

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
REMOTE MEETING  
AUGUST 4, 2020**

Present: Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Chair  
Ms. Kate Bowen, Secretary  
Ms. Amy Checkoway  
Mr. Michael Crowley  
Ms. Tara Donner  
Ms. Evelyn Gomez  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

**1. OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to Order

Andrea Prestwich called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

1.2 Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns.

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.4 Chair's Report

In the interest of time, the Chair did not present a report.

1.5 Superintendent's Report

In the interest of time, the Superintendent did not present a report.

**2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

**3. MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Opening Schools – fall 2020 Presentation of Hybrid and Remote Models

Over the past several weeks, school administrators and faculty have been working on options for opening schools. They have attended building based meetings, professional development workshops, and meetings with Belmont Education Association leaders. The presentation at this meeting will explain the elements of three “return to learning” options. A google form will be sent to parents on August 5 to submit questions regarding the three options. Families will complete a survey on the hybrid options, which will be explained at this meeting. The data will be used to inform the decisions on finalizing which option to choose for beginning the school year.

The three options being considered are 1) In-person with restrictions 2) Hybrid return 3) Full-remote. These three options will allow the district to respond to whatever the health situation is in September and throughout the year.

The plans for each option are a result of many meetings with stakeholder including Belmont Public Schools Leadership Council, Belmont Education Association, PTO/PTA Presidents, Town Departments, Aftercare providers, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) calls, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) virtual conference in July and daily administration meetings.

During the month of July, an occupancy feasibility study was completed at each of the schools. This study measured the classrooms using DESE’s 3-foot spacing standard. It was determined based on the pressure tests, that it would not be possible to bring all students and staff back into the buildings while maintaining the required distance. Therefore, full in-person learning is not an option for fall 2020.

Superintendent John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias and Director of Human Capital Michael McAllister provided an overview of the different hybrid models. The hybrid model reduces the number of students attending school at one time. It divides the students into two cohorts (A & B). In each hybrid model, students with complex needs will attend every day. In elementary schools and middle schools English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies would be taught on the in-person day. Art, Music, and Physical Education would be taught on a remote day at the elementary level. World Languages, Health and Engineering would also be taught on a remote day at the middle school level.

At the high school level, the plan is to keep the Program of Studies unchanged and schedule all classes students signed up for last spring. Students will receive direct instruction with a teacher, independent and group work, and project based learning opportunities. There will be an X block for additional support and/or reinforcement of content.

With each of the hybrid models, full attendance will be taken and expected. Students will receive feedback and will be assessed in a way they were not last spring: traditional grades will be given.

A description along with the pros and cons was provided for the following seven hybrid model proposals:

#### HYBRID

##### ***Hybrid Proposal #1: Younger students full in-person; all other grades remote learning only.***

Younger grades return fully in-person, but are physically spread across different district schools. PreK-2 in their current elementary schools; 3-4 at BHS; 5-6 at Chenery

##### ***Hybrid Proposal #2: Morning or afternoon, lunch at home.***

Half in a.m., leave before lunch; half in p.m. arrive after lunch.  
Students receive synchronous remote instruction when they are not in school.

***Hybrid Proposal #3: Day-by-day, Wednesday at home.***

Half of the students attend each day on alternating days (Cohort A: Mon/Thur; Cohort B: Tue/Fri)  
Wednesdays all remote with prepared work (asynchronous) while teachers are in planning meetings

***Hybrid Proposal #4: Day-by-day in couplets, Wednesday is at home.***

Half of the students attend in two-day couplets (Cohort A: Mon/Tues; Cohort B: Thur/Fri)  
Wednesdays all remote with prepared work (asynchronous) while teachers are in planning meetings

***Hybrid Proposal #5: Week-by-week***

Half of the students attend each week on alternating weeks.

***Hybrid Proposal #6: Every two weeks***

Half of the students attend for two-week stretches on alternating “fortnights”

***Hybrid Proposal #7: ‘More pros than cons’***

All days shortened by 60 minutes to accommodate contractual requirements for teacher Preparation and meetings (all others could be accommodated during the day)  
Maintains traditional start and end times for teachers for each school

**FULL REMOTE**

If it is determined full remote learning is the safest plan to implement, decisions will be made based on previous input from parents about the remote learning that took place during spring. Instruction will be synchronous and students will receive feedback and will be given traditional grades. Traditional schedules will be followed but may vary by level. Students will not be on screen all day. Students with “complex” needs will attend every day.

Belmont Public Schools will submit their preliminary plans to DESE on July 31. DESE will review the plans and provide feedback by August 7. The family survey will be available from August 5 – 10. On August 6, the School Committee will hold a Community Forum to receive input on the plans and they will vote on a final plan on August 11. A final decision will be submitted to DESE on August 12.

**3.2 Review of 2020-21 School Calendar**

Superintendent John Phelan explained DESE and the BEA discussed safer ways to re-enter school. It was determined educators need more time to prepare for students coming back. They signed a Memorandum of Agreement, which allows a reduction in the number of school days from 180 to 170. The ten days will allow for preparation for the school year and the first day of school for students in Belmont will be September 16. In past years, the staff had a professional development day prior to the students coming back. This coming school year, the professional development day will be on November 3 since schools will be closed for Election Day. The School Committee will vote on the 2020-21 school calendar at their August 6 meeting.

**4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)**

**4.1 Finance Subcommittee**

There was no report from the Finance Subcommittee.

4.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

There was no report from the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

4.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

There was no report from the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee.

4.4 Capital Budget Committee

There was no report from the Capital Budget Committee.

4.5 Warrant Committee

There was no report from the Warrant Committee.

4.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

Members of the Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee and school administrators toured the building site earlier in the day.

4.7 Community Path Committee

The Community Path Committee will meet on August 14 for a discussion on access points around the path.

4.8 Financial Task Force II

The Financial Task Force II met over the last two weeks to determine the amount and the timing of the override. A decision was made to postpone the override vote until April 21 in order to see how much funding will be provided by the State.

4.9 Rink Working Group

The Rink Working Group will meet on August 5.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1 Consent Agenda - None

5.2 Personnel Items - None

5.3 Business Items – None

5.4 Approval of Minutes - None

**6. ADJOURN**

*On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Evelyn Gomez, it was **VOTED** unanimously on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by



Catherine Bowen, Secretary