

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
December 28, 2020
6:15 p.m.

Members attending: Sharlene Cronin, SusanMary Redinger, Suzanne Allen, Abby Besse, Shannon Molloy, and Linda Dwight Absent: Maureen Babcock

Others in attendance Nick Thornton, Taylor Caroom, Brooke Caroom, Scott Hoffman, Josh Myler

SusanMary Redinger called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Taylor Caroom read the Vision Statement.

SusanMary Redinger thanked everyone for all of their time working on this project and for making time during vacation week to attend this meeting.

SusanMary Redinger read a statement indicating that the meeting was being held remotely and the meeting was being held via video conferencing. Members in attendance were identified through a roll call process.

Public Commentary: None

SARS-CoV-2 Screening Initiative Presentation and Discussion (VOTE)

Shannon Molloy thanked everyone for being able to attend tonight and thanked everyone for all of the work that has been done thus far. A special thanks to Harvard Schools Trust, the PTO, the Harvard Teacher's Association and administration.

Liz Ruark thanked Dr. Dwight, the Harvard Teacher's Association and the School Committee for their leadership during this pandemic time.

Liz Ruark explained the reason and process behind the Covid 19 screening initiative.

*The Broad Institute is the lab that will be processing the PCR tests.

*CIC is the company that will maintain relationship with the Broad Institute

*Testing will be done once weekly.

*Watertown, Wellesley and Salem have already started this type of testing.

*The tests will be pooled testing and tested in groups of 10.

Toby Bazarnick explained the fundraising process.

*Costs for the first 2 weeks of testing will be provided through grants and the School Committee.

*After the first 2 weeks, funding will be provided through individual, corporate matches, small businesses, foundations and large businesses. Donations designated for COVID-testing can be sent to the Harvard Schools Trust.

*The cost of program is approximately \$8K per week.

*The duration of program would be 21 weeks (or until the last week of the school year) at a total estimated cost of \$163,000.

Impact of the Program

- *Peace of Mind for teachers and families.
- *Ability to isolate non-symptomatic cases swiftly.
- *Additional evidence that anti-COVID measures are working.
- *Additional data to inform future policy revisions.

Shannon Molloy made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to move that the School Committee endorse the screening initiative as proposed, recognizing that fundraising will be conducted by COVID-Safe Schools and managed by the Harvard Public Schools

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Note: COVID-Safe Schools is a group of parent volunteers, a school committee member, the lead school nurse and the district superintendent who have worked collaboratively on the screening initiative.

SARS-CoV-2 Screening Agreement Signature Authorization (VOTE)

The Committee discussed approving the agreement with CIC that Dr. Dwight and SusanMary Redinger will sign.

Shannon Molloy made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to authorize SusanMary Redinger, chair and Dr. Linda Dwight, superintendent, to sign the agreement with CIC Health, LLC.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

SARS-CoV-2 Grant Approvals (VOTE)

The following grants were presented to the School Committee for approval.

The Harvard PTO - \$2,500 -for SARS-CoV-2 Screening for In-Person Staff and Students

The Harvard Teachers Association - \$2,500 - for SARS-CoV-2 Screening for In-Person Staff and Students.

Shannon Molloy made a motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to accept the grants from the PTO and Harvard Teachers Association as presented. (\$2,500 each)

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Shannon Molloy made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to accept all monies from fundraising efforts managed by The Harvard Schools Trust on behalf of the COVID-Safe Schools program.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

SARS-CoV-2 Funding Proposal (VOTE)

Dr. Dwight explained that in order to begin baseline testing on January 4th, we need start-up funds from the School Committee. We are requesting up to \$11,000 be allocated from a revolving account for this purpose. The \$11,000 would be combined with a gift from the PTO for \$2,500 and Harvard Teachers' Association for \$2,500 to cover the first two weeks of testing at \$8,000 per week.

The two-week coverage of funding would provide time for the fundraising efforts to succeed. The COVID Safe Schools program will continue to cost approximately \$8,000 per week and will require donations from individuals, families, community members, and corporations. The Harvard Schools Trust has generously agreed to process the donation and gift the funds to the School District for this purpose.

Shannon Molloy made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to allocate up to \$11,000 from the Devens Fund to support SARS-CoV-2 testing through the agreement between Harvard Public Schools and CIC Health, LLC.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Superintendent Update

Dr. Dwight outlined how the program COVID-Safe Schools screening initiative would be implemented. With this screening initiative it is hoped that schools will be able to keep students in attendance in the hybrid model.

Calendar Change – Monday, January 4th will become a full day off from school to facilitate the testing drive-in schedule. This day would be added to the end of the year. Tuesday and Wednesday will be remote days for all students with principals sharing modified schedules with families.

Information Sharing – we will send out communication to families of the schedule change through our call system.

In order to get information out and answer any questions, we will also hold a parent virtual information session on Wednesday evening, December 30, 2020 at 7 p.m.

The Drive in Process: Parents/guardians with children and student drivers will access the driveway off of Pond Road.

Bus Option: Students who regularly ride the bus may choose that option to access the test site and will then return home.

Drive Up Vehicle Schedule – Test will be performed while students are in their vehicles.

Permission slips – district permission slips and the CIC health forms will be sent directly to parents/guardian.

Sharlene Cronin made the motion and Suzanne Allen seconded to make Monday, January 4th an official day off of school.

VOTE: Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

School Committee Commentary

Shannon Molloy – by making data informed decisions, it allows us to keep as many kids in school as possible. If screening minimizes risk, policies could be changed in the future to allow for more in person attendance. For now, no changes will be made.

SusanMary Redinger gave a huge thanks to volunteers, as well as Toby, Liz and Shannon. Asked folks to find time over the next week to relax. Very excited about moving the program forward.

Adjournment

With no objection, SusanMary Redinger adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

