

Berkley School Committee
Special Meeting
August 4, 2020

AGENDA ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A special meeting of the Berkley School Committee was held at the Berkley Middle School Cafeteria on Tuesday, August 4, 2020. Mrs. Weber, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present

Jillleen Solomon
Jennifer Vincent
Christopher Ghilarducci
Tara Weber
Daniel Fagan

Other

Thomas Lynch, Superintendent
Patricia Silvia, Executive Assistant to Supt. & SC
Jennifer Francisco, Principal, BCS
Kimberly Hebert, Principal, BMS
Andrea Porter, Business Administrator
Melissa Abrego, Adm. For Student Services
Sarah Cogar, Assistant Principal, BCS
Timothy McCarthy, Head of Bldgs./Grounds
Diane Maxwell, Public

Mrs. Weber stated "Let the record show that this meeting is being electronically recorded. If anyone in the audience wishes to electronically record this meeting, you should notify the Committee at this time. Any such recording may be subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by the Chair to the extent permitted under the Open Meeting Law." One request was received to record for Facebook Live.

AGENDA ITEM #2: SCHOOL RE-OPENING PLAN, HYBRID MODEL

Mr. Lynch explained that many meetings were held with administrators, the planning committee and the teachers' union to discuss the three plan options. All agree that the best plan for Berkley is the Hybrid Model. This will give every student the opportunity to attend class in person each week. Students in Cohort A attend in person Monday and Tuesday. Students in Cohort B attend in person Thursday and Friday. The three days they are not in school in-person they are remote learning. On Wednesday the schools will be cleaned and teachers will prepare remote learning plans. Some high risk students and students with special needs will attend four days/week.

It was reported that all families will be sent a packet in the mail with their cohort information; siblings will be placed in the same cohort. An information sheet will be enclosed for families to complete and return. The information sheet will be for parents to provide the school with information on their plan for their student. This is needed to help with scheduling and transportation issues. Transportation guidelines are very strict allowing about 23/bus. First survey responses indicated that 57.7% will use the bus in morning and 65.2% in the afternoon. There was discussion about additional bus runs or buses that may be needed. This will not be known until surveys from parents are returned.

Full remote learning will be available for those who don't want their children to return to school part time. If they chose this, there will be a charge teacher in each school to monitor the student but no teacher instruction.

Mrs. Vincent stated districts are required to submit three plans to the DESE and to recommend one for approval. The school and union recommended the Hybrid model. It is not possible to support a full return of all students in person to school, with the current distancing requirements.

Mr. Lynch stated three additional teachers will be hired for grades 1, 4 and 7 to keep the class sizes small. The schools' schedules were explained by Mrs. Hebert and Mrs. Francisco. BMS will have 2 lessons in each content area during remote learning and four lessons for UA (music, art, health, PE). At BCS, over the 3 days of remote learning, they'll have eight academic lessons at each grade level and a lesson from each UA (music, art, computer and PE). Preschool will continue to operate as it normally would because their class size numbers are small. For remote learning assignments: PK, K and Gr 1 will use the see saw platform to push out lessons and receive work back from families. Gr 2, 3, 4 will use the Google classroom platform, same as BMS, and push lessons out and back that way. Teachers will have Google meets with students on a regular basis so students have contact with the whole class. A lunch will be added at each school so there will be four lunches instead of three. Students will sit with their class and be safely spread out in the cafeteria. Participation in remote learning on the day students are not in school is required, it is not optional. It is equivalent to a school day and grades will be given. A preliminary meeting was held with Bloom Bus. Their drivers will clean between routes. Further negotiation may be needed with them if additional buses or runs are needed. Drop off and pick up procedures will change. Police detail may be needed if a lot of parents opt to drop off students. Funding for this was discussed.

Question and answer session ensued. Mrs. Abrego provided information on remote lessons for special needs students. Differences between remote learning in the spring and plans for the fall were explained. The remote lessons will be pre-recorded, students won't be expected to follow the live classroom lessons, only Google meets will be live. BMS is still waiting for guidance on after school sports.

On the survey Info Sheet, parents need to indicate if their child is participating via virtual or hybrid model. Hybrid is part in person and part remote. Virtual is all remote and will be monitored by a teacher but is a platform that stands on itself. With virtual there is no student to student interaction; is a self-directed form of learning, there is no participation in any of the remote hybrid learning with BCS or BMS, it is also different from home schooling. The state may develop a virtual platform for the entire state so districts won't have to do that but it's still under discussion. Once a family decides to do hybrid or virtual, they cannot shift back and forth. If they want to change, they may have to wait until the next term begins. It is important to return the Info Form ASAP so schools can plan.

Students who need technology will be loaned a Chromebook or laptop. Mrs. Weber referenced the building guidelines and asked about air quality, windows and HVAC. Mr. McCarthy provided information on air filters and stated all windows at BMS open. New windows at BCS have been requested in our capital plan for several years and they will be checked before September.

Mask breaks will be given throughout the day, at recess, snack time and lunch. Teachers will have PPE, outdoor classrooms will be used when possible. BCS specialists will come to classrooms to avoid student movement. All students will be encouraged to wear masks, even young ones. There will be no attendance initiatives this year. Parents are encouraged to keep children home if they are not well.

It was recognized that a lot of time and effort have gone into developing these plans. Appreciation was extended to the administrators for their hard work. It was noted that this is voted tonight but is subject to change at any time. Mr. Lynch thanked the teacher and para unions for their cooperation and the administrators and planning committee for their hard work.

Mrs. Weber stated it is important to note that the Hybrid Model Comprehensive Plan is recommended by Mr. Lynch and the administrators as they feel it is effective and safe for staff and students of our community.

It was moved by Mrs. Vincent, seconded by Mrs. Solomon and VOTED to authorize the Superintendent to submit to DESE on or before August 10, 2020 the Hybrid Model as Berkley's Comprehensive Plan for the start of school in September, 2020.

Vote: UNANIMOUS

AGENDA ITEM #3: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Due to the pandemic, it is not feasible to open Berkley Public Schools as we normally would in September; therefore, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Berkley Teachers' Association is necessary.

It was moved by Mrs. Vincent, seconded by Mrs. Solomon and VOTED to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Berkley Teacher's Association as written.

Vote: UNANIMOUS

AGENDA ITEM #4: SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2020/21 (VOTE)

Mr. Lynch stated the only change to the 2020/21 calendar is the additional staff professional development days as required by DESE. Eight are scheduled for the beginning of September and dates for the other two are to be determined, as needed, based on possible changes in plans due to the pandemic. Students in Cohort A will start in school on September 14 and students in Cohort B will start in school on September 17.

It was moved by Mrs. Vincent, seconded by Mrs. Solomon and VOTED to approve the revised 2020/21 school calendar as presented with the understanding it could change if plans change again due to the pandemic.

Vote: UNANIMOUS

AGENDA ITEM #5: SURROUND CARE PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Surround Care has been closed since March when school closed due to the pandemic. The School Committee discussed in length if Surround Care should be available to parents when school opens in September. Mrs. Terrien expressed concern over how to keep the students safe because she knows they like to play in groups together and what they like to do is play board games and do sport activities as a group. It is risky to mix the students with different groups than they have been with in class all day because of the exposure. Guidelines only allow ten to a group. More staff would be needed for smaller groups which would increase the cost to parents. Responses to the first survey sent to parents indicate only 27.5% would use Surround Care in the Fall. There was agreement that Surround Care would not be offered at this time. It is physically and fiscally not possible to do at this time. Perhaps during the year if conditions improve, it can be offered again.

AGENDA ITEM #6: NEXT MEETING DATE

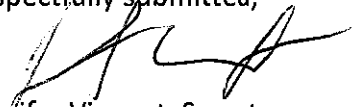
School Committee will meet next on Tuesday, August 25 at 5 PM.

AGENDA ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Vincent, seconded by Mrs. Solomon and VOTED to adjourn at 5:40 PM.

Vote: UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Vincent, Secretary

Enclosures:

Agenda

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Berkley Teachers' Association (BTA)

Berkley Public Schools Hybrid Model Proposal (7/28/20)

Revised Calendar 2020/21