

Concord School District  
Board of Education  
**Instructional Committee**

**Date:** September 23, 2020

**Committee members present:** Barb Higgins, *Chair*; Gina Cannon, Danielle Smith, David Parker

**Other Board members present:** Tom Croteau, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards

**Administrators:** Kathleen Murphy, *Business Administrator*; Donna Palley, *Assistant Superintendent*; Jack Dunn, *Business Administrator*; Mike Reardon, *CHS Principal*, Kris Gallo, *CMS Principal*, Susan Lauze, *BGS Principal*, Paulette Fitzgerald, *RMS Principal*, Kaileen Chilauskas, *CHS Assistant Principal*, Katie Scarpati, *MBS Principal*

Committee Chair Barb Higgins called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The agenda was to hear an update on the transition to a hybrid school model, including a presentation of schedules by Principals, and staff resources. She noted that planning and implementation were fluid, based on recommendations from the CDC and the NH Public Health Department. She noted that the Board had voted at its last full meeting not to continue using *Teams* for committee meetings due to significant staffing issues.

Superintendent Murphy made it clear that transitioning to a hybrid model relied on data from the CDC and NH Department of Public Health.

Donna Palley reviewed the emergency remote learning mode from March 16 to June 4, 2020, noting that it was primarily asynchronous (not live). She stated that feedback from surveys suggested the need for more live interaction with teachers; more peer-to-peer interaction, more feedback from teachers to students, and more structure in the day. Over the summer, staff members and families collaborated on models for learning, technology supports, safety procedures and protocols, social-emotional and other needs. In the spring and summer, 80 students attended CRTC and 119 students attended CHS and a small site on the Heights, and students returned to athletics for drills/skills. There were no reported cases of Covid-19. She discussed the decision to transition to a hybrid model, noting that the NH Division of Public Health developed a "decision matrix" to assist with transitions among fully remote, hybrid, and fully in-person models (see end of document). She also discussed the charts "Determining the Level of Covid-19 Community Transmissions," the NH Division of Public Health "School Dashboard," which is live and updated daily, and "Determining the School-Specific Covid-19 Impact Level" (also at end of document).

CMS Principal Kris Gallo reviewed the priorities for both remote and hybrid models. A cohort model would be used, and classes would be divided into two groups: A and B. Group A would attend school on Monday and Thursday, and Group B would attend school

on Tuesday and Friday. Remote meetings/instruction would take place on Wednesdays. "Vulnerable students" would attend for up to four days, if staffing is sufficient. The hybrid curriculum mirrors as closely as possible the curriculum for those students who are continuing in the remote model. As students may be in front of screens from 7:45 to 2:30 pm, teachers have built in several breaks throughout the school day. She said Principals were waiting for staffing information from Human Resources before assigning students to specific teachers, and specifically noted that administrators might not be able to keep students with their current teachers, based on parent choice or teacher choice for remote learning, but were doing best to make those decisions quickly and get the information out to parents. Decisions about how many teachers would be needed were based on student data, in order to move forward with hybrid model. She reiterated that students could not necessarily stay with their current teacher, and parents could not ask if their child's teacher was going to continue in a remote mode, based on confidentiality of health information.

Principal Gallo said that teachers may be taking childcare leave if they needed to stay home with their children. She also noted that Wednesdays would not be days off but would be shorter, with students still receiving some live instruction.

MBS Principal Katie Scarpati said that classes were half the normal size (7-11 students). She described a sample school day for both in-person and home instruction: morning meeting, math, writing, interactive read-alouds, guided reading, reading mini-lessons, word study, science/social studies, and specialists/Project Key time. She said the time allotted for direct live instruction was the same, but was "front-loaded" for in-school students, especially with smaller class sizes. There was discussion about student assessment and parent/teacher conferences. Ms. Scarpati noted that kindergarten screening had been done entirely online and worked better than expected. She said the Principals would be discussing parent/teacher conferences over Zoom or other ways.

Superintendent Murphy indicated that rather than "deep-clean" the schools only on Wednesdays, the custodial staff would do a deep clean every day, and an "over and above" cleaning on Wednesdays.

Ms. Cannon noted that, for parents concerned that students would receive only two days of instruction per week, actually more material could be covered due to smaller class sizes.

RMS Principal Paulette Fitzgerald presented a chart reflecting the first week transition to the hybrid model for sixth graders. Siblings were grouped between high school and middle school, with schedules then transmitted to elementary schools. She emphasized that Wednesday was not a day off but would include advisories, teacher office hours in the morning, and teacher collaboration and clubs in the afternoon. She presented charts for seventh grade and eighth grade, noting that over a two-week period, students would have each class in person three times. She said the Grade 8 schedule would not "waterfall" as some student and staff were shared with the high school (math classes). She noted there would be frequent mask breaks, and Grade 6 also would have recess. She said it was hoped that for grade 6, teachers could move between classes; for grade 7, students would have to

move to science labs. She said it was more challenging to have grade 8 students in one room all day. As they are on the second floor on their own wing (except for science), they planned to have a cohort of 10 students move to one exploratory (i.e. art), which would also reduce exposure for teachers. She noted that teachers would focus on attendance to make sure students were actively engaged in their learning. Attendance would be taken in advisory, and in every single class. She it was hoped that staffing numbers would result in each teacher having one remote class in their schedule, as they were trying to keep all students with their same teachers.

CHS Principal Mike Mr. Reardon described a high school hybrid model schedule that provided for students to attend school in-person for periods 1, 3, 5 and 7 twice in a week they are calling the "Crimson Week" and attend periods 2, 4, 6, and 8 the following week, called the "Tide Week." On Crimson week, students would attend period 2, 4, 6 and 8 classes remotely on Wednesdays; on Tide Week students would attend periods 1, 3, 5, and 7 remotely on Wednesdays. Students opting for the hybrid model will attend school with their cohort group twice weekly; either on Monday and Thursday (Cohort 1) or Tuesday and Friday (Cohort 2). Wednesday will be a remote learning day for everyone. Teachers would offer office hours on Wednesdays. Teacher collaboration time would also occur on Wednesdays, and clubs would meet at 2:00 p.m. He noted that teachers would focus on social/emotional well-being throughout this year. He said while a freshman orientation did occur, the first week of hybrid would provide another transition for those students. He said that in this extraordinary situation, and given the pandemic, what was important was getting students face to face with their teachers and each other, twice a week, for 90 minutes each time, to create a sense of community and work with peers. He noted that no teachers or students would have to change teachers, or courses, if they were staying remote. The guidance department would be meeting with fully remote students on a weekly basis. He said there would be very little tolerance for mask or social distancing violations, or wandering the building. Discipline logs would be kept, and if a student could not comply, he or she would need to go to remote learning. [Later clarification: scheduling models had been put out to all departments for their input and that the final schedule, presented at this meeting, had been vetted through the Curriculum Facilitators.]

There was discussion about balancing remote and in-person staffing, the difficulty of teaching both in person and managing students on Zoom, and challenges for AP and high-level classes.

### **Update on staffing**

Ms. Palley displayed a staffing chart of those planning to teach remotely at each level, noting that the deadline for requests had passed. At that point, at the elementary level there were 7 electing remote and 86 in person; at the middle school level there were 8 electing remote and 58 in person; and at the high school level there were 17 remote and 64 in person. She reviewed the status of student choice of learning models as of that meeting, noting that there might not be enough students who are remote to retain all the teachers who want to be remote. She pointed out that each teacher should be kept at his/her grade

level if possible, and there might be a need to have teachers teaching remotely have students from several schools. She said that, if students were able to come back to school within the year, administrators would prefer them to stay with the teacher they had been with.

Superintendent Murphy thanked the administrators, especially those presenting. She discussed safety protocols and procedures: screening (dual process – at home and at school); mandatory mask-wearing; 6-foot distancing; “cohorting;” no visitors; no large groups; movement in buildings limited/controlled; daily cleaning/disinfecting; use of outdoor spaces encouraged. She noted that students would be moved to the remote model if they did not comply with these protocols. She described protocols for students or staff who became symptomatic; if they had a family member who tested positive; if someone traveled outside New England; and what would be done in the case of a Covid-19 diagnosis of a student or staff member.

If a student or staff member tested positive for Covid-19:

1. School member tests positive
2. Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) contacts school’s administrator
3. Administrator can also contact DPHS, as appropriate
4. Administrator contacts Superintendent
5. Administrator assists in identify close contacts (within 6 feet for 10 minutes or more) with the person confirmed with Covid-19
6. DPHS and administrators issue school/community notifications, as appropriate
7. School tracks quarantines (for asymptomatic close contacts) and isolations/test results (for those symptomatic/diagnosed) to anticipate return dates.

There was a brief discussion of the timetable of a message that went out to parents regarding a band member who tested positive.

Superintendent Murphy stated that moving to a hybrid model was in the best interest of children, as they need to see and connect with their teacher and with peers. Social/emotional learning and the foundation for educational learning could best be set by in-person instruction. Students connect with staff members including bus drivers, lunch workers, teachers, educational assistants, and those relationships cannot be replaced by online platforms. While all administrators naturally worry about student safety or an outbreak, the District was prepared, and could “pivot” rapidly.

There was a brief discussion about emphasizing the message to stay home if teachers or students had symptoms, the need for substitute teachers and educational assistants, and whether a teacher who needed to be quarantined but was asymptomatic, could teach remotely, and the need for substitute teachers who could monitor classrooms. A concern was expressed that “vulnerable” students had been segregated, and might need to be reintegrated into a class. Ms. Palley noted that those students had had their regular day with their class all along. There was discussion of whether and how a family could shift from remote and to hybrid or vice versa. The with natural trimester

(elementary) and semester/quarter (middle and high school) schedule would be identified time periods to make the change.

Several public comments included concerns about curriculum, and whether Wednesdays at CHS were via Zoom (synchronous on those days). It was stated that science labs should occur, as well as ROPE, Environmental Science and Freshwater Ecology (based on field trips). Mr. Reardon noted that ROPE is ongoing, but field trips were not currently allowed. It was noted that the survey sent at the beginning of September might be taken as a decision by parents on one model or the other. Ms. Palley noted that parents call their administrators and confirm their choices. A suggestion was made that Principals mail their families to note this is what they picked and confirm whether this is what they wanted.

Ms. Higgins commented that a full remote curriculum, and a transition to a hybrid model, had never been done before, and while uncertainty was difficult, the administrators and Board wanted the best for students, and that there was a group of people at every level who wanted to do the right thing.

Superintendent Murphy reiterated that the administration would rely on available resources available, first calling the NH Department of Public Health with any suspected case. A decision could be made to shut down one school but not the entire District.

**The Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Smith).**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Chair*

Linden Jackett, *Recorder*

Decision Matrix for Transitioning between Models				
		Level of Community Transmission		
		Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Level of School Impact	Low	Hybrid	Hybrid	Remote
	Medium	Hybrid	Hybrid	Remote
	High	Remote	Remote	Remote

## Determining the Level of COVID-19 Community Transmissions

*(Based on guidelines from Bureau of Infectious Disease Control)*

*We will use the highest level identified by any one of the criteria for Merrimack County.*

Criteria	Level of Community Transmission		
	Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
COVID-19 PCR test positivity as a 7 day average	< 5%	5 – 10%	>10%
Number of new infections per 100,000 population over prior 14 days	<50	50-100	>100
Number of new hospitalizations per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days	<10	10-20	>20

## Determining the School-Specific COVID-19 impact level

*(Based on guidelines from Bureau of Infectious Disease Control)*

Criteria	Level of School Impact		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within the school facility	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission within the school setting	One cluster* in the school	Two or more unrelated clusters* in the school with onset (based on source case symptom onset dates) within 14 days of each other
Student absenteeism due to illness	<15%	15-30%	>30%
Staff capacity to conduct classes and school operations <sup>†</sup>	Normal	Strained	Critical

*\* A cluster is defined as 3 or more individuals confirmed with COVID-19 who are part of a related group of individuals (e.g., classroom) who had the potential to transmit infection to each other through close contact.*