

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
March 7, 2022

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BELMONT, MA

DATE: March 28, 2022
TIME: 9:09 AM

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway, Chair
Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
Mr. Mike Crowley
Mr. Ralph Jones
Mr. Jamal Saeh
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

Committee Chair Amy Checkoway called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

2. MAJOR BUSINESS

2.1 Mask Policy (Discussion and Vote)

Chair Checkoway stated there would be no public comments during the special SC meeting, which was put forth to vote possible changes to the current mask policy. At their 4:30 pm meeting, the Board of Health voted to lift the mask mandate for the Town and Schools and recommended that individuals not vaccinated should continue to mask. Member Saeh spoke to the framing of the BOH decision, specifying it was based on current vaccination and COVID rates.

Ms. Checkoway stated the discussion would focus on whether to lift the current mask policy. Member Moriarty voiced appreciation of the BoH's thoroughness of presented data and is comfortable with their decision. Ms. Moriarty supports individuals' decisions to wear masks if it is best for them. Member Crowley said masks have been a protection for children and families, and with numbers shifting dramatically, he feels it is time to lift the mask mandate. Chair Checkoway also supports lifting the mask mandate, and supports families who wish to continue to mask.

Member Bowen, Policy Subcommittee Chair proposed the current Face Covering Policy 5005-A be edited in numbering to 50005-A1 and have added language. *"...when voted by the SC. When this policy is not in place, 5005-A2 will be in effect."* (SC Document: 5005-A_Face_Coverings_DraftEdits_2_24_22)

Discussion occurred around the need to vote the policy in/out or to base its status on the guidance of metrics, similar to the BoH decision. The SC stayed with the voting language.

Chair Checkoway asked if there was a motion to suspend the current face covering policy and adopt the new policy.

On a motion offered by Kate Bowen and seconded by Amy Checkoway, it was VOTED unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to suspend SC Face Covering Policy 5005-A1 with included amendments/edits.

Discussion then turned to the second Face Covering policy document 5005-A2, which has MASC guidance implicit in the draft. (*SC Document: MASC_Template_FaceCovering_2_24_22*) Member Bowen suggested removing the bus mandate language as it is no longer applicable. Chair Checkoway noted the language regarding unvaccinated and immunocompromised speaks to the preschool students. Also of note was that masks are still required by DESE in nurse's offices.

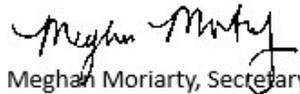
Superintendent Phelan was asked about the feasibility to communicate the change with families by tomorrow. Mr. Phelan responded the district readied three draft communications in anticipation of a vote. After the 7:00 pm Select Board meeting vote, a communication will go out to all families regarding the change.

On a motion offered by Jamal Saeh and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote, to put School Committee Face Covering policy 5005-A2 in place.

3. ADJOURN

On a motion offered by Mike Crowley and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was VOTED unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:


Meghan Moriarty, Secretary