children to grow up to be well rounded adults. I spoke to so many parents this past year, and a lot of the feedback was the same. Their child had become sad, lonely and struggled with learning and worst of all their children were not able to make new friends because how can you make new friends if you are seating 6 feet apart in a room and can't see their faces and you can't interact with them. Sixty-five percent of our communication is made up of facial expression; meaning we need to see a person's whole face to fully understand what a person is trying to communicate. How can our children thrive at school if they are spending their critical years of education behind a mask? Unfortunately, if protocols change in the school district, my first fear is my child won't be able to attend Underhill. At this point wearing a mask is not an option for her. If I tried making her wear it, it would be borderline child abuse. She cries that she can't breathe and has sensory issues regardless of what mask I put on her. This leaves me very limited options which is extremely unfair. Public schools should lead the way giving on giving each individual child their specific needs. I personally know what my child needs health wise and I should be given the freedom to choose what is best for her. Every parent has that right living in this country. I as a parent would never try to force a health decision on another parent like some of the parents that are here. You don't know what child is having breathing issues, speech delay, sensory issues. The Department of Health this summer stated that schools were a lost risk environment. What is on the rise however is RSV and that has a direct effect on young children. Unfortunately, it is on the rise because of how low our kids' immune systems are.

(G. Martakos imposed the 3-minute limit)

John Lycars, 142 Hackett Hill Road: The Superintendent, staff and board members do a great job this handling the punches coming at them. It is tough sitting there making decisions for the whole community. I am going to change it up a little. I have a few other things I want to talk about besides what everyone here is talking about. I want to talk about Underhill Elementary School overcrowding. Hooksett is expanding; it is not shrinking. Enrollments are going up; they are not going down. One reason people are attracted to Hooksett Schools is because they are not overcrowded like some of surrounding communities. It is common knowledge that children learn better in smaller classes. Please review policy IJB and consider lowering the maximum class size for grades K-2 to 15 vs 20 for optimal learning. Students are provided a less than ideal learning experience with growing class sizes and aids are not the answer. Additional teachers are the answer and Hooksett taxpayers will embrace this. Hooksett School District's main mission is education not health care. The Hooksett School District should return to its main mission of providing education to the Hooksett children and relinquish health care back to the parents where it belongs. If a Hooksett child, teacher or staff member gets seriously sick or dies from the Corona Virus because of the

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position of the Hooksett School District, our concern should be that the Hooksett School District will be forced to legally defend itself for negligence no matter what guidance we are following as it is currently taking on the responsibility of keeping everyone safe from Corona Virus which is not your responsibility. Education is our responsibility on this Board. WE are inadvertently saying the Hooksett School District by implementing distancing, protocols, mandatory mask wearing, limited bathroom usage, quarantine etc. are keeping your child, teacher or staff member protected from viruses. We do not declare a child of quarantined or demand a test for the flu unless we witness rising temperatures in the children. But a child is quarantined for days simply because they test positive for Corona Virus. A parent and guardian choice for wearing masks, in your wellness policy which is JLCF. Currently the Hooksett School District has no policy to follow with guidance for COVID-19, the flu, or other virus because the Hooksett School Board has not updated the wellness policy which could include the following: Sending a letter out at the beginning of the school year to parents and guardians, teachers and administrators defining that school facilities are for learning,

(G. Martakos imposed the 3-minute limit)

Ann and Amber Reidick, 502 W. River Rd River Road: I want to say a few words in regard to ... I have made the choice to not have my daughter in school until I know exactly what is going to happen with the schools because I want my daughter to be in a consistent environment and not have an emotional up and down roller coaster with what is going on. I want her to feel that she can express herself through facial expressions as everyone else has stated and that she is not going to be the guinea pig and have to deal with the emotional consequences later in life with how we have been asking our kids to mask up. I appreciate the fact that it is still optional, and my daughter wanted to come with today because wants to learn about this process and also, she wanted to say something.

Breanna: I am asking that masks be optional.

Eric Mullen, 1465 Hooksett Rd: I'm not going to bring any data because you guys have seen plenty of the data, but I do want to leave you with this. I was very impressed with the School Board this past year providing the option of learning from home or being in class. And I think there is a lot of local, state and city communities that did not provide that for their residents. I hope you follow that same process when looking at the mask mandate option of giving the parent the option whether to wear a mask or not. Please keep that in mind when making your decision.

Deborah Walker, 48 Zachary Drive: I am the mother of a 12-year-old daughter who just started 7th grade at Cawley this year. Last year she started 6th grade, her first year in middle school and for her, first time experience going from an elementary school where you are sitting in one class all day to a middle school where she should have been able to experience what high schoolers and college students experience which is moving from class to class. Instead, she got the total opposite. I am very thankful that you had in person school still open and there was that option for people to remote learn with their children. I chose for my daughter to go to school, but she had to sit in one classroom all day long. They rotated where half of the classroom would go to the cafeteria to eat lunch and half would stay in the

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classroom to eat lunch. The masks had to stay on for most of the day with few mask breaks. They were 3 feet apart with no facial expression. They were shamed for taking their masks down for a second to scratch your face. She had problems with acne mostly where the mask is. My daughter is against wearing the mask and so am I. I think the mask should be optional and this school and this town and all schools anywhere it should be up to the parents to decide what is right for their child. I am her mother. I know what she's feeling. This past year has been very emotional and mental. It affected her. She is isolating more right now, and it is harmful. Harmful for our children. My daughter is having a hard time making friends and this is a time in her life when she is exerting herself and finding who she really is. Instead, she is locked in a room, basically, wearing a mask and you can't go out and hangout with your friends after school because of all this crap. I believe this is real and scary, but I think we are pushing this just a little too far. So, I agree with other parents here tonight that say masks should be optional and they should be.

W. Rearick, Superintendent: 2 points:

1. DHHS, if you go to our website, we have their most recent power point and they do give a chart that gives some guidance for indoor mask wearing and a tool kit which they gave us last year. When they talk about level of community transmission, it's not just for the county but it is for the community that you live in. While the county we are in substantial, if you look at the Town of Hooksett, it is not. So, when you look at the chart, again we can't implement the chart yet because we're not in school. For example, they say sporadic cases without evidence of substantial transmission. If you are in the substantial category, you should wear masks. If it's moderate transmission in a community, it's optional. They had charts like this last year and we relied more heavily on what we were seeing in school, on the ground rather than a chart. It's helpful because it gives you some guidance but is not a blueprint by any stretch.
2. We do listen and are current on the CDC guidance and the American Pediatric Association guidance. Since COVID started, we relied more heavily on DHHS because they have a better understanding of what is going on in New Hampshire. When you look at documents, they provide us they give us everything the CDC has for recommendations but right now they are saying we have the latitude to go in whatever direction we decide.

J. Hyde made a motion to accept the 2021-2022 reopening plan as presented in our packet. Seconded by L. Laliberte.

J. Hyde: There is a little bit of new language which says *COVID in school- if a student or staff tests positive for COVID -19 the principal will notify the State of NH Department of Public Health. Those who have been in contact with the positive individual will be asked to self-observe and may continue to attend school so long as they remain asymptomatic. Those you are considered household contacts will be asked to self-quarantine as determined by DHHS. Bus transportation per CDC order passengers and drivers must wear masks on school buses. Page 3 – If there is significant rise in community transmission due to COVID – 19 masks may be recommended for all occupants of the school building.*

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That gives us the option to move if we need to. The only question is if a student is asked to self-quarantine a remote learning option will be provided during their absence. I would like to know what that means.

This plan allows for everyone, regardless of what side of the debate you're on to make the decision that is right for them without us interjecting any of our own personal feelings and without feeling pressure from anyone in the community. This is the middle ground. This is the high road. This is where we should be until something changes. We've done that since I was elected to the Board in March. If something comes up, we will bring it up; have a discussion and make a decision. As of right now, there is all kinds of data out there and there is a chart right on the DHHS website. COVID in children is an extremely small risk; tiny; infinitesimal. Not only getting sick but hospitalization and there have been no deaths under the age of 19 in NH and only one death under the age of 29 and 30 hospitalizations under 19. I understand because I have 6 kids, actually I have 8 because we have lost 2 in our lives. So, I empathize with people who go through sickness with their kids, however there is risk in life. There is risk in getting in your car and driving your kids to school and that risk is actually higher than COVID. I can't imagine how difficult it is for a speech pathologist to work with a child when they can't see your face. I think the way to go is middle of the road and let parents make the decision that is best for their family.

A. Tremblay: Like Mr. Hyde I am also a parent and unlike Mr. Hyde, my children are all in Hooksett Schools. They were remote all of last year and they were very excited to be back in school this year. In terms of the current reopening plan, it does say on the last page that will continue to update the plan based on CDC and DHHS guidance. That was made very clear when the plan was first published and clearly the situation today is very different than on the day this plan was made. I am not a doctor and no one else on this Board holds a medical degree and I think it's important that we look to the recommendations of the people that actually are doctors. I would make a motion when it's time to under the heading of masks make them mandatory when indoors for all students and staff and visitors. The goal for everyone, including everyone in the district, every parent and every expert, whether you trust their guidance is to keep students in school. Last year, with the measures that the district put in place, Hooksett was able to accomplish that beautifully. Much better than other communities and they are to be commended. I would rather, as someone pointed out, the Governor himself stated that the surge is likely to be significant this fall. I would rather get in front of the problem now and pull back if we see that things are better than expected then to have to scramble to change plans halfway through.

L. Laliberte: On page 6 it initially said recommended and should say **required**. My thoughts and speaking with others, I like the way it stands now. As a community and parents, we need to look at the beginning of it and it talks about screening children; I don't mean check all students. I mean if kids are sick, they should stay home. That is for colds and flu and collectively be better at that. We need to be in school and let kids have the full experience. As Mr. Lyscars said we also need to review our policy so we can respond on a dime.

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J. Godbout: Thanked the public for being here and I would like this input at all meetings. We need this input from the public to understand their position. Any email with an address will be added to the public record. I read every email.

I want to be as transparent in these conversations as possible. My goal is to get as many students in the school safely as possible.

W. Goertel: I also thank the public for their input. The mission of the Hooksett District is to develop a community of learners that are intellectually curious, resourceful, and respectful of themselves and others. Academic achievement through constantly raising standards is the district's highest priority. Mr. Lyscars talked about safety, and we have to be safe to set the stage for academic achievement. Interesting, we haven't talked about the role of media. Scott Adams, author quotes "People are watching two different movies on one screen". I think tonight we have 3 different movies. As we review this policy, we have opinions based on personal assessment, data, and community. There are people not feeling OK, but we are going to implement some safety measures. AS a tech guy I am frustrated by a lot of the media. In 2021 there a sophisticated algorithms serving you headlines that conflict so fear and low-quality information runs ramped; aware of that I do my own research. I bring that to the Board. Safety concerns is not one size fits all. I believe in parents knowing what is best for the kids. We are not locked in stone. I do my own homework and I don't see a compelling reason to do otherwise.

J. Sullivan: I have been here for 20 years, and I have always been consistent with following the guidance of the Professionals and staff. If there is a significant rise/what is that threshold.

W. Rearick: CDC does have guidance. Right now, it does fluctuate.

G. Martakos: This has not been easy on any of us. I am also in favor of the optional masks. I believe it is the parents' choice. We have followed the science and we have done a good job over the past year. It is not easy. We are not doctors and we are doing the best with what we know.

W. Rearick: Regardless of what the Board votes, it is a roller coaster and things can change. What the Board chooses to do tonight could change quickly. That is the nature of what we are dealing with. We made a decision last year to open and we took a chance, and we knew we may have to change. Everyone should understand that. Based on the nature of the virus. We try and interpret the data to the best we can and read the recommendations of the CDC. Last year we didn't have the vaccine. Now we do. Hooksett right now is in a good position. If we were in Florida, Texas or Arkansas it might be a lot different. It is based on the information currently in front of us.

J. Hyde: Page 3, if a student is asked to self-quarantine, remote will be available. What does that look like?

W. Rearick: It will be room and zoom. If that number spirals, we may have to look at remote learning for large numbers. We will send letters home to parents as we did last year. If your

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children are sick, I understand parents work but times have changed. Please keep your children home. I would like to entertain training for nurses and parents so the nurses can be trained with the parents' permission to do the test in school. If it is negative the child can go back to class and if positive go home.

Vote

J. Hyde **Yes**

A. Tremblay **No**

L. Laliberte **Yes**

J. Godbout **Yes**

W. Goertel **Yes**

J. Sullivan **Yes**

G. Martakos **Yes**

6:1 motion carried

Screening by School Nurses for children who are sick at school.

The Board entered into a discussion regarding the approval for nurses to administer COVID-19 testing for children with symptoms an option with the approval of parents or guardians.

J. Hyde motioned to pursue the optional COVID 19 testing by School Nurse. Seconded by W. Goertel.

W. Goertel motioned to amend to authorize with parent or guardian approval. Seconded by J. Hyde.

Roll call vote on amendment unanimously in favor

Roll Call vote on amended motion

Vote

J. Hyde **Yes**

A. Tremblay **Yes**

L. Laliberte **Yes**

J. Godbout **No**

W. Goertel **Yes**

J. Sullivan **Yes**

G. Martakos **Yes**

6:1 motion carried

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of May 18, 2021, Sealed, Non-public Meeting Minutes

J. Sullivan motioned to approve the non-public minutes of May 18, 2021. Seconded by J. Godbout.

Vote unanimously in favor.

Approval of June 2, 2021, Board Minutes

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J. Hyde motioned to approve the non-public minutes of June 2, 2021. Seconded by L. Laliberte.

Vote unanimously in favor

Approval of July 20, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes*

J. Hyde motioned to approve the minutes of July 20, 2021. Seconded by W. Goertel.

Vote unanimously in favor

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Instructional Time Schedule

W. Rearick provided a schedule of the instruction time for the 3 schools for 2021

J. Sullivan motioned to approve the Instructional Time Schedule for the 3 schools as presented. Seconded by L. Laliberte.

Vote unanimously in favor.

Handbook Changes

W. Rearick stated that the Handbook changes have been submitted by the principals for your consideration.

Changes are highlighted in red.

J. Hyde asked (#16) added National and or State standards?

B. Loi stated as looking at Art, Music and Physical Education for all students we have our own standards, but we also look at National and State Standards which are a part of the NH standards.

L. Laliberte: Under page 31 where we are adding COVID-19. I don't know if we need to add anything, but my examples would be including respiratory infections, influenza AB and COVID-19. Those are just as wildly spread.

When I looked at page 31 under medication, we don't have the new guidance for administering over-the-counter drugs by the nurse.

W. Rearick stated that the policy was only approved for the first reading. Once the policy is approved it will be added.

W. Goertel stated correct e.g., to i.e., page 32.

Motion not made – vote unanimously in favor of Handbook changes

Snow Day/Remote Learning – Bill Rearick

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W. Rearick stated that normally if it snows 5 days in the school year it is allowed as a snow day. On the 6th day we can go to distance learning. I am looking for Board approval to allow 5 snow days in the school year.

Amy Tremblay asked how the 6th day would impact teachers?

W. Rearick stated that teachers would just go online and teach remotely as they did when they were out for COVID last year.

Amy Tremblay asked if there were any contractual considerations.

G. Martakos: I don't think so because we would only be extended the school year otherwise.

J. Hyde: How many snow days are we averaging?

W. Rearick: 4 the last two years. We haven't gone over 5 in the last 2 years.

J. Godbout: What if we get a bad storm and the internet is out?

W. Rearick: If we can't teach online, we would have to make that up.

L. Laliberte asked if a certain number of students need to be online for it to count.

W. Rearick: Don't ask, don't tell. If it raised as an issue, we would track that. It is honor system anyway.

Amy Tremblay motioned to accept the proposed 5 snow days with remote learning on the 6th day. Seconded by L, Laliberte
Vote unanimously in favor

Washington DC Field Trip – Matt Benson

M. Benson: Congratulation tot 9 Cawley students in the Little League World Series. We filled out the Hooksett approval form for the Washington DC trip. I spoke to Mr. Bennett (Bennett Travel) last Friday. Cancellation: Washington DC is open. Arlington Cemetery, the Museums are open. They are handling it differently with everyone vaccinated and they are not offering the full cancellation fees. He would have to set up a cancellation penalty schedule where if you cancel at this time, you own this much money. With a cancellation schedule, it protects Mr. Bennett and as the group gets smaller, the cost of the trip goes up. That is where we are, and full refunds would not be a part of it. We have a hotel deposit now for the students and we need a decision by the Board by September 15th, 2021. Obviously, the issue is COVID again. We have had kids that have become ill on the trip before, had mono, had strep throat and we had parents come down and get their students at the students' costs. If we are put in a quarantine situation the parents or the school would have to pay for the additional cost and transportation to get that student home. If we are looking under our current guidelines, we would have masks on the bus because that is CDC required. I assume

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there are places down there that also require masks. The issue is close contact in a hotel room of 4. That is like close contact with families at home that are required with quarantine. The trip is scheduled for 4 days before April vacation. I have no rough estimate for how many students will be going next year. We have 150 students in the class. We usually have between 108 and 120 students with 3 buses running. Once or twice, we have had 4 buses. We take 2 registered school nurses who volunteer their time.

L. Laliberte asked if Mr. Bennett could get the cancellation schedule to Mr. Benson prior to September 15th.

Mr. Benson can contact him by email and fax tonight.

L. Laliberte: I would like to see the cost impact and get parents' input.

W. Rearick: As Matt said, if a child has strep; the parent would have to come get their child. What we are concerned with if someone tests positive, it isn't just A child it's the others in that hotel room which may mean we have to take one of our chaperones offline possibly because someone needs to watch those kids. You can't just leave them in a room; someone must be nearby until someone arrives.

W. Rearick: We can put the refund schedule in, we can bold it but until something happens, for example the trip gets canceled.

J. Godbout: What about a survey to 8th grade parents before we get all the numbers from Mr. Bennett and mention it may cost more this year and the policy and provide the bullets of concern and see when it comes back if they are willing to it. We and Bennett could be doing all this work and we may only have 50 kids that are willing to do it this year and it may not be worth it staff wise, teacher wise and all that. It is usual staff that supervises this trip. I would like to see more surveying of the staff.

G. Martakos stated it is a good point to get the parents' input.

J. Sullivan: We need to know the cancellation policy and possibly get a survey done.

M. Benson: I can send this out to the staff and there is no need to send this out if we don't have enough staff members.

G. Martakos: We would need a special meeting since the next meeting is after the deadline.

W. Rearick: For a survey you would need to decide what information you want on those forms and parent would need time to digest it.
You would have to meet by the end of August.

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M. Benson: If we decide to go forward with approval from the Board, we will then schedule a parent meeting sometime in September and that is when parent make their first deposit that night.

J. Sullivan motioned to table the decision on the DC trip until Thursday, August 26th and ask the Chair to schedule a special meeting for August 26th.

Seconded by J. Hyde.

Vote unanimously in favor

M. Benson stated that last time the cost was \$806 based on the number of students.

M. Benson stated that he booked a date for Camp Mi Ti Na

POLICIES

Second Reading

BEA – Regular Board Meetings

W. Rearick: No one responded to School Board ethics and there were no changes from the first reading.

JLCD-R – Medication Administration Form

W. Rearick we added the word “rescue” before the word “inhaler”.

J. Sullivan motioned to approve the second reading of BEA and JLCD-R. Seconded by A. Tremblay.

Vote unanimously in favor

FINANCIAL

Manifest

J. Hyde motioned to approve the manifest dated June 15 to June 25th, 2021, in the amount of \$1,618,281.39. Seconded by J. Sullivan.

Roll Call Vote unanimously in favor

J. Hyde motioned to approve the manifest dated June 28 to July 9th, 2021, in the amount of \$1,130,427.92. Seconded by W. Goertel.

Roll Call Vote unanimously in favor

J. Hyde motioned to approve the manifest dated July 12 to July 23rd, 2021, in the amount of \$1,611,462.45. Seconded by L. Laliberte.

Roll Call Vote unanimously in favor

J. Hyde motioned to approve the manifest dated July 26th to August 13th, 2021, in the amount of \$262,367.50. Seconded by L. Laliberte.

Roll Call Vote unanimously in favor

PERSONNEL

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Superintendent's Nominations

J. Sullivan motioned to approve the Superintendent's nominations for Derek Clark as the Health Teacher, Tania Spencer, Special Education Teacher and Kara Prinderville for half time Kindergarten. Seconded by W. Goertel

Vote unanimously in favor

W. Rearick: Brad is in the process of interviewing a candidate for Guidance. Still searching for Reading and School Psychologist.

Welcome Cheryl Violet as the new ESL Coordinator who comes to Hooksett from Auburn.

J. Godbout asked how the district was going to service reading at the start of school without a Reading Specialist and a School Psychologist who does a lot of testing. Is there someone that we contract hourly?

W. Rearick: We will contract someone to help, and we will have to make up the time for those students that need the reading once we get someone on board because those are hours we must provide.

Co-curricular Nominations

J. Hyde motioned to accept Garrett Middleton as Athletic Director with a compensation of \$3,355.00. Seconded by A. Tremblay.

Vote unanimously in favor.

J. Hyde motioned to accept Lori Adams as Student Council Advisor 50% with a compensation of \$1,184.50. Seconded by A. Tremblay.

Vote unanimously in favor

J. Hyde motioned to accept Victoria Gibson as Student Council Advisor 50% with a compensation of \$1,184.50. Seconded by A. Tremblay.

Vote unanimously in favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

John Lyscars, 142 Hackett Hill Rd: To finish my earlier statements. I have heard the argument against choice for masks that is some children wear masks and some do not it will be a burden on the teacher. A teacher is there to educate children; not comply with every parent's demand that they wear a mask, eat their broccoli at lunch time or don't bite their nails. That is the job of the parent, and we must as a society stop thinking that the teacher and school district are babysitters. The Superintendent told us all tonight that the reopening plan can change at any time. This will continue to put this Board in the middle until you create policy. Policy JLCF needs an update as we said earlier with the School Board's guidance for identifying children who are becoming sick and how we get them as quickly as possible to the healthcare providers, their parents or guardian. I am proud of J. Godbout's vote on a policy amendment tonight for testing children in school as it should have been a separate agenda item for transparency and announced to the public on the agenda. This is a big item that people would want to know about.

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J. Sullivan suggested having meeting at other schools such as Underhill and Memorial

Subcommittee Reports

W. Goertel stated that he volunteered to be the Rep. on the Pinkerton Academy Committee. Because we are a sending district and they are planning renovations of 3 million dollars, we get to be involved and we are involved in the conceptual plans. They have portables in bad condition. They have a plan to remove the portables and add on to existing buildings. We don't have a price tag and our Hooksett Trustee was also there.

J. Godbout: There was no budget meeting in August because they didn't have a quorum, so the next meeting is scheduled for September 2nd. This will be the first meeting with the new Board.

W. Goertel: As the New Hampshire SBA delegate rep. the meeting has been rescheduled to October 14th. As an agenda item next meeting we should review and determine support for those resolution

ADJOURNMENT

*J. Godbout motioned to adjourn. Seconded by W. Goertel.
Vote unanimously in favor*

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Hooksett School Board is Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 6:00 pm. at the David R. Cawley Middle School Media Center.