

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN □ PAXTON □ PRINCETON □ RUTLAND □ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1347

Monday, July 13, 2020  
7:00 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED REMOTELY, VIA GOOGLE MEET

*Wachusett Regional School District Committee*

Megan Weeks, Chair	Matthew Lavoie
Melissa Ayala	Linda Long-Bellil
Nicole Amos	Karl Ottmar
Krista Bennett	Deidre Shapiro
Scott Brown	Asima Silva
Maleah Gustafson	Christina Smith
Sherrie Haber	Kelly Williamson
Jeffrey Haynes	Linda Woodland
Laura Kirshenbaum	Adam Young

*Committee Members Absent:*

Michael Dennis, Vice-chair	Kenneth Mills
Robert Imber	Benjamin Mitchel

*Administration Present:*

Darryll McCall, Superintendent of Schools  
Robert Berlo, Deputy Superintendent  
Daniel Deedy, Director of Business and Finance  
Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources  
Brendan Keenan, Director of Social Emotional Learning  
Christine Smith, Administrator of Special Education  
Barry Sclar, Supervisor of Information Technology  
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

*Student Representatives Present:*

Kenichi Gomi	Kathryn Mangus
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Chair Weeks called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Chair Weeks announced the meeting was streaming live on Holden TV, Channel 194, and is being conducted remotely, via Google Meet.

I. Public Hearing

Chair Weeks read aloud public comments submitted electronically.

Lauren Salomon-Garrett, Holden resident (attachment 1)

Mary E. Lampron-Shepherd, WREA President and Holden resident (attachment 2)

Corey Burnham-Howard, Princeton resident (attachment 3)

Benjamin and Sarah Smith, Holden residents (attachment 4)

II. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Weeks welcomed Member Ayala who has rejoined the Committee, by appointment of the town of Sterling.

Chair Weeks took the opportunity to address the Committee, including her expectations for how meetings and discussions at the regular School Committee meetings will be conducted.

Chair Weeks reported that due to lack of quorum, the Business/Finance meeting scheduled for this date was not held; therefore, full Committee action on the proposed amendments to the contracts with the District's transportation providers will be deferred.

III. Student Representatives (K. Gomi, K. Mangus)

Student Representative Mangus reported that the student body is awaiting direction from school and District administration about the plans for schools reopening in the fall.

IV. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

1. Reopening Task Force and Next Steps

Superintendent McCall invited Director Keenan to project and speak to a PowerPoint presentation prepared to outline the work of the Wachusett Reopening Health & Safety Advisory Task Force (attachment 5). Director Keenan explained that the Task Force's Initial Recommendations Report will be available on the District website. At the conclusion of Director Keenan's presentation, Superintendent McCall extended his thanks, and he then had the DESE Initial Fall Reopening Guidance projected, for review and discussions (attachment 6). Superintendent McCall reported a survey will be going out to parents within the next several days, in order to obtain parent/student input on the reopening of schools. Superintendent McCall spoke about a \$25M grant opportunity with an application deadline in the next several days.

Chair Weeks opened the floor to member questions/comments about the presentations made.

Member Kirshenbaum requested additional details on plans moving forward, particularly 1:1 technology, what teachers utilize for online platforms (i.e. Google Classroom), a curriculum plan on “low COVID” days to maximize teaching on days when absenteeism is low, and also details about a school calendar in the event edits need to be made.

Member Lavoie would like to see more access to technology, along with how to equip students and teachers with training to use technology. Services for the neediest children is very important. He also mentioned consideration about outdoor classes, weather permitting.

Member Long-Bellil agreed with the importance of face-to-face teaching and learning. She mentioned teacher professional development during the summer to prepare staff for schools reopening. She lastly mentioned how the schools/District will address the situation when a positive case is diagnosed in a building.

Member Ottmar spoke about a vaccine and how many will opt to receive or not receive the vaccine. Knowing these numbers will be beneficial when planning for the reopening of schools, because some will not send children back to school until a vaccine is available.

Member Shapiro pointed out the importance of differentiating the needs of elementary, middle school, and high school students when planning for remote learning.

Member Silva reiterated that there will be families who would want the option of complete remote teaching and learning, and she hopes this option will be considered for these families.

Member Smith is concerned about students returning to school buildings. She listed many examples of potential problems with the reopening of schools.

Member Williamson would appreciate a time-on-learning analysis for when schools are reopened and students are back in the buildings. She questioned how much time will be focused on teaching and learning, and how much time will be taken up with safety and hygiene.

Member Woodland expressed her concerns about in-person reopening. She also mentioned professional development for teachers in advance of schools reopening. Lastly, she mentioned the survey conducted and the results of that survey.

Member Young, a member of the Reopening Task Force, spoke about the general recommendations made by the members of the Task Force. He also stressed the importance of consistency of remote learning, across schools and towns, and he spoke briefly about some experiences of remote learning during the spring of 2020.

Member Amos spoke about the school system where she works and how it is addressing technology and remote learning.

Member Ayala is concerned that there is a lack of data as it applies to children exposed to the virus, who are often asymptomatic.

Member Bennett spoke about limiting exposure if students stay in classrooms and teachers move from classroom to classroom.

Member Brown thanked District administration and the Task Force for the report and the work of the Task Force. During recent meetings/negotiations with the bargaining units, members of those unions have expressed concern about reopening of schools. He spoke about remote learning in the springtime, which was not completely successful for all students, including special needs students. He did note that some schools and parents/students did have a positive experience with remote learning in the spring, but others did not have a positive experience.

Member Gustafson is curious about District administration's timeline for sharing information and for making decisions about the coming school year. She noted DESE's recommendation about districts not sharing plans until the beginning of August, and her concern about that late timeline. Member Gustafson would like to know the results of surveys conducted in the spring, polling teachers and parents/students about their experiences with remote teaching and learning in the spring. She also mentioned the need for basic professional development i.e. GoogleClassroom. Superintendent McCall addressed Member Gustafson's comments and concerns.

Member Haber understands districts are awaiting further guidance from DESE. She agrees with other comments made about teacher training/professional development.

Member Haynes expressed thanks to the Task Force. He expressed THE importance of planning for remote learning. He also mentioned frontloading professional development days to the start of the school year, rather than having them scattered throughout the year. Member Haynes asked if a phased-in approach to school reopening could be considered. Lastly, he asked if alternating school days is considered, could students in the same family attend school on the same days.

Member Kirshenbaum had additional comments/questions, including families who have students attending a Wachusett school but their parent(s) work/teach in another district. Superintendent McCall spoke to this question, which is very challenging to address. She also spoke about prioritizing students in groups, as their needs differ.



Student Representative Mangus addressed the Committee, stating that students are anxious to get back into school, while understanding the health and safety of students and staff. If remote learning is continued, she encouraged remote learning be improved from what was offered in the springtime. Superintendent McCall spoke to Student Representative Mangus' comments.

Member Smith had an additional comment that district leaders and school committees will make local decisions, while DESE provides guidance for the reopening of schools.

2. Update on Tiered Reductions

Member Lavoie had a comment regarding the reductions, and he mentioned reach out from members of the communities to fill potential voids in middle school athletics, and this could be an opportunity to address these programs.

Member Ottmar spoke about reductions, the various tiers, the fact that Tier 4 and Tier 5 have been eliminated from the reduction document. Superintendent McCall explained that the original document, with the five Tiers, was a worst case scenario. The updated reduction document still reduces 14 teachers (40 of the 54 pink slipped teachers may be recalled), which is significant. Director Deedy also spoke about the closing and adjustments to FY20.

Member Gustafson asked that the Committee be informed of when teachers/staff will be notified of recall, and she would like the Committee to be informed of what positions will be restored. She also spoke about middle school athletics, and the strong possibility that these programs will not be allowed to run, per the state in the interest of safety. She also spoke about other reductions that were included in Tiers 1 and Tiers 2.

At Member Ottmar's inquiry, Superintendent McCall explained the Human Resources Department will be sending out reinstatement letters to some of the teachers who were pink slipped.

Member Kirshenbaum requested an aggressive final draft of a staffing plan, which would be shared with the District's legislators to advocate locally, state-wide, and federally for much needed funds to become whole again.

Member Gustafson expressed her thanks to Administrator of Special Education Smith for information that was shared with parents.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

1. Motion: To support the Resolution in Support of Education Funding for COVID-19.

(L. Kirshenbaum)  
(A. Young)

Chair Weeks read aloud the resolution. At Member Lavoie's inquiry, Superintendent McCall confirmed that District administration is keeping accurate track of COVID-related expenses.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously.

2. Motion: To support the Anti-Racism Resolution.

(L. Kirshenbaum)  
(J. Haynes)

Chair Weeks read aloud the resolution.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil

Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*  
None

The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Motion: To approve the School Committee 2020-2021 meeting calendar.  
(S. Haber)  
(A. Young)

Chair Weeks spoke about the additional meetings on the calendar, in light of the current circumstances (attachment 7). Member Lavoie asked if consideration will be given to beginning in-person meetings when it will be considered safe. It was confirmed that the proposed dates had been checked so as not to conflict with religious observances. Member Gustafson asked that a hybrid model of in-person School Committee meetings be considered for members who might not be able to participate in-person.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*  
None

The motion was unanimously approved.

4. To accept the settlement agreement between AA Transportation for Home to School Transportation, Special Education In-District and Special Education Out-of-District and the Wachusett Regional School District whereby invoices for the total closure days of 62 days are pro-rated with a payment to the vendor of 75% of total invoice, with the District realizing a savings of 25%.

Passed over.

5. To accept the settlement agreement between Van Pool Transportation for Special Education Out-of-District Transportation and the Wachusett Regional School District whereby invoices for the total closure days of 62 days are pro-rated with a payment to the vendor of 75% of total invoice, with the District realizing a savings of 25%.

Passed over.

6. Motion: To authorize a budget transfer of \$312,171 from the Instructional Support Appropriation to the Benefits and Insurance Appropriation.

(A. Young)

(L. Long-Bellil)

Director Deedy explained the motion and the funds available for transfer.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Motion: To authorize a budget transfer of \$42,476 from the Operations and Maintenance Appropriation to the Special Education Tuitions Appropriation.  
(M. Lavoie)  
(A. Young)

Director Deedy spoke to the motion.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Motion: To authorize the listed FY21 Revolving Funds in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 44, Sect. 53E ½, to be expensed under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools (or designee), to be credited with receipts from acknowledged revenue sources, to be expended for their respective stated purposes, and not to exceed the authorized amounts.  
(S. Brown)  
(L. Long-Bellil)

Director Deedy explained that this motion was brought before the Business/Finance Subcommittee on June 17, 2020.

Name of Fund	Legal Citation	Authorized Amount
Adult Education	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71E	\$8,000
Applied Arts	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71C	\$60,000
Athletics	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 47	\$440,000
Building Use	M.G.L. Ch. 40, Sect 3, Ch. 71, 71E	\$72,000
Cafeteria	(548 of Acts of 1948) [3]	\$1,680,000
Circuit Breaker	M.G.L. Ch. 71B, C.M.R. 603 Sect.10.07	\$3,100,000
Drivers Education	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71C	\$144,000
ECC Tuition	M.G.L. Chapter 71: Sect. 26A.	\$136,000
Extended Day	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71F	\$16,000
Gifts & Grants	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 47	\$172,000
Insurance Reimbursement	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 47	\$65,600
Kindergarten	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71F	\$0
Locker Fees	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 47	\$20,000
Lost Books Damaged Property	M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 531/2	\$12,000
Parking Fees	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 47	\$65,600
Performing Arts	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71C	\$24,000
Program Initiatives	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71C	\$117,600
School Choice	M.G.L. Ch. 76 Sect. 12B(O)	\$750,000
Summer School	M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 71C	\$12,000

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

9. Motion: To authorize the listed FY21 Student Activity Funds in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 71 Sect. 47, for funds belonging to the students and not to the District or school control, to be credited with receipts from acknowledged revenue sources, to be expended for their respective stated purposes, and not to exceed the authorized amounts.

(K. Ottmar)

(S. Haber)

Name of Fund	Legal Citation	Authorized Amount
Wachusett Regional High School	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$520,000
Dawson Elementary	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$12,000
Mountview Middle School	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$224,000
Mayo Elementary	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$24,000
Davis Hill Elementary	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$100,000
Paxton Center School	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$100,000
Thomas Prince School	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$100,000
Naquag Elementary	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$24,000
Central Tree Middle School	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$80,000
Glenwood Elementary	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$60,000
Chocksett Middle School	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$60,000
Houghton Elementary	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$12,000
Early Childhood Center	M.G.L. Ch. 71, Section 47	\$12,000

Director Deedy spoke briefly to the motion, explaining the Business/Finance Subcommittee supported this motion at the meeting of June 17, 2020. Member Gustafson asked for an additional explanation from Director Deedy about the various levels in each account.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

10. Motion: To appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism

(J. Haynes)

(L. Kirshenbaum)

Chair Weeks read a statement and the charge to the ad hoc subcommittee (attachment 8). Chair Weeks asked that members interested in serving on this ad hoc subcommittee to contact her.

Member Lavoie asked if this proposed ad hoc subcommittee might be appointed as a standing subcommittee, based upon the WRSDC By-Laws. Other members voiced agreement with the suggestion this be a new standing subcommittee. Student Representative Mangus asked how students would be heard at ad hoc subcommittee meetings. Per Chair Weeks, this is something that would be addressed once the ad hoc subcommittee/subcommittee is appointed. Member Young addressed Student Representative Mangus' question, explaining all subcommittee meetings are open to the public and students would be welcome at any and all meetings.

Discussion continued, including the reading aloud of Section 4 of the WRSDC By-Laws, which confirmed that standing subcommittees can be appointed at will.

Motion to amend: The School Committee supports the Chair appointing a standing subcommittee on Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism.

(A. Young)

(S. Brown)

More discussion took place, including a point of order and the re-reading of a portion of Section 4 of the WRSDC By-Laws. After discussion, the maker and seconder of the motion to amend withdrew the motion.

Discussion on the motion on the floor continued. Member Lavoie provided background on the appointment of standing subcommittees.

Motion: To amend the motion on the floor to appoint a Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Subcommittee as a standing subcommittee.

(J. Haynes)

(M. Lavoie)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*



Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*  
None

The motion was unanimously approved.

Motion as amended: The School Committee supports the Chair appointing a Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Subcommittee as a standing subcommittee.  
(J. Haynes)  
(M. Lavoie)

Roll call vote on motion to amend:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland

Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion to amend was unanimously approved.

Motion: The School Committee supports the Chair appointing a standing subcommittee on Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism.

(J. Haynes)

(M. Lavoie)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

Motion: To extend the meeting until 10:30 PM.

(A. Young)

(L. Long-Bellil)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett

Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Asima Silva

The motion was approved 15-3.

V. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the School Committee.

VI. Secretary's Report

- A. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on March 9, 2020, to be released.

(A. Young)  
(L. Long-Bellil)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Kelly Williamson

The minutes were approved 15-0-3.

- B. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on May 11, 2020, to be released.

(A. Young)  
(L. Kirshenbaum)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Deidre Shapiro  
Kelly Williamson

The minutes were approved 16-0-2.

- C. Approval of #1344 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on May 26, 2020

(J. Haynes)  
(L. Kirshenbaum)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Nicole Amos  
Deidre Shapiro  
Kelly Williamson

The minutes were approved 15-0-3.

- D. Approval of #1345 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on June 8, 2020

(S. Brown)

(L. Kirshenbaum)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith

Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

*Abstained:*

Nicole Amos  
Deidre Shapiro  
Kelly Williamson

The minutes were approved 15-0-3.

- E. Approval of the Organizational Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on June 30, 2020

(S. Brown)  
(M. Gustafson)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Melissa Ayala  
Jeffrey Haynes

The minutes were approved 16-0-2.

- F. Approval of #1346 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on June 30, 2020

(S. Brown)

(S. Haber)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

*Abstained:*

Melissa Ayala  
Jeffrey Haynes

The minutes were approved 16-0-2.

VII. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Weeks reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Director of Business and Finance's report that Members should contact the Superintendent; if there were questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, Members should contact the Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Management Subcommittee (M. Weeks, Chair, M. Dennis, Vice-chair, S. Brown, M. Lavoie, C. Smith, A. Young)

Deferred

B. Education Subcommittee (C. Smith, Chair, N. Amos, K. Bennett, S. Haber, R. Imber, L. Kirshenbaum, L. Long-Bellil, D. Shapiro)

Deferred

- C. Business/Finance Subcommittee (M. Dennis, Chair, M. Gustafson, K. Mills, B. Mitchel, K. Ottmar)

Deferred

- D. Legal Affairs Subcommittee (S. Brown, Chair, R. Imber, K. Mills, K. Ottmar)

Deferred

- E. Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Subcommittee (M. Lavoie, Chair, L. Kirshenbaum, K. Williamson, L. Woodland)

Deferred

- F. Facilities and Security Subcommittee (A. Young, J. Haynes, L. Woodland)

Deferred

- G. Audit Advisory Board (Be. Mitchel, Chair, A. Young, Vice-chair)

Deferred

- H. Ad Hoc Subcommittees

- 1. Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Negotiate the Superintendent's Contract

Motion: To discharge the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Negotiate the Superintendent's Contract

Chair Weeks explained action to discharge this ad hoc subcommittee would be passed over until a future meeting, as there is one additional piece of business by this ad hoc subcommittee to be addressed by the full School Committee, the approving of an amended job description for the Superintendent of Schools.

- I. Building Committees

- J. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (M. Lavoie), Chocksett Middle School (K. Williamson), Davis Hill Elementary School (K. Williamson), Dawson Elementary School (L. Kirshenbaum), Glenwood Elementary School (N. Amos), Houghton Elementary School (D. Shapiro), Mayo Elementary School (A. Young), Mountview Middle School (S. Brown), Naquag Elementary School (S. Haber), Paxton Center School (K. Ottmar), Thomas Prince School (A. Silva), Wachusett Regional High School (K. Mills), Early Childhood Center (L. Woodland), Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) (M. Gustafson)



Deferred

IX. Public Hearing

Jennifer Paolilli, Holden resident (attachment 9)

Lynn Hanley, Holden resident (attachment 10)

X. New Business

There was no new business brought before the Committee.

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(S. Haber)  
(M. Lavoie)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Nicole Amos  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherri Haber  
Jeffrey Haynes  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DM:rlp

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Public comment by Lauren Salmon-Garrett
- Attachment 2 – Public comment by WREA President Mary E. Lampron-Shepherd
- Attachment 3 – Public comment by Corey Burnham-Howard
- Attachment 4 – Public comment Benjamin and Sarah Smith
- Attachment 5 – School Reopening Health & Safety Advisory Task Force PowerPoint
- Attachment 6 – DESE Initial Fall Reopening Guidance
- Attachment 7 – Draft WRSDC Meeting Schedule
- Attachment 8 – Charge to the Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Subcommittee
- Attachment 9 – Public comment by Jennifer Paolilli
- Attachment 10 – Public comment by Lynn Hanley



Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

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## Fwd: Public address 7/13/20 SC meeting

1 message

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**Megan Weeks** <megan\_weeks@wrsd.net>

Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 8:26 AM

To: Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

Megan K Weeks, M.Ed  
Chair WRSD School Committee  
Assistant Principal, Murdock High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lauren Salmon-Garrett** <guppiesalmon@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 6:05 PM

Subject: Public address 7/13/20 SC meeting

To: <questions@wrsd.net>

My name is Lauren Salmon-Garrett, 49 Cook St in Holden. I thank you ALL for the incredible amount of work that you have done since this pandemic closed our schools and the work yet to come with the budget and re-opening plans.

It's obvious from the science that Covid-19 is already spreading again. Our R-zero is rising in MA, 1.07 today, when it was .99 last week. Anything above 1 is not good. As opposed to the spread decreasing with hopes of opening schools fully, we're moving toward restrictions again, though this is not how DESE is framing their guidance.

This is why Wachusett's remote plans for 20-21 MUST be robust and CONSISTENT, they need to align with curriculum, and students MUST have regular face-to face contact with teachers and staff. ALL of this will take great time and effort to coordinate, so I hope that you do NOT waste time drawing up desk diagrams like DESE and get down to the real business.....educating our children, not how to wear masks and wash their hands well, but curriculum and content.

Commissioner Riley made it clear that districts have to provide a fully remote plan for families. I, as an at-risk person, may go this route and may not send my kids back into school buildings in the fall. I want to know that this plan is as good as any plan for returning to school.

You've got 7 weeks as of right now. I hope that you use this time to come up with plans to support & train our teachers and staff, get technology in place, and create the best scenario for every learner in our

district. I, like many, want my kids back in school with their friends and teachers, but it's just not realistic. Please, use the little time that you have wisely!

Thank you.

*The contents of this e-mail, and any attachments, are the property of the Wachusett Regional School District, and subject to the Public Records Law, M.G.L. c.66, § 10.*

Good Evening, my name is Mary Shepherd, new president of the Wachusett Regional Education Association, 1320 Wachusett Street Jefferson. As I develop my visions for this role I chose to accept, I see a kinder community, and it begins with everyone one of us in this meeting. The global pandemic COVID-19 has brought to light the many divides and inequities our current society is blighted with, it is pushing us to face and to walk alongside things that make us uncomfortable. Hello people! This is where true growth begins for our students, pushing them beyond their comfort zone! Let's be like a student!

My leadership vision of a kinder community begins on two fronts. The first being the pandemic and the importance of returning to school safely at the appropriate time. Conversations are happening on this front, I stay current by reading social media posts, guidelines from DESE, and proposals from MTA. Second, are the racial and socioeconomic injustices exposed like a zit popping during the pandemic. This popping zit requires immediate attention, so where is our district leadership on Black Lives Matter? We have heard from many minority students who have walked through the judging walls of our schools, my heart was sad listening. Looking at former Chair, Ken Mill's weighted expression after reading these letters was a wake up call. However, I think our district is still stirring and the deafening silence is making us late. We must choose to be leaders on this front. These students demonstrated strength in showing the human side of vulnerability, asking us to be kinder. Let's teach kindness, and fill all our hearts.

In my first grade classroom, I have seen blatant discrimination between peer students, one black and one white. To this day I am not sure if I handled the situation correctly, but I would rather show up imperfectly than stand by silently. My first education centered diversity class came after this incident. Where I learned we all have work to do to expand our knowledge of race and multiculturalism to ensure all our students feel represented and heard during their time with us. How do we as a district foster a sense of multiculturalism and antiracism? It begins with our

curriculum. In my class I have developed an approach to teaching art through the artist, introducing artists of other races and discussing the physical differences between the artist, myself, and the classroom students. This summer, one middle school teacher is reading many age appropriate literature on racial inequities to use in her classroom, and one high school teacher is designing a course on the history of race and racism in the United States.

But this speckled approach to educating our students on the broad subject of systemic racism must take a district wide approach. It should begin with training of staff, all staff. When I was sharing my diversity class experiences with the para's one day, they asked why don't we have any PD like that? We could use that information, and I agreed. Racism is deep, my undergraduate degree in Urban Studies, delved into the many challenges black and brown people face, and in my opinion in the almost forty years that have passed, it has gotten worse. In life there are no erasers, but as Louise Hay, one of my favorite authors would say, the mind needs cleaning just like our closets every so often. So I invite you to join me in changing the conversation, to embrace the uncomfortable, because we all, especially our shunned students, whether because of the color of their skin or the clothes they wear, deserve a sincerely kinder community, and it begins with listening and sharing each other's stories. I want all Wachusett students to know they fit in our community and we have their backs.



Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

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## Fwd: School Reopening Plans and Communication

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**Megan Weeks** <megan\_weeks@wrsd.net>

Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 8:26 AM

To: Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

Megan K Weeks, M.Ed  
Chair WRSD School Committee  
Assistant Principal, Murdock High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Corey Burnham-Howard** <cburnhamhoward@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 10:10 AM

Subject: School Reopening Plans and Communication

To: Darryll McCall <darryll\_mccall@wrsd.net>, Robert Berlo <robert\_berlo@wrsd.net>

Cc: <nicole\_amos@wrsd.net>, <krista\_bennett@wrsd.net>, <scott\_brown@wrsd.net>,

<michael\_dennis@wrsd.net>, <maleah\_gustafson@wrsd.net>,

<sherrie\_haber@wrsd.net>, <jeffrey\_haynes@wrsd.net>, <robert\_imber@wrsd.net>,

<laura\_kirshenbaum@wrsd.net>, <matthew\_lavoie@wrsd.net>,

<linda\_longbellil@wrsd.net>, Kenneth Mills <kenneth\_mills@wrsd.net>,

<benjamin\_mitchel@wrsd.net>, <kari\_ottmar@wrsd.net>, <asima\_silva@wrsd.net>,

<christina\_smithSC@wrsd.net>, <deidre\_shapiro@wrsd.net>, Megan Weeks

<megan\_weeks@wrsd.net>, <kelly\_williamson@wrsd.net>,

<linda\_woodland@wrsd.net>, <adam\_young@wrsd.net>, Brendan Keenan

<brendan\_keenan@wrsd.net>

Dear Superintendent McCall, Deputy Superintendent Berlo, and School Committee Members,

I'm writing as a concerned and invested member of the WRSD community to share my thoughts on "reopening" school for the 2020-2021 school year.

I have voiced my concerns —as have many others— in online, social media forums. I realize that vocalization won't reach you. I have shared my thoughts in the "WRSD Reopening Task Force Preliminary Survey" that was sent to the community. I realize that my comments in that survey may not reach you. I have expressed to my friends my concerns, and some reassure me that there are many smart and dedicated people working on a recommendation for how school will operate come September. I realize



that there are also many smart and dedicated people who have not been included in the conversation.

The WRSD Reopening Task Force was created without a call for volunteers but by appointment. A “WRSD Reopening Task Force Preliminary Survey” was sent to the community a month ago, but results of that survey have not yet been shared with the community. I understand that by June 24, the Reopening Task Force had already presented its findings to the Administration, and yet those recommendations have not been shared with the community. I see that other school districts are hosting forums for parents and for teachers so that they may be involved and offer valuable perspectives, feedback, and ideas. Here in the WRSD, the lack of communication and the lack of parent/teacher involvement in recommendations could portend to be a large issue in the acceptance and cooperation and successful implementation of any final action plans, whatever they may be.

While my singular opinion may not have any influence—and it well should not on its own given the thousands of people in our community—I feel compelled to share it since the health and the education of our children are at stake. In my opinion, the only safe, realistic, implementable option that will be sustainable for any length of time and will ensure adequate academic rigor is remote learning. Any other option seems unrealistic when considering safety and risk and education given inadequate funding, current teacher-to-student classroom ratios, old HVAC systems, shared bathrooms, shared busses, the general nature of children to be intimate in their socialization, and the general environment needed for successful in-person education, coupled with the current exponential increase in Coronavirus cases nationwide and the CDC guidance and considerations related to the risk of COVID-19 spreading in school settings.

If the WRSD School Committee can not or does not feel safe meeting in person at this time, how can you expect our children and teachers and staff to meet in person for six hours per day?

I understand all the reasons advocated for in-person school despite the pandemic—from educational quality to student socialization and development. But, as you all know, this will not be a return to “normalcy.” I think the focus needs to be on health safety and on maintaining academic rigor.

Remote learning planning needs to be a primary focus. If there is a return to the school building, I assume that if one person in a school building is diagnosed with COVID-19, the building will shut down for some period of time, and remote learning will be the default. If there is a return to the school buildings, I assume that if cases spike again in Massachusetts, school buildings may again be ordered closed with remote learning being the default. While remote learning was an emergency measure implemented last spring, it was, in general—despite the best efforts of many teachers—neither adequately planned or executed to ensure a “normal” academic rigor. That was



accepted and understood by many given the nature of the pandemic emergency. But now, months later--with remote learning a best option for consideration and the likely default in any scenario--there has been time to plan for a rigorous remote learning program.

No matter the decision made on the path forward with regard to school reopening—that decision needs to be made now, and shared with the community now. I understand that these are unprecedented times, and that state and federal guidance may shift and continues to be forthcoming. I understand the need for careful consideration and deliberate decision-making, and I do appreciate all the efforts in that regard. But now is the time for a decision to ensure successful implementation of a start to the school year in just six weeks. Leadership is about making tough decisions and executing those decisions. Again, decisions need to be made now and shared now—not sometime in August—so that teachers and parents and students can make decisions on whether they feel safe returning to the school building, teachers can prepare lessons for the chosen format, families can plan work and life schedules, and WRSD investments of time and energy and resources can be made to ensure adequate resources for, and successful implementation of, the chosen plan.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued efforts on behalf of our school community.

Be well,

Corey Burnham-Howard  
Princeton Parent of TPS and WRHS Students

*The contents of this e-mail, and any attachments, are the property of the Wachusett Regional School District, and subject to the Public Records Law, M.G.L. c.66, § 10.*

Dear Chair Weeks and Members of the School Committee,

As parents and concerned residents of the district, we are again writing to express our concern and displeasure about the proposal to pay AA Transportation 75% of the money the district would have paid for bus services during the COVID shutdown period.

It is important to note that paying for services not rendered has long been illegal, and only recently became legal under emergency legislation signed by the Governor on June 5th. This speaks volumes about whether or not such actions are in the public interest.

Clearly, spending taxpayer money for nothing in return is not in the public interest. But these are unprecedented times, and it is understandable that the law was changed to help vendors who are at risk of becoming financially insolvent. However this does not excuse the School Committee from its responsibility to perform financial due diligence on behalf of the students of the district and the taxpayers of the towns.

It is vital that the School Committee and the school district are confident that AA Transportation is indeed at serious risk of financial insolvency before committing tax dollars for services that were not delivered. Anything less would be a dereliction of your fiduciary responsibility to students and taxpayers.

To date, the district administration has been unable to demonstrate AA's financial vulnerability. This is not the administration's fault – but rather the owner of AA transportation – Mr. Ron Ernenwein.

Mr. Ernenwein has been unwilling to share company financial information that would demonstrate his need for the 75% figure he is demanding. If he has concerns about the sensitivity of disclosing private financial information, an independent financial analysis by a CPA could be conducted **and should be a precondition prior to settling on any amount.**

In the absence of any financial documentation offered by AA, there are reasons to doubt Mr. Ernenwein's claim that his company needs the 75% figure that he presented as an ultimatum:

1. AA Transportation has argued that they need the money to protect their employees, but AA bus drivers were laid off and have presumably been receiving unemployment, including any state and federal bonus money.
2. Fuel is a substantial cost for a transportation company, but during the shutdown period the company was not using any fuel.
3. Between the last School Committee meeting and this meeting, the Federal Small Business Administration reports have been made public. Local reporting has shown AA transportation received federal relief assistance. The SBA figures do not report an exact amount, but AA Transportation was listed as having received over \$2 million dollars in PPP aid.

Some district administrators and Committee members seemed concerned that AA Transportation might refuse to provide bus services next year if we do not meet Mr. Ernenwien's demands. Those in support of paying 75% figure frame their argument around the importance of maintaining amicable relationships with our community partners. Yet, during the June 17th Finance Sub-Committee meeting, one member described the district as being "backed into a corner" by Mr. Ernenwein. Our district business director stated that if we don't agree to 75%, Mr. Ernenwein told him "he would have to do what he has to do." Is this the behavior of a quote-unquote "community partner?" No. This sounds like a threat.

Though the concerns mentioned at previous meetings are understandable, they should not drive hasty and uninformed decisions. A decision of this magnitude, worth over \$1 million dollars, cannot be made without full cooperation and transparency from the vendor. Besides, we are in a multi-year contract with this company. Surely the contract has protections in place for the district and avenues of financial and legal recourse for breach of contract?

Further still, Mr. Ernewien's threat to pull the contract only seems to undermine his claims of financial vulnerability. Companies in desperate need of income do not willingly drop clients.

In closing, it is clear that the School Committee does not have the information needed to make a fiscally responsible decision at this moment due to the lack of transparency by AA Transportation. If anything, the latest revelation that AA recently received over \$2 million aid and possibly supports the need for Mr. Ernenwein to legitimate his negotiated amount.

Despite the good news that the school budget passed, state aid figures remain uncertain. WRSD already laid off 52 teachers and other staff and is planning for additional cuts that would total about 148 teachers and related staff. These cuts include – but aren't limited to – eliminating music for elementary school and world language for middle school. This is a serious loss for students. How many classes or programs for our students could be funded with the \$1.2 million dollars the Committee is considering paying the bus company?

The School Committee is literally facing a choice to either provide programs for students **or** blindly pay AA transportation for services never delivered.

As parents, this is no contest. Our money should be going to ensuring our kids have access to music class, world language programs, teachers, and counselors who will help them recover and thrive in these challenging times. We understand that this is not a simple decision. We are absolutely appalled at the apparent bullying behavior of the bus company, who, according to a member on your committee, has "backed you into a corner." We urge the Committee to do the right thing, not the easy thing. Remember that the district is the customer and that AA is not in a position to issue ultimatums. Offer a fair payment based on information and evidence. Do not be cowed by threats.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Smith

Benjamin Smith



# **School Reopening Health & Safety Advisory Task Force**

**WRSD School Committee**

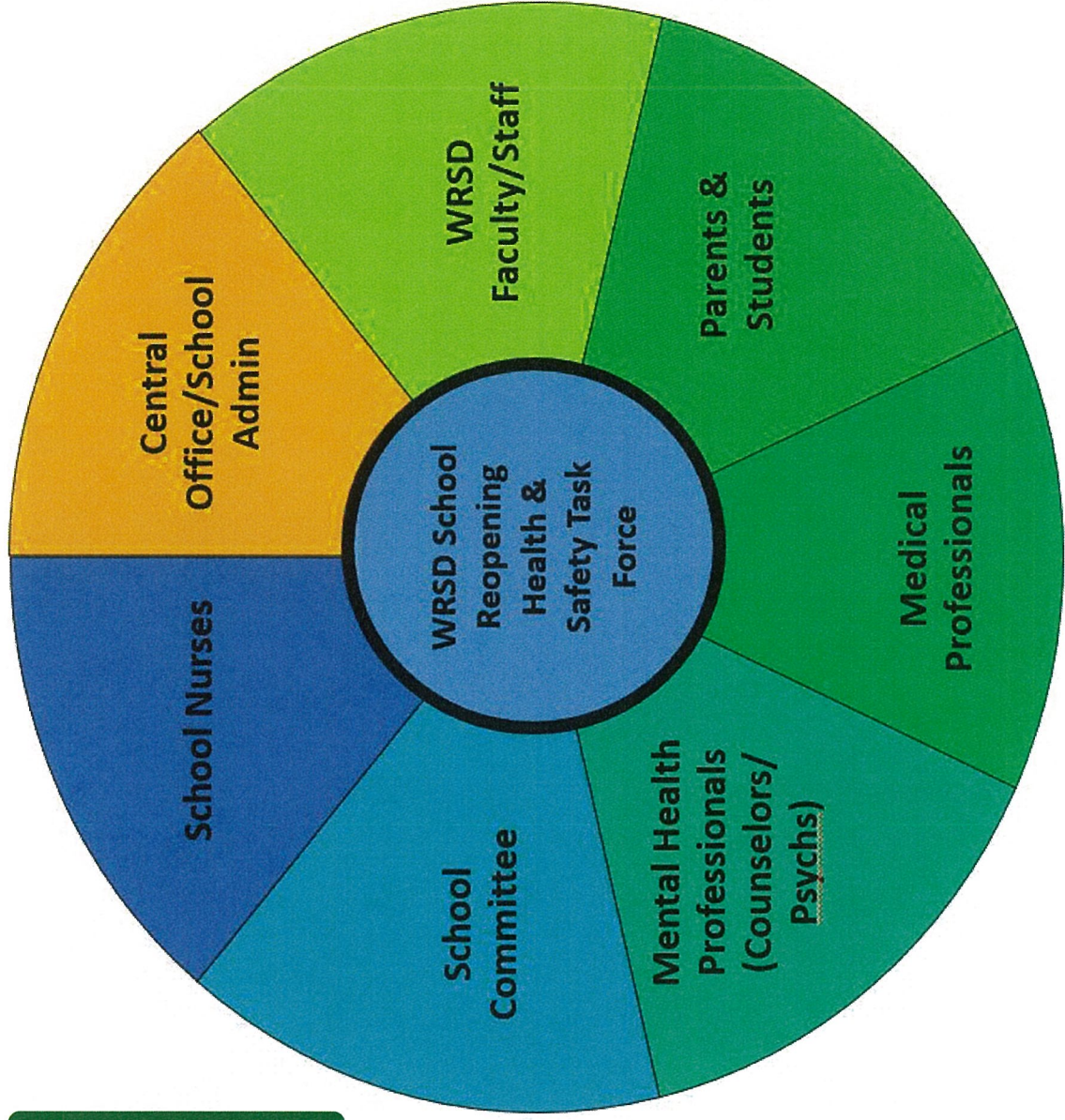
**July 13, 2020**

**WACHUSETT REGIONAL  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**





# Task Force Make-Up



# Goals of the Task Force

1. *Develop a set of recommendations for Fall, 2020 school re-opening, focusing on student health, emotional and academic domains.*
2. *Review available state and federal guidance for reopening schools in a safe manner.*
3. *Collect and consolidate local stakeholder feedback about what is needed for a safe school reopening.*
4. *Explore possible contingency plans for reopening schools.*





## Review of process & Purpose of this Committee

**1.**

Background  
&  
Orientation  
(6/4/20)

**2.**

Stakeholder  
Input &  
Incorporation  
of Official  
Guidance  
(6/10/20)

**3.**

Develop  
FAQ  
Document,  
Continue to  
Revise Final  
Doc  
(6/17/20)

**4.**

Final  
Document  
Revision  
(6/24/20)

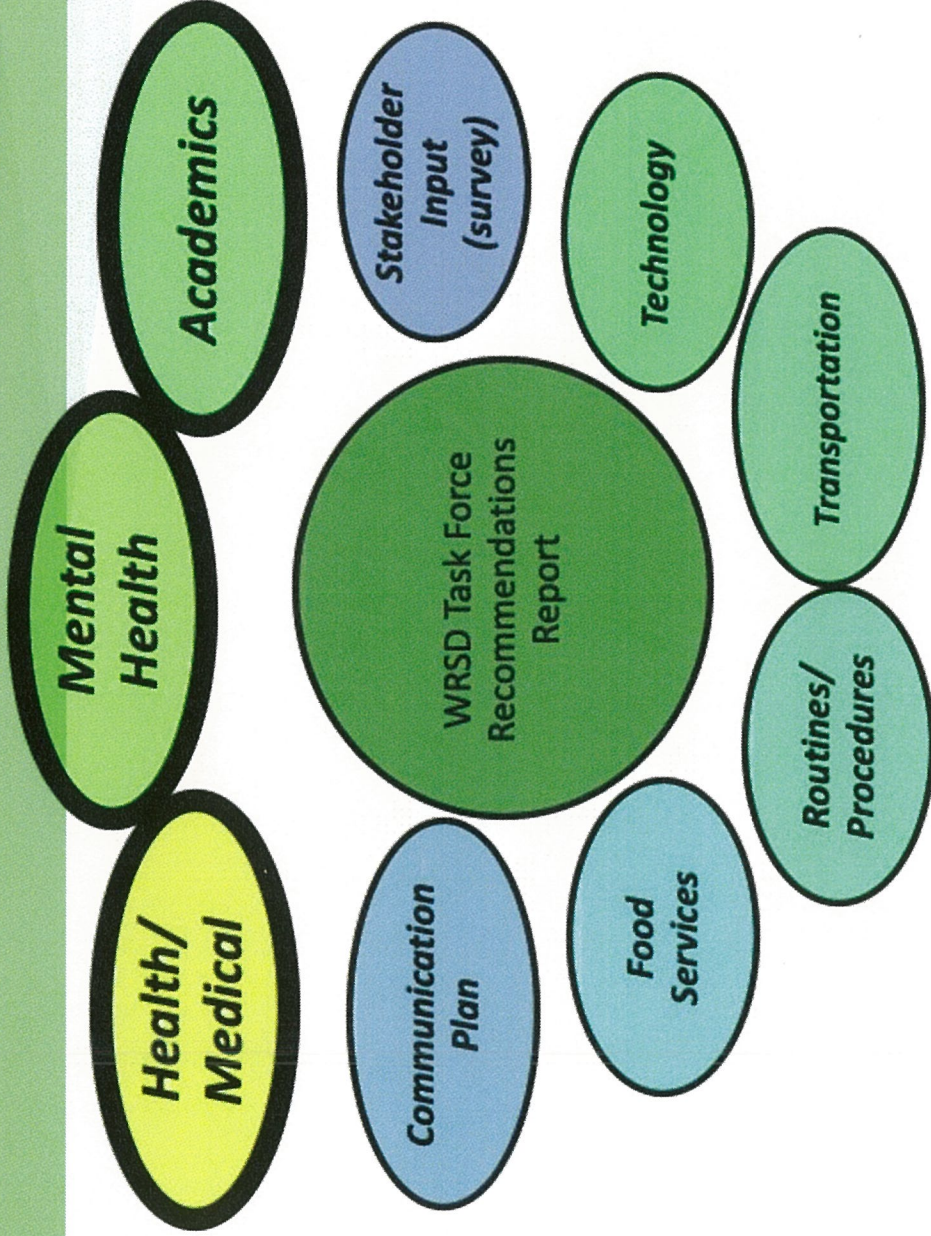
*Final*

*Recommendations  
Document  
Submitted to  
Central Office  
Administration  
(7/3/20)*





# Domains for Recommendations





# Health/Medical: Highlights

- “We cannot eliminate risk of COVID-19 to students, staff and the community but we will look for opportunities for risk reduction.”
- “We are not necessarily limiting our recommendations to resource or budgetary limits of WRSD as many of these are unknown to this group. Certainly, not all of our recommendations are feasible and we defer to WRSD making these ultimate decisions.”
- Focus on **Prevention, Screening, Surveillance** (monitoring), and **Supplies** (PPE)
- There is a need to support all stakeholders via providing information, training, and responding to questions & concerns as they arise.
- Drafts of **protocols** and **procedures** based on best available, official guidance



# Mental Health: *Highlights*

- Primary focus on reconnecting relationships between and among **students, faculty, & staff**
- Strategies for supporting all students to reconnect to school
- Tiered supports (Tier 2 & 3) for students who require extra support at all levels.
- Leverage community-based referrals (INTERFACE and other referral sources) for students who require supplemental supports outside of the school environment.





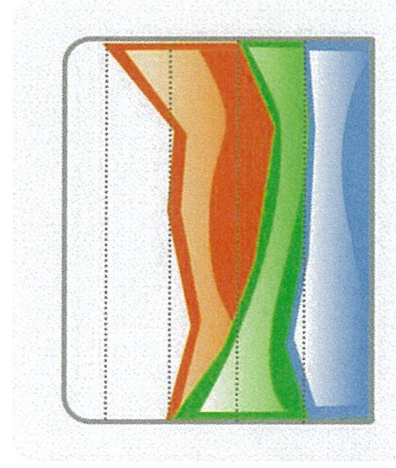
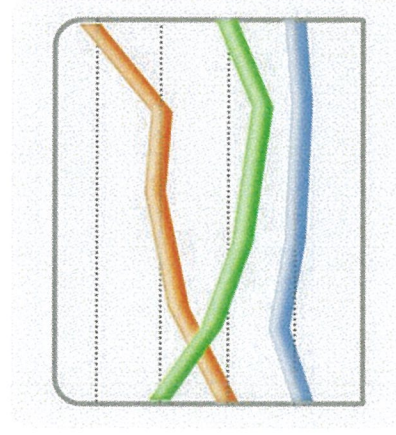
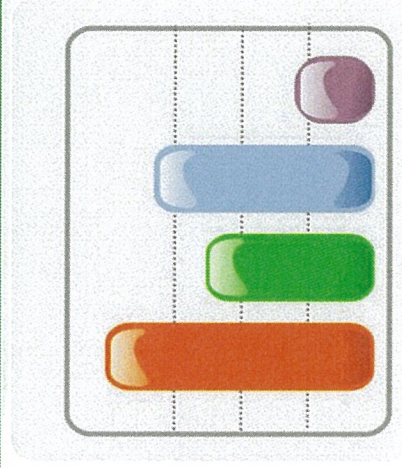
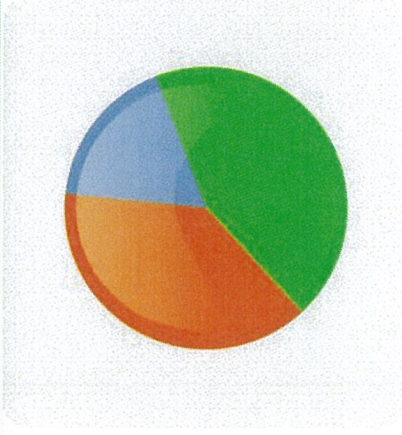
# Academics: Highlights

- Focus on *remote learning, classroom configurations, staffing implications, Special Education, & Professional Development*
- Discussions about **high school**-specific concerns brought to light by high school students on the Task Force
- For **elementary** classrooms, recommendation made to remain **self-contained** to decrease need for transitions/exposure
- **Developmental considerations:** *to always focus on the best ways to intervene with students based on their developmental needs*



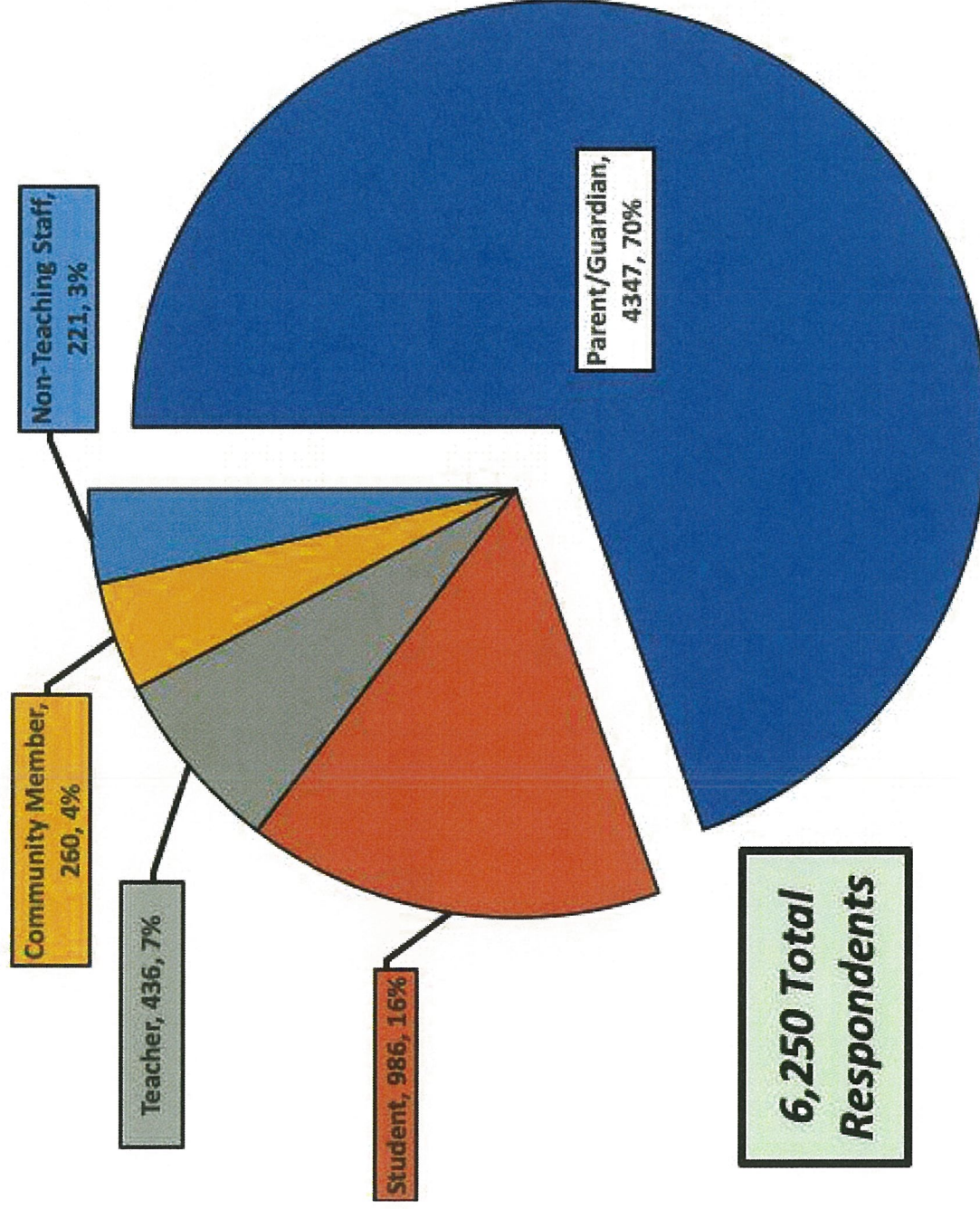


# Stakeholder Survey



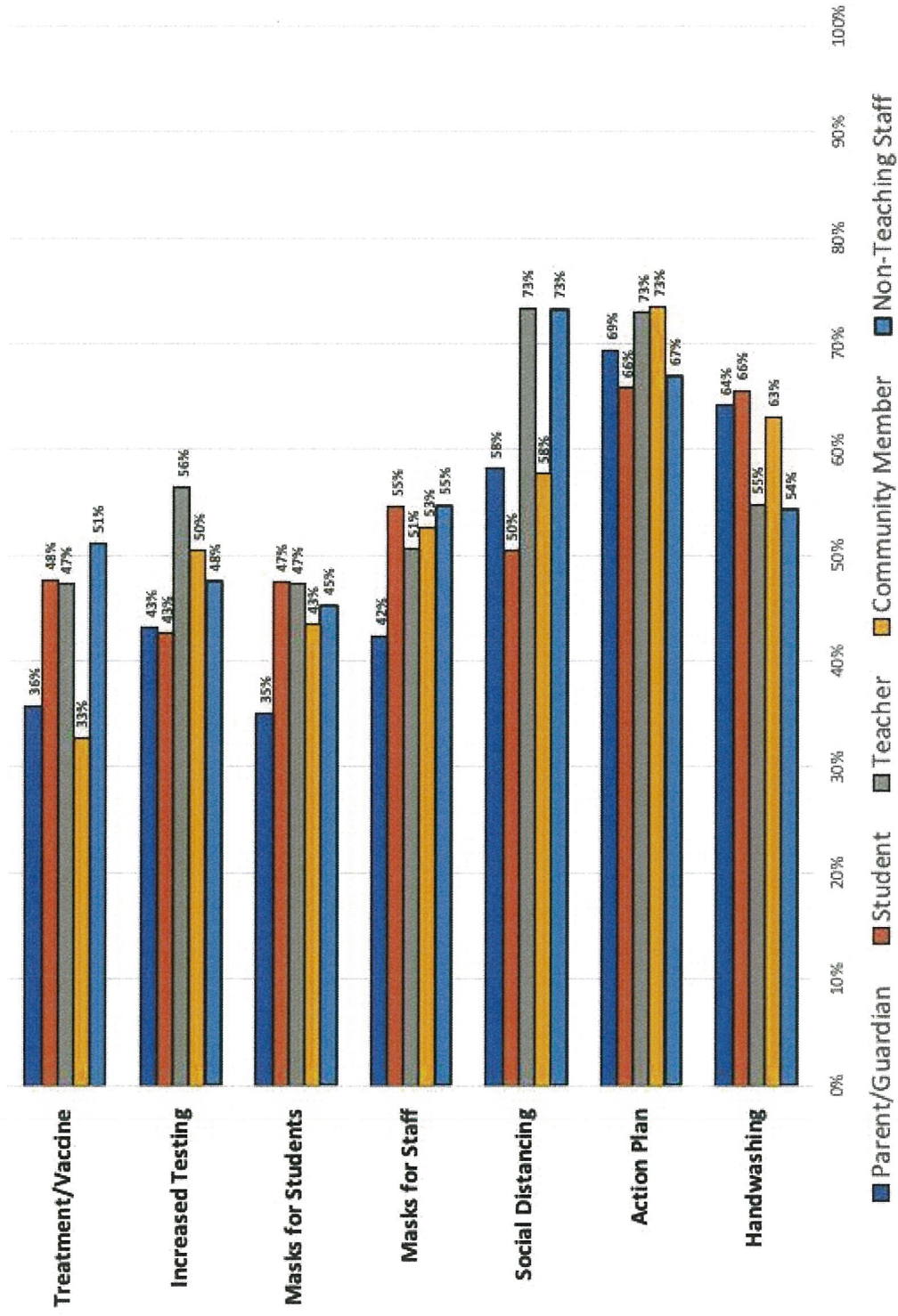
**Survey Window Dates:**

- June 12 - June 22, 2020

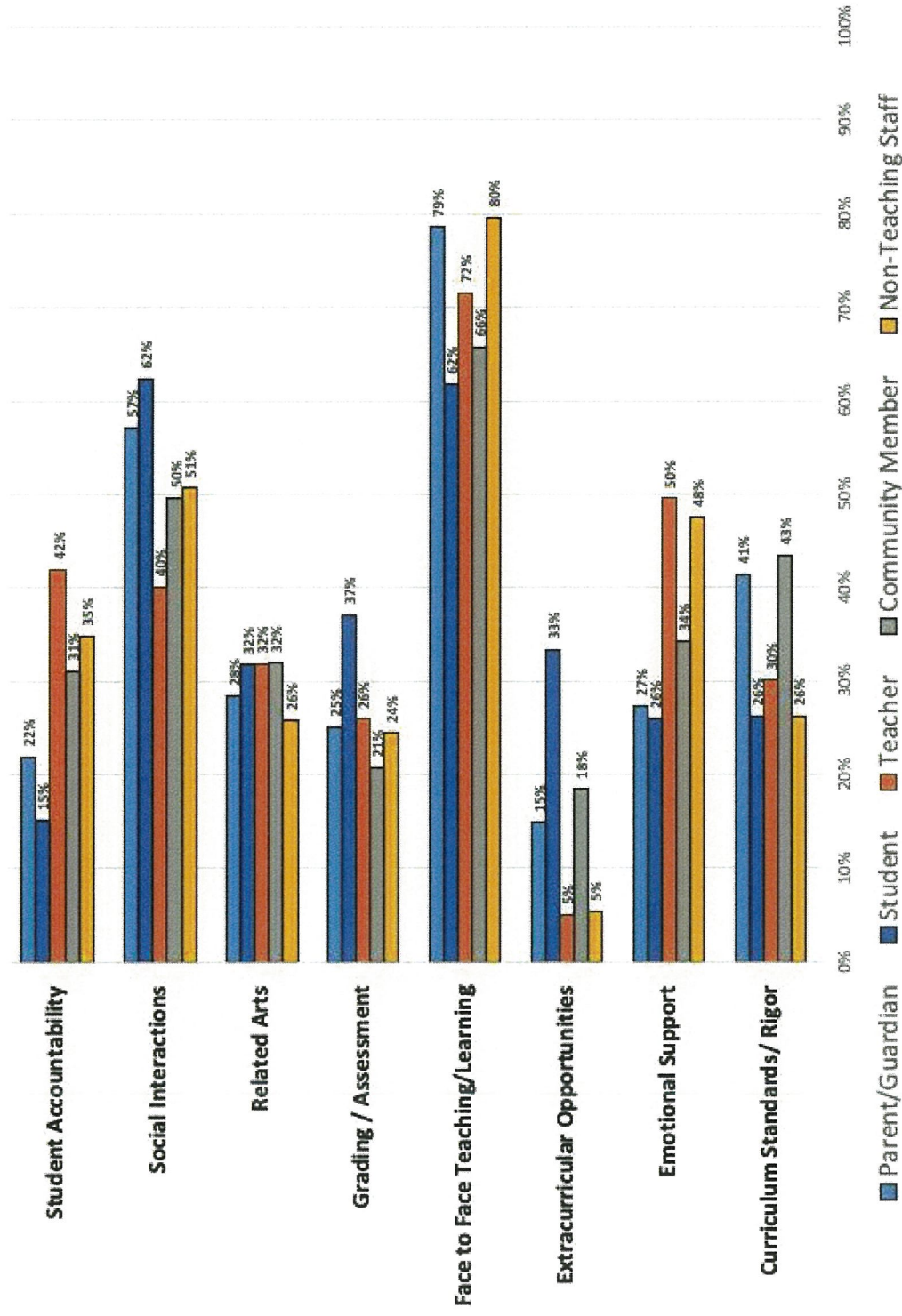




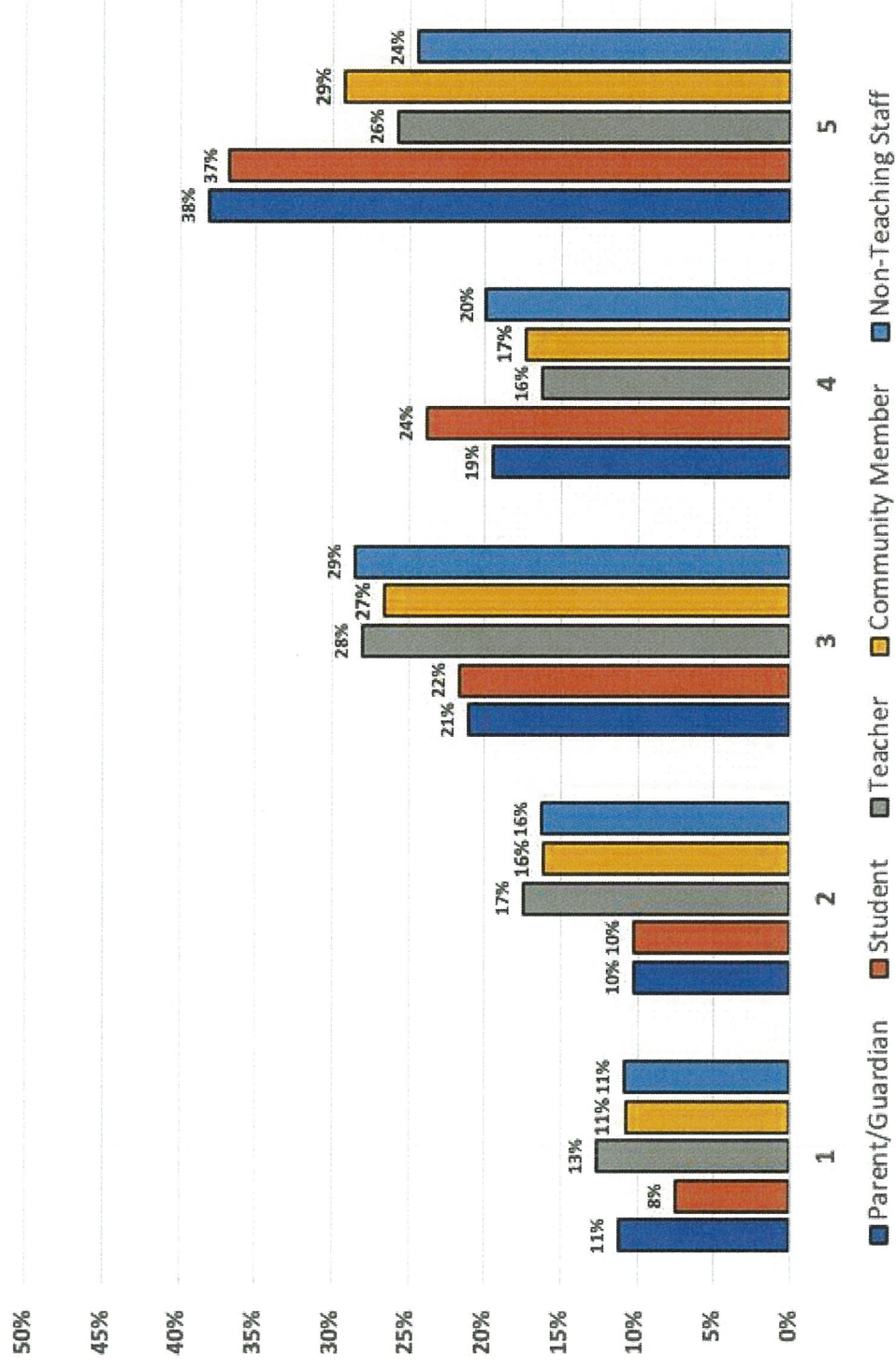
*Which conditions do you feel are important to have in place in order to facilitate a return to in-person schooling?*



**Which elements do you believe are most essential for educating students as we respond to guidance from Massachusetts state authorities? PLEASE SELECT ONLY 3.**



**Readiness scale: At this time, how ready are you to support a return to regular school routines, including in-school teaching and learning?**  
***(1 = Not at all ready, 5 = Very ready)***





# Themes in Responses

- *Fear*
- *Remote Learning*
- *Wearing Masks*



# Wearing Masks

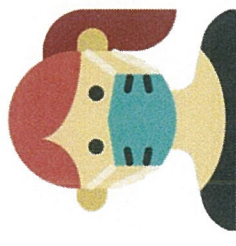
	Masks for Students (rated as being important for returning to school)	Masks for Staff (rated as being important for returning to school)
Parent/Guardians	35%	42%
Students	47%	55%
Teachers	47%	51%
Community Members	43%	53%
Non-Teaching Staff	45%	55%





# Wearings Masks: Comments

- (Teacher) “As a special ed teacher I'm particularly nervous going back to brick and mortar since our kids will not tolerate wearing masks, will get very anxious and won't be able to maintain 6ft distancing.”
- (Student) “Have masks for teachers and open normally, students do not transmit the disease and need to go back to their routines.”
- (Parent) “I don't think it is reasonable to require students to wear masks for 6-8 hours a day”
- (Community Member) “I do not believe masks or social distancing is needed with a 99% recovery rate.”
- (Non-teaching staff) “No Masks. They don't stop viruses anyways”





# Fear: Comments

- Many survey respondents indicated that they are fearful about the possible return to school, and about the impact of the pandemic on children and adults.
- (Parent) “I don’t want to send my daughters to school and tell them that sharing is bad, and that they need to be scared all of the time.”
- (Parent) “This is not the “new “ norm for them. They don’t even want to go into a store because they are scared. They think if everyone is wearing masks then “sick “ is still here and they shouldn’t be in places with lots of people.”
- (Student) “I am afraid to bring covid home to my family - who is at a high risk!!”
- (Teacher) “Trying to wrap my head around all these scenarios is extremely overwhelming for a teacher and parent. I’m very fearful that I won’t be able to teach anymore if that is the case.”
- (Teacher) “These kids are not able to social distance, wear masks, wash their hands properly, cover their mouths when they cough, drool, have toileting accidents etc. I am fearful for my own health and safety as well as the other children in my classroom.”
- (Community Member) “I think the social distancing is going to scare the kids. I’ve seen pictures of extreme measures.”





# Remote Learning: Comments

- Many of the comments made by stakeholders revolved around remote learning. Comments included positive ones about the Spring, 2020 remote learning plan, as well as challenges that arose.
- (Parent) “Although I think there will be difficulties and adjustments necessary, I feel that the students need to be in school because their educational goals cannot be reached entirely through remote learning.”
- (Teacher) “Family life, work life, and remote learning balance while trying to stay healthy physically and emotionally.”
- (Student) “I believed that I have thrived in remote learning and believe that is the safest and most effective way to learn until there is a vaccine or treatment available.”
- (Community Member) “The current process with remote learning as the only option was necessary to control the spread but not sustainable long term.”
- (Non-Teaching Staff) “I am concerned for the SpEd students as many did not do well with remote learning. When we return to in-class learning, their aides will be key to emotional and academic success. It is so important that the aides will be there





# “What went well?”

- “It was really easy to work with others and speak freely without being judged. Lots of work was also accomplished in each meeting even though they were only an hour we got so much more done than I expected.”
- “The members were very receptive to ideas presented. The group was very well organized by the facilitator and resources were provided that were helpful for all members. I always felt comfortable to sharing thought and ideas with the group members.”
- “Weekly meetings were well orchestrated and organized. The groups were well-designed which allowed various viewpoints to be included. Having a weekly meeting agenda sent by Brendan was a huge help.”
- “Well organized and managed project. Brendan certainly knows how to welcome opinions and keep large group conversations organized.”
- “The meetings were well planned and well organized. Breaking up into smaller groups was key to getting each task accomplished.”



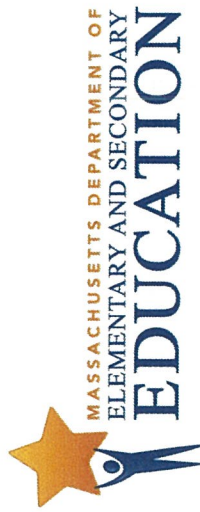
# Suggestions to Improve Task Force

- “Maybe lengthening the meeting time from 1 hr to 1.5 hours? In this manner Sub-groups will have it slotted in their schedule to meet together for 30 min prior to the actual meeting.”
- “None”
- “More detailed discussion of how we will go remote if needed again, as well as feedback from parents and perhaps specific suggestions from parents as to what worked remotely and what did not.”
- “Just keep working together and staying in contact even if it's via email updates.”
- “Perhaps have the medical professionals listen to the concerns of the principals on the ENORMOUS challenges of implementation”

# “What did not go well?”

- “Everyone on the Academic Task Force was great, but we needed more parents who did not have a dual role.”
- “Not related to the Task Force, but I wish DESE would have offered guidance sooner so the group could have developed a clear and precise plan for reopening.”
- “There are so many areas to cover and concerns that are multi-faceted with limited time and resources it is difficult to cover all topics and concerns”
- “The uncertainty of what school will look like in the fall.”
- “Nothing”
- “It's difficult to plan with no recommendations or guidance from the state.”





# Initial Fall Reopening Guidance

A planning resource to ensure a safe return to school for the 2020-21 school year

June 25, 2020

**DESE is grateful for the continued engagement of multiple stakeholders from the education and medical communities whose perspectives have shaped our guidance**



### **Health experts and medical community**

- COVID-19 Command Center Medical Advisory Board
- Dr. Sandra Nelson, MD, Infectious Disease, Massachusetts General Hospital
- Dr. Lloyd Fisher, incoming President, Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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### **Return-to-School Working Group**

45-member group consisting of students, parents, teachers, superintendents and school administrators, leaders from educational non-profit organizations, and municipal officials

---

### **Collaboration with key stakeholders**

Superintendents, administrators, parents, experts in public health and teaching and learning, teachers' unions

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Goals for fall return to school</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Health &amp; safety requirements</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Reopening plans</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Upcoming comprehensive DESE guidance</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Appendix</b>

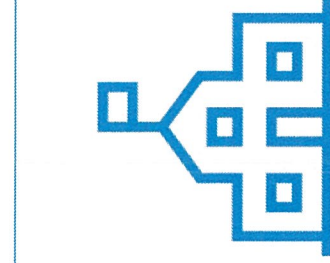
DESE is asking districts to prioritize the safe return of students to in-person school settings to maximize learning and address students' holistic needs

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## Initial Fall Memo

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DESE's initial fall memo is intended to help districts achieve the goal of safe, in-person student learning and includes the following



**Return to school**

### Health & Safety Requirements

for in-person learning this fall

### Reopening Plans

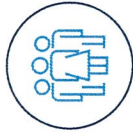
to address three possible learning models

### Upcoming DESE Guidance

to support fall planning



# Our philosophy and approach balances COVID-19 related health and safety risks with risks of keeping students out of school



Our goal is the **safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings**, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs



Our initial fall guidance is based on an **extensive review of current medical literature**

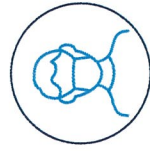


Our guidance attempts to **balance the health and safety risks of COVID-19 with the health, safety, socioeconomic, and achievement risks** of keeping students out of school



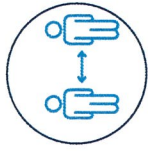
It is not one mitigation strategy but a **combination of mitigation strategies taken together** that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission

## Getting students and educators back to school in-person, safely, relies on a combination of strategies, including key health and safety measures



### Masks/ face coverings

Primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory. **Masks/ face coverings protect against COVID-19 infection** (study estimates 80% effectiveness in reducing transmission<sup>1</sup>)



### Physical distancing

Physical distancing helps mitigate virus transmission. Aim for six feet between individuals when feasible; **a minimum physical distance of three feet is appropriate as informed by evidence when combined with the other measures outlined in the list of safety requirements**



### Handwashing / hand sanitizing

Handwashing removes pathogens from the hands. While **handwashing with soap and water is the best option**, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol) may be utilized when handwashing is not available



### Staying home when sick

**Students and educators should stay home if they are sick** or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19

1. <https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/5/5/e002794.full.pdf>

## Review of medical literature suggests that children are less susceptible to and less likely to transmit COVID-19

### Schools do not appear to have played a major role in COVID-19 transmission

- In a review of COVID clusters, only ~4% (8 of 210) involved school transmission<sup>1</sup>

### In general, rates of COVID-19 infection are lower for children than for adults

- Based on an analysis of data from six countries, children under 20 are half as susceptible to COVID-19 infection than adults<sup>2</sup>

### If exposed, children may be less likely to become infected with COVID-19

- In China, in households with COVID-19 exposure, children under the age of 18 were infected at a rate of 4% compared with 17% for adults.<sup>3</sup>

### If infected, children may be less likely to infect others with COVID-19

- In Switzerland, a study of household clusters found that only 8% had a child as the index case. In nearly 80% of the cases, the child got COVID-19 from an adult family member.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lederer, Q. J., Fuller, N. M., Koopit, L. E., Funk, S., Koopit, G. M., & CMID COVID-19 Working Group. (2020). What settings have been linked to SARS-CoV-2 transmission clusters? Wellcome Open Research, 5(83), 83. Available at <https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/article/5-83v2>

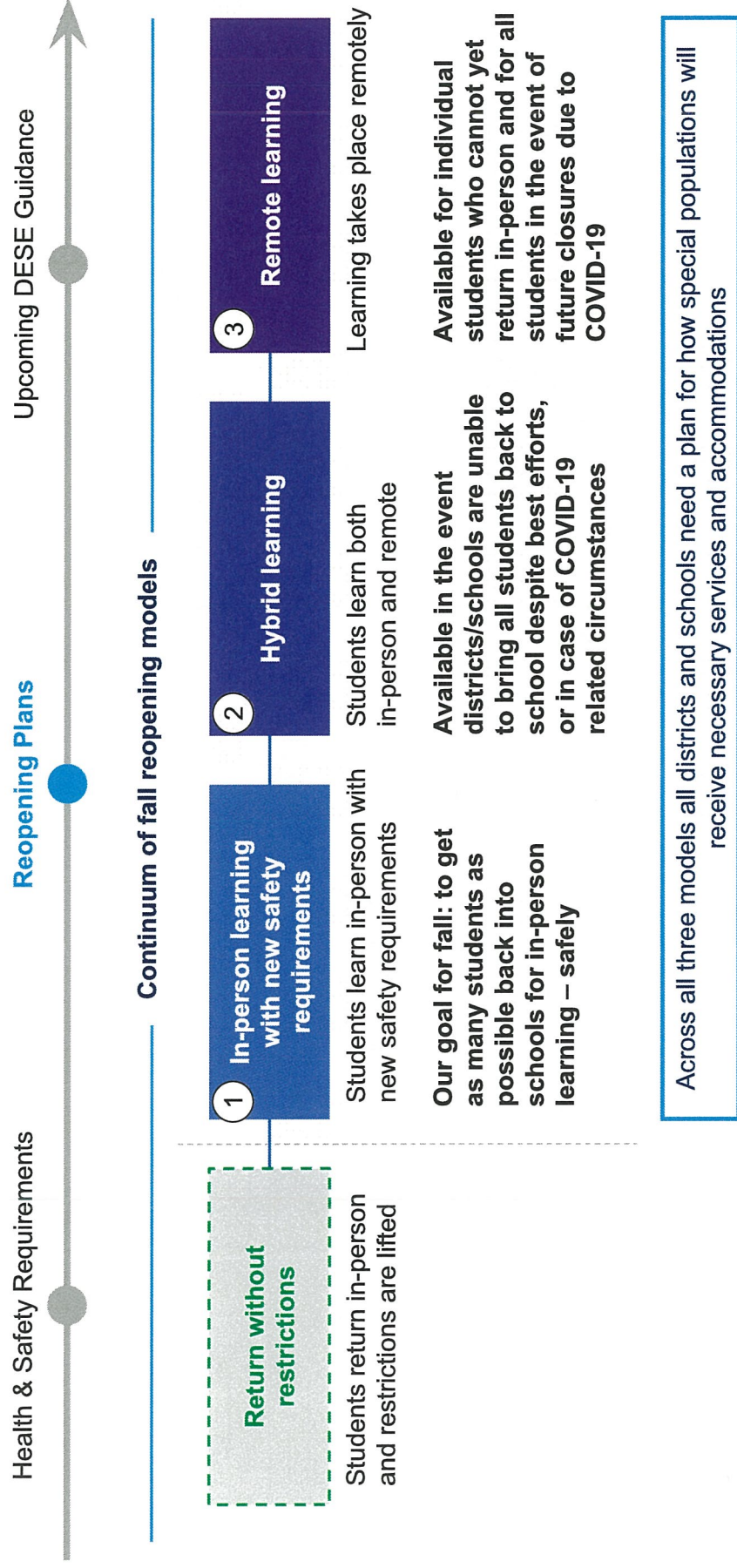
<sup>2</sup> Davies, N.G., Klepac, P., Liu, Y., et al. Age-dependent effects in the transmission and control of COVID-19 epidemics. Nat Med (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0962-9>

<sup>3</sup> Wei Li, Bo Zhang, Jianhua Lu, Shihua Lu, Zhiqiang Cheng, Cao Peng, Xinghua Liu, Peng Zhang, Yan Ling, Kahong Tao, Jianying Chen, Characteristics of Household Transmission of COVID-19, Clinical Infectious Diseases., doi:10.1093/cid/cia450

<sup>4</sup> Porfay Barbe, C., Wagner, N., Gauthier, M., Moussasoul, D., Lowy, N., Dancie, A., & L'Huillier, A. (2020). COVID-19 in Children and the Dynamics of Infection in Families. Pediatrics, e20201576. Available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2020/05/22/peds.2020-1576>

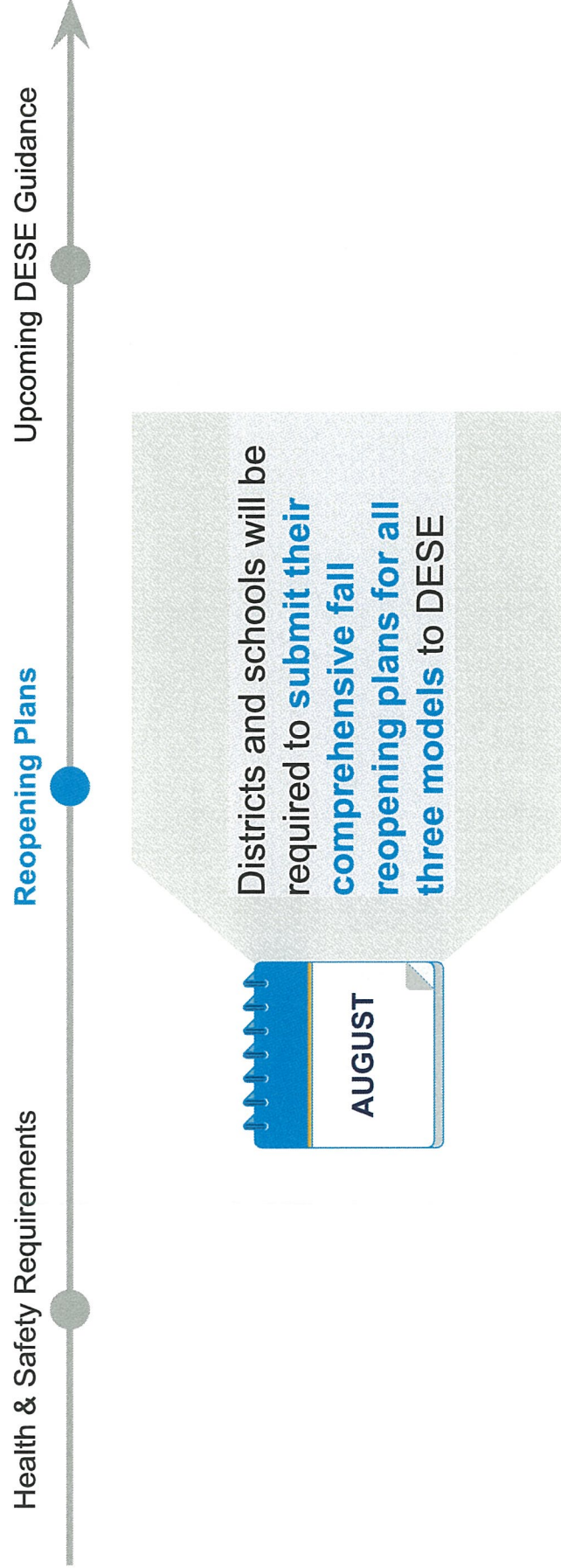


# Each district and school needs to plan for three possibilities on the continuum of reopening



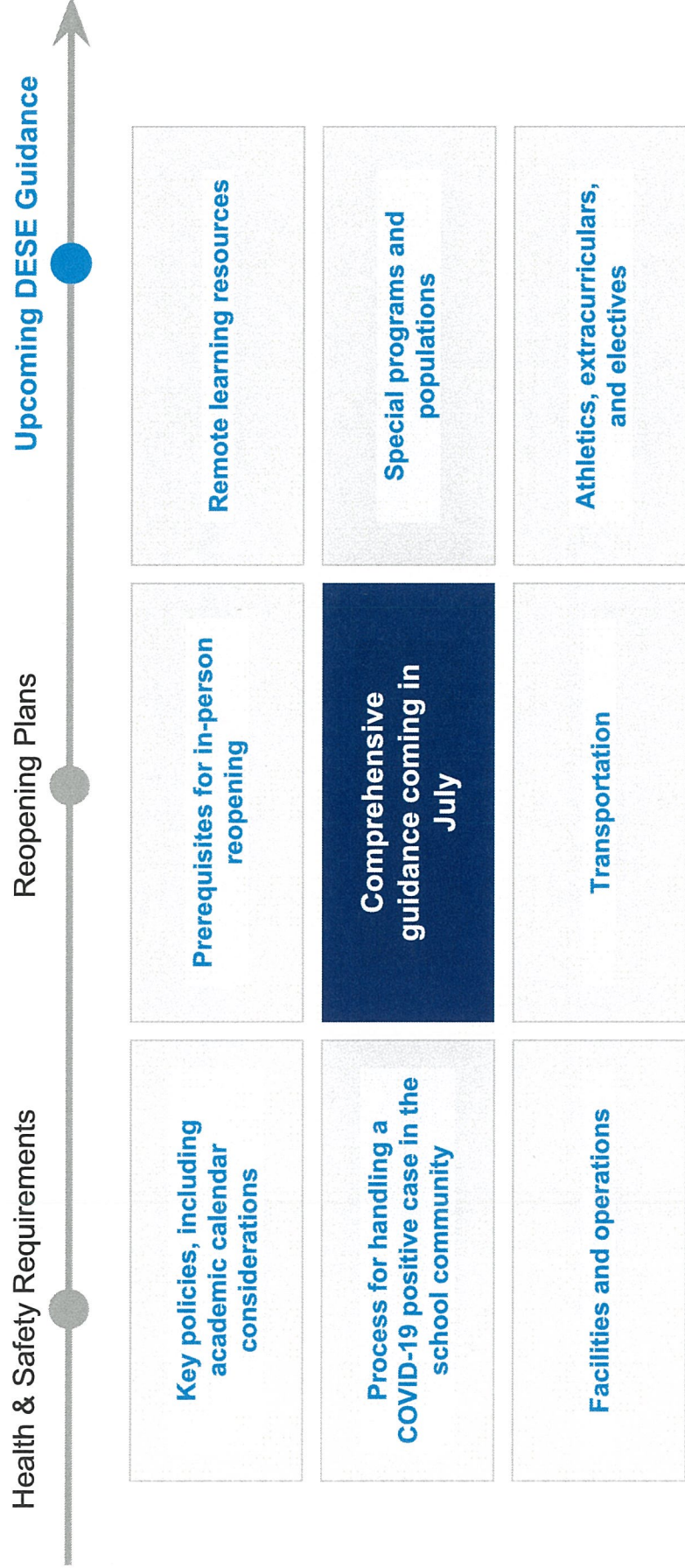


**Districts and schools will be required to submit their comprehensive fall reopening plans (all three models) to DESE in August**



**DESE will provide more guidance to districts shortly**

# To facilitate planning, DESE is working on additional, comprehensive guidance for districts on the following topics



**Wachusett Regional School District Committee  
July 2020-May 2021**

July 13, 2020	Virtual Meeting via Google Meet
July 27, 2020	Virtual Meeting via Google Meet
August 10, 2020	Virtual Meeting via Google Meet
August 24, 2020	Virtual Meeting via Google Meet
September 14, 2020	Location: format of meeting (virtual v in-person) TBD
September 29, 2020 (Tuesday)	Location: format of meeting (virtual v in-person) TBD
October 13, 2020 (Tuesday)	Location: format of meeting (virtual v in-person) TBD
November 9, 2020	Location: format of meeting (virtual v in-person) TBD
December 7, 2020	Location: format of meeting (virtual v in-person) TBD
January 11, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
January 25, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
February 8, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
March 1, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
March 15, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
April 12, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
April 26, 2021	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)
May TBD	Location: Wachusett Regional High School, Holden (TBD)

(approved by the WRSDC

July 13, 2020

Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Subcommittee

Charge:

- 1) To review K-12 curriculum and make recommendations to ensuring that black and multicultural voices are represented in all areas.
- 2) To work with administration to craft a Racism Intervention and Prevention plan.
- 3) To study and recommend both PD in equity, diversity and anti racism for WRSD staff and to recommend ways to promote and hiring of a diverse district staff.





Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

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## Fwd: Use of Disinfectant Chemicals and Students

1 message

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**Megan Weeks** <megan\_weeks@wrsd.net>

Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 8:26 AM

To: Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

Megan K Weeks, M.Ed  
Chair WRSD School Committee  
Assistant Principal, Murdock High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jennifer Paolilli** <jenpaolilli@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 8:37 PM

Subject: Use of Disinfectant Chemicals and Students

To: <questions@wrsd.net>

Dear WRSD Committee,

After reading through the Reopening Task Force Report, I have two specific concerns regarding the Health recommendations for both hybrid and full open.

1) In the report, it is recommended that older students wipe down their own surfaces. However, I strongly urge students to properly wash hands after doing so as the chemicals are not meant for skin contact. I am concerned that this will not happen and students will become exposed to unnecessary chemicals and that there will not be time or knowledge for them to do so.

2) In the report, surfaces are planned to be cleaned and wiped down multiple times throughout the day. However, you will need to take into account additional time to account for the proper usage of the chemical. Most disinfectants require a 3-10 minute dwell time (where the product remains wet on the surface). Students should not be allowed to touch surfaces while wet, else the product may not work correctly and students are now in contact with a chemical which needs to be washed off.

Thank you for your time and your hard work.

Jennifer Paolilli

99 Pleasant St, Holden, MA 01520

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Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

## Fwd: Public hearing comments 7/13/20

1 message

**Megan Weeks** <megan\_weeks@wrsd.net>

Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 8:25 AM

To: Rebecca Petersen <rebecca\_petersen@wrsd.net>

Megan K Weeks, M.Ed  
Chair WRSD School Committee  
Assistant Principal, Murdock High School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lynn Hanley** <lynnh1@charter.net>  
Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 9:33 PM  
Subject: Public hearing comments 7/13/20  
To: <questions@wrsd.net>

Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on tonight's meeting.

1. It is curious that there has been no survey yet of families, as noted by one committee member, to help determine families that do not intend to send their children back to school this year?

2. To continue on member Shapiro's comments about differentiating considerations for elementary, middle and high school students: DESE's use of research about child transmission is in fact too generalized and therefore misleading about lower risk among children. Recent research in other countries that have reopened their schools, as cited in this Sunday's New York Times, notes that transmission risk increases with age. Therefore it may be wiser to consider remote learning for middle and high school students due to that higher risk, while elementary students may be able to have some planned days of in-school learning.

3. It was noted that DESE is giving consideration to an altered school calendar this year, that might mean fewer required days for students. However, there was no mention of MCAS. What is the School Committee and Superintendent's view about waiving MCAS, given the loss of time on learning last spring and the potential for further learning loss this coming year?

4. With the elimination of Tier 4 and 5 cuts, it would be beneficial to confirm for the community that middle school foreign language and elementary music continue to be available and fully staffed.

Thank you again for communicating my comments, and for all the work that you do as a committee.

Lynn Hanley  
11 Wyoming Drive  
Holden

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