



**TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, July 22, 2020, 5:30 PM
355 Migeon Ave – Zoom Meeting**

Minutes

1. Call to Order: 5:32 P.M.
2. Roll Call: Major Carbone, Ms. Cappabianca, Mr. Corey, Ms. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Eucalitto, Ms. Todor, Mr. Maniccia, Ms. Spino, Ms. Richardson, Ms. Fappiano, Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Fergusson, Mr. Arum, Ms. Klimaszewski, Ms. Schulte, Mr. Barlow, Ms. Herold
3. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Maniccia made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Mr. Kissko. All in favor.
4. The chair read a statement sent over by CABA to make it clear what decisions are State decisions and what decisions are district decisions. The chair said a lot of questions are asked on why we are not rolling out the hybrid model first and the answer is that we are not allowed to. The State requires us to have 3 plans.
5. School/Community Service/Public Participation: These comments are representing a paraphrased overview of the comment that was read into the record.
 - G.S – Parent of an Elementary school student questioned how her student with an IEP will receive services.
 - G – Stated that they hope our city chooses the science data and the feelings of teachers, parents and students and we are not out of the woods. They want distance learning lesson plans to be available weekly not daily.
 - M.O – Strongly urge the Torrington public schools to consider a two-day schedule: all odd graded classes would go 1 day, and all even grades would go on day 2.
 - V.G – “COVID19 is a killer and is highly contagious. Thank you for all your work and it is unfair that the State is not allowing partial re-opening off the bat.”
 - T.P – “Why can’t this be an open meeting due to COVID but we can send our kids to schools wearing masks all day long? Distance learning was a failure in my opinion.”
 - Teacher – “After reviewing the draft of the reopening plan I have serious concerns of all students and school staff. A full return to school would be making our students and staff an experiment. It makes sense to start the school year 50/50 model.”
 - M – Stated that they appreciate all of the hard work the district has done to provide the safest learning environment. Safety for all is our highest priority. We support to reduce capacity and do a staggered schedule.
 - M – Listed the many concerns about staff and students safety about going back to school.
 - T – Voiced their many concerns and one thing is that we are expecting our children to wear a mask the entire time. They suggested that when it comes to distance learning for older children; we should use zoom to participate.
 - J.L – “Thank you to everyone that worked on the reopening plan. Many of the comments stated today should be directed to our state governor and commissioner. He had a few questions on the teacher’s responsibilities and evaluations.”

6. Discussion

A. School Reopening: Ms. Lubomski presented a presentation on the School Reopening plan. We are a public school and we must follow what the Governor and Commissioner are saying. In our plan, the Commissioner is requiring that we have 3 phases. The 3 phases are: Minimal (In Person Learning), Moderate (Hybrid Learning), and High Spread (Remote Learning). Within the plan there were priorities set forth by the Government and Commissioner: Safety & Health, Educational Model, Social Emotional, Transportation, Food Service, Monitoring of Transmission and Communication. The Minimal Spread in person learning is 100% student attendance in school or remote learning parallel track. The moderate spread hybrid learning is 50% student attendance/ alternating attendance. The high spread of virus 0% students' attendance/ all distance learning. The safety measures are: social distancing, PPE: masks, face shields, Plexiglas, gloves, gowns, cohorts, cleaning and disinfecting, limiting visitors inside the building, no sharing of materials, no lockers, and no playground usage, bathroom usage, and nurses-isolation rooms, containment plan, monitor illnesses and COVID cases. There will be orientation videos of each school to inform families about PPE, classroom set-up, daily routines, and health measures. FAQs will be posted on the website. The estimated additional expenses are \$2.7 million. First day of school is September 8th. The surveys will be sent out to the parents and staff. The survey must be completed by August 1st. Ms. Richardson had a question regarding food service and the problem with people doing distance learning is how will they get their food on time if they are trying to be on schedule for classes? Ms. Lubomski said that they are working on that glitch. Mr. Eucalitto stated just for clarification the Governor has given these guidelines, if things improve there is a chance that the masks might go away. Ms. Lubomski stated that what we are presenting tonight, this is the plan we are presenting. The governor might say everything is wonderful, until he says that, I am obligated to present this to comply. If we presented a plan that they did not like, then it would be detrimental to our students because the days won't count. Ms. Fappiano asked if we have started interviewing teachers and buying material to prepare, or are we waiting for the ok from the State? Ms. Lubomski said that we have started and we are being thoughtful moving forward. We are not buying for the whole year, we are buying 60 days at a time. Ms. Richardson wanted to talk about the heat issue and wanted more information. Mr. Eucalitto stated that looking at the risk the children face, in CT we are in a good place, do we have a pediatrician with the kids underlying conditions? Ms. Lubomski stated that we must make sure that we are staying in our lane. Parents should be consulting with their physician to make sure it is the best decision for their child and their family. Ms. Fappiano asked did we consult our medical advisor? Ms. Lubomski replied yes, we are working with Dr. Currey. Ms. Fappiano is interested in how my kid's days will look like vs. distance learning. Ms. Lubomski stated that we will structure the days as much as possible. Mr. Maniccia asked if the younger students will be on the computer all day? No. Mr. Kissko stated that we cannot possibly think of everything, we have to trust our teachers. Ms. Spino asked if the in person learning and distance learning will be on the same pace/level? Yes. Mr. Eucalitto stated that parents

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have to make a risk assessment and decide if they will send their students to school or distance learn. Ms. Fappiano said that parents are being asked to choose between hard and harder. Mr. Maniccia said it is our job to approve the guidelines, the details will come after. The details cannot be done just yet until the guidelines are approved. The chair said that what each school looks like will be different depending on how many students are coming to school and how many are distance learning. Mr. Kissko stated that our job is to provide the guidelines and the teachers will follow the guidelines and compose their classroom with those guidelines. The chair stated that the reopening plan is a fluid document. Ms. Richardson stated that the community can use different avenues that board members cannot use to advocate for the change they want.

- B. Mask Policy #2011: The policy identifies the mask definitions and the consequences for mask refusal. The teachers will not be fighting this battle since it is a public health issue. The student will be sent to an isolation room where a phone call will be made to the parents to help explain the requirement for being in school and if they cannot meet the requirement then they have to distance learn, become compliant with the mask requirement or get a doctor's note. This is a CAFE policy and the Department of Public Health has approved this language. Ms. Hoehne stated that this is a temporary policy for everyone, and it is comprehensive. Mr. Eucalitto stated that there might be a lot of kids who might cause an issue and what if their parents are not available to answer the phone call during the day? Mr. Maniccia wanted to reiterate that this is a policy and that there is procedures that will be done at the building level. Ms. Lubomski stated that the administrators would appreciate that there is a policy even if it is temporary. Ms. Richardson wanted to make sure that the students and staff cannot wear anything that hides who they are and that must be very clear in procedures.
7. Action Items:
 - A. Mask Policy #2011 – Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve the mark policy with the changes discussed, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
 8. Comments for the Good of the Order: The following comments are paraphrased.

Ed Corey – “I am happy with the plan and thank you to everyone who worked on it. I am not enthused that we are reopening.”

Ellen Hoehne – “Thank you everyone who worked on, it was a lot of work.”

Jess Richardson – “I am optimistic that we as a community can work together and we can figure this out at the same time.”

Gary Eucalitto – “I concur and I hope the parents, students and teachers understand you'll do the best you can and I think the children can be the safest they can possibly be. I know the teachers and administrators will do their best.”

Molly Spino – “Thank you for all the work.”

John Kissko – “Thank you for all the work.”

Armand Maniccia – “Thank you to everyone for all of this work.”

Nikki Fappiano – “Thank you for all your hard work and I know I asked a lot of questions and I am a parent and I appreciate you answering the questions.”

Chair – “I want to thank everyone. This is a very emotional time for everyone we are doing the best what's safest for our students and staff given the guidelines. If parents

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have questions and concerns reach out to the schools and they may be helpful in making those decisions. We will keep the communication flowing as best as we can.”

9. Adjournment: Mr. Kissko made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Richardson second. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 P.M.