

August 10, 2020

A special meeting of the Westfield School Committee was held on Monday, August 10, 2020, at 5:30 pm remotely (due to COVID-19 crisis). Members present by roll call were: Bo Sullivan, Diane Mayhew, Bo Sullivan, Cindy Sullivan, Heather Sullivan, and Tim O'Connor. Chairman Humason was not in attendance. At 6:28 pm Ramon Diaz entered the meeting.

At 5:30 pm Vice Chair Tim O'Connor called the meeting to order. Vice Chair Tim O'Connor chaired the meeting in the absence of Chairman Humason.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Public participation, excluding personnel:

Cindy Sullivan read the following emails:

Karen Kennedy, Kingsley Ave, Haydenville, MA

I just read through the Superintendent's report to the Westfield News. So I wanted to ask the school committee a couple of questions if that is feasible. I work for Westfield Schools as a contracted employee. I am the Autism Consultant for the two high schools and the transition program. I have worked for Westfield for eight years in this capacity.

My questions are:

1. I see that the recent school committee meeting was cancelled due to weather and school committee members did not have electricity in their homes. So this would indicate to those who read this that the school committee is not meeting in person for these meetings. So my question is: Why would you not be meeting in person if it was safe to do so, especially since you are a small number of people and not a classroom full of students or a school full of students and staff? Why is meeting remote still happening for your group, but we want to send hundreds of students back into buildings?

2. I am hearing from colleagues that they are buying different types of safety equipment on their own to ensure their safety at school. This should not be happening. The district/ the state department of education, the federal government should supply schools with these pieces of equipment.

Teachers/staff should receive assurance that they will be provided with the most protective equipment for their safety.

3. Building safety and health: How is the school committee being assured that the school buildings are equipped and up to date on the best air quality ventilation systems to ensure that those in the school building will have quality purified air, considering that this virus is spread through the air and not only droplets but new research suggests that it can stay in the air for some time before no longer being a threat to anyone. How will the district make sure that these systems are up to par?

4. Maintaining social distance. This is really a big one for me. The CDC and many of the USA researchers, medical professionals and top infectious disease experts continue to say 6 feet. Every place in the USA maintains 6 ft space between people; grocery lines, medical office waiting rooms, restaurants, most businesses that are currently open, are all maintaining 6 feet distance between people. Why are we going to go with DESE citing the WHO for 3 feet? This should be unacceptable to the families of Westfield and to the staff of Westfield schools. We should have the same respect for social distancing as

the rest of the nation. This is common sense and is the reason that other countries have been more successful than the USA in combating this virus. I am not a union member, but my understanding through association with union members that the MTA is saying that DESE needs to change its recommendation to 6 feet and anything less is unacceptable.

5. As a special educator, and someone who has taught children with special educational needs, I do understand the difficulty remote learning was for this population. BUT, I also do not believe that this population should be the experiment to see how reopening goes. These are the students with the most health issues, the most immune compromised systems and who also present challenging behaviors that will require less than 3 feet distance in order to maintain safety of the teachers/staff working with them. How will the district ensure that both students and staff will be safe?

6. What will the district policy be if a staff or student comes down with COVID-19? How will this be handled? Will school shut down for 14 days to stop the spread? Will only those through contact tracing be sent home?

7. DESE states that schools will not be responsible for checking temperatures and rely on families to do so. Is this the stance that Westfield will be taking? My concern here is that often students arrive at school only to go right to the nurse's office because they are sick and a parent sent them anyway. How will this be addressed to ensure the safety of all?

8. Is waiting two to three weeks long enough to ensure that there are no new virus cases or that no one has the virus at this point. We all know and understand from listening to the news and health experts, that this virus can be "hidden" in those who are asymptomatic. We also know that testing is not accurate, as you can be negative one day and positive the next. How are we going to ensure that everyone is safe when we do not have reliable testing to identify who is symptomatic?

9. How will the district "isolate" a symptomatic student" ?

10. What if a student was sent home and came back the next day, what would be the district's response?

11. Will the staff be told when there is someone symptomatic? Or if someone has the virus?

12. Will we have to use our sick time for quarantine time or if we come down with the virus? What if your symptoms require you to be out for a longer period of time? How will the district handle that?

13. There are so many other concerns and questions that I could go on and on. I have addressed many of my concerns to the schools reopening committee as well. But these 12 points are some of the key points I wanted to make the committee aware of, although I would hope that these are also your concerns.

14. On a last note, I see that Governor Baker has just released new guidelines for limiting the number of people gathering outdoors from 100 to 50 but still stands that those gathering indoors limit the number of people to 25. How can the district reopen with those state guidelines?

15. How will the district respond to those students and families who do not adhere to the mask wearing rule? What if students refuse to wear a mask or maintain social distancing?

16. What about classrooms/office that do not have windows or adequate ventilation?

Thank you for listening to my concerns and I hope that you will be able to answer some of these questions to the school community. I hope that you are all well and that you continue to be so.

Claire Howard, Franklin Street, Westfield

To begin, I would like to express my appreciation to Superintendent Czaporowski and all members of the committee for your commitment to our district. I am an elementary ESL teacher and what I want more than anything is to return to the classroom with my students, but only when it can be done safely. To ensure the safety of all students and staff, I strongly support returning to school with the fully remote option. If you decide to proceed with the phased hybrid model reopening plan, please make masks mandatory for all students, including those in preK, kindergarten and first grade. Also please require that students and staff maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance.

Dawn Altieri, Knollwood Drive, Westfield

My name is Dawn Altieri and in favor of the hybrid learning. I have 2 students one at the high school and one at the tech. They are both visual learners and have missed a lot. My biggest concern for the remote is the structure. Thank you.

Jeffrey Amanti, Loomis Ridge, Westfield

During these trying times, it is more important than ever to continue the valuable learning of the trades offered at Westfield Technical Academy. These trade programs have shown that they are essential in keeping our citizens healthy, community safe, utilities running, and economy moving forward.

The hands on learning of these trades cannot be replaced by virtual learning. I implore you to try to find a safe way to allow the valuable trade programs to offer shop times with the equipment and tools housed at the WTA facility. These state-of-the-art shops offer some of the most comprehensive learning tools to advance the education of students. These trades cannot be taught without the tools the shops have to offer.

While the number one priority needs to be the health and safety of the students, teachers, and staff of the schools it remains imperative that we continue the training of the students to give them the proper skills to be employed in these valued industries.

3. Approval of school committee meeting minutes:

a. Special meeting minutes of July 16, 2020

Diane Mayhew moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve the special School Committee meeting minutes of July 16, 2020.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	absent	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	5	<u>0</u> motion passes

b. Special meeting minutes of July 22, 2020

Diane Mayhew moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve the special School Committee meeting minutes of July 22, 2020.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	absent	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	5	0 motion passes

Cindy Sullivan requested to return to agenda item #2 Public Participation to read an email that was missed.

Jennifer Castell, Janelle Drive, Westfield

I want to start by thanking you all for what I can assume has been many, many hours of work on this very involved process and decision. Thank you- your time is more appreciated than you know!

As a public school employee (Occupational Therapist) in another district, I have been involved in this process in the town that I work in, and although that has brought me some stress and frustrations, it's just not the same stress and worry that comes over me when I think about my own children's safety. It's not the same to think to yourself-- I can control my PPE, I can control my distance, I can be vigilant with safety protocols, I will do all I can to keep my students safe - as it is to say - will the adults in my children's lives at school do the same?, and more importantly, will my children and their peers be able to carry the weight of these safety protocols? Don't get me wrong, I have faith that our teachers will work their butts off to keep our children safe, but their priority shouldn't have to be the safety of 15-20 kids during a pandemic. I am worried for our teachers as well. I've been out and about, and unfortunately when kids gather, they are not always provided with the best models- unfortunately for some, these routines will need to be established at school. That in itself, will not be an easy task.

There was a point during the summer that I felt more confident in sending my kids back in person, but with new info coming out daily: 40% increase in child cases in one study (American Academy of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital Association); Older Children can transmit the virus just as much as adults (Korea) (published in the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention); Children younger than 5 carry a higher viral load than adults (small study published by JAMA Pediatrics); 97,000 children tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 2 weeks of July; and more information about lasting effects of this disease- so yes, there are a lot of people surviving the disease, but, with lasting effects that these people live with well beyond their hospital discharge date; (but with this new data)...my concern has risen.

So, without knowing all the details of the hybrid plan proposed, my questions/comments would be~

\*\*Is the proposed plan realistic when taking children's typical behaviors into account? (Kids are energetic, impulsive, tactile and often seek the

comfort/acceptance of others and many learn best with hands on and collaboration with others. Although we expect them to follow directions and instructions, we can't expect them to act like mature responsible adults for 6+ hours a day just because we are putting them in a school during a pandemic.

\*\*What are the specifics that would result in going full remote from a hybrid model? What are the guidelines the health department would use to make that call? And how are parents notified when our children have been exposed?

\*\*Does the proposed calendar give teachers and administration enough time to roll out all safety protocols well and to fidelity? And will they be coming back to the table if these protocols aren't working for their population of children?

\*\*I care about my children, family and friends (obviously), but I also care about the community of Westfield as a whole; we aren't being diligent if we are saying this decision only affects the children ~ we need to consider the safety of our teachers and the entire community when we are making this decision.

I'm looking forward to listening this evening with the hopes that some of these questions will be discussed and considered.

Thank you again for the work you've put into this, and a special thank you to the school admin and staff that have worked tirelessly for our children!!

Vice Chair Tim O'Connor thanked everyone for comments, telephone calls, and email submissions.

4. Approval of the Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Back to School Plan  
Superintendent Czaporowski, Deb Ecker, Susan Dargie, Denise Ruzala, Chris Rogers, and Pam Kotarski reviewed the attached PowerPoint presentation regarding the Back to School Plan. Information regarding communication, feasibility study, reopening models, high needs students, social/emotional learning/technology, safety/personal protective equipment, and transportation was shared. Also, Mr. Joseph Rouse, Director of Health Department, was in attendance to provide Additional information and answered questions.

a. Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Hybrid Back to School Plan

Bo Sullivan moved, Ramon Diaz seconded to approve the Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Hybrid Back to School Plan, Part 1, as follows:

Phase A: Full remote for all students with the exception of students that attend Westfield Technical Academy. WTA students will go to school for their CTE shop weeks. School will start September 14, 2020.

Phase B: High needs students

Phase C: Kindergarten students and Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	6	0 motion passes

The School Committee will vote on future Phases of the Back to School Plan before they are implemented.

b. Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Full Remote Back to School Plan

Bo Sullivan moved, Ramon Diaz seconded to approve the Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Full Remote Back to School Plan.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	6	0 motion passes

5. Approval of the revised 2020-2021 Westfield Public Schools school year calendar  
Ramon Diaz moved, Cindy Sullivan seconded to approve the revised Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 school year calendar, as presented.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	6	0 motion passes

6. Report of the signed weekly warrants

Bo Sullivan reported the following warrants were signed:

- June 19, 2020 – 11 batches totaling \$541,371.87
- June 26, 2020 – 21 batches totaling \$634,527.77
- June 30, 2020 – 31 batches totaling \$1,131,189.23
- July 24, 2020 – 11 batches totaling \$108,556.95
- July 31, 2020 – 7 batches totaling \$91,334.90

7. 2<sup>nd</sup>/final reading, by title only, to adopt policy File: IKE Promotion & Retention of Students

Diane Mayhew moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to a 2<sup>nd</sup>/final reading, by title only, to adopt policy File: IKE Promotion & Retention of Students.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Diane Mayhew	X	

Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	6	<u>0</u> motion passes

8. Superintendent's Reports

a. School Choice fund expenditure

Diane Mayhew moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to expend \$216,000 from the School Choice Revolving Account to purchase mathematics program materials.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	6	<u>0</u> motion passes

b. Other

9. Mayor's update: none

10. School Committee update:

Diane Mayhew reported that she would be participating in the MASC webinar and would share information with committee members.

Ramon Diaz reported on Westfield Technical Academy and Westfield High School graduations. He thanked everyone for their help with the graduations.

11. Items for referral to subcommittee: none

12. Old business: none

13. Subcommittee Reports/Recommendations

- a. Reports: none
- b. Minutes: none

14. Other items not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting

Acceptance of Grant – CvRF School Reopening Grant Program - \$1,171,350  
 Bo Sullivan moved, Ramon Diaz seconded to accept the CvRF School Re-opening Grant Program in the amount of \$1,171,350.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Bo Sullivan	X	

Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>absent</u>	
	6	0 <u>        </u> motion passes

15. Next regular School Committee meeting: August 24, 2020

At 9:30 pm Cindy Sullivan moved, Ramon Diaz seconded to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion passes.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	0 <u>        </u> motion passes

Mr. Stefan Czaporowski, Superintendent of Schools  
 Clerk – Westfield School Committee

A true copy, Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Cindy Sullivan, secretary  
 Westfield School Committee

CS/cm





# School Committee Presentation

Back to School 2020 - 2021

## Communication



- Superintendent Updates/Social Media/Media
- Completed surveys: **6,313 responses**
  - Students: 2,674 responses
  - Parents / Guardians: 3,036 (Spring Feedback and Reopen plans for 2020-21)  
[65% favor hybrid, 18% favor remote, 17% other]
  - Staff: 603 responses
- 2020 Reopen Email: **61 emails received**
- Parent Forum Participation: **124 registered**
- Teacher Forums: **86 registered**

## Feasibility Study

- No school in our district can support all students back under the current guidance
- Particularly problematic at older schools not designed for large class sizes and current safety guidance related to COVID-19
- A phased in model moving to an alternating week hybrid model dividing our students into two cohorts
- Remote Learning Centers
- Staffing return rate



## Reopening Model

### HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

(Cohorts A, B or A and B)

- Phase 1 - High needs students, CTE shop students, Fort Meadow students, and Kindergarten (?) daily
- Phase 2 - Grades K(?), 1, 5, 7, and 9 Hybrid
- Phase 3 - All students return to a full Hybrid Model
- Phase 4 - All students return to school because a vaccine or treatment is readily available.



## Remote Learning

- Connectivity and Access
- Structured, Rigorous, and Consistent
- Google Platform and Compatible Tools
- Balance between Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning



## Hybrid Learning

- Remote Learning / In Person Learning
- Phase 1: High Needs attend daily
- Students transitioning to a new school (Grades K(?),1,5,7,9)
- Cohort A / Cohort B / Cohort A+B
- Learning Connected between Remote and In Person weeks
- College and Career Opportunities



Cohort A - Weeks 1 and 3  
Cohort B - Weeks 2 and 4  
Cohort A+B - Every week

## In Person Learning

- 100% of students and staff in school every day
- Additional spaces (cafeteria, library, etc.) may be used as necessary to maintain 3 ft distance between students
- Students will be placed in cohorts
- Implemented after vaccine or treatment is available



## High Needs Students



Students already identified as "high needs" through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled "Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3." Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:

- Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
- Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers
- Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student's school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless; in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students dually identified as English Learners.

Special Education students meeting this criteria are serviced in the ASD, Essential Learning Skills, and Developmental Learning Program.

English Learner students meeting this criteria are identified as Level 1 and Level 2 serviced in the English Learner Education Program

Preschool children and Kindergarten students with and without disabilities are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop the socialization, motor and communication skills that are vitally important at this age.

## Social / Emotional Learning

- Engaging Families as Partners
  - Two-way communication
  - Connecting Families to family based services
- Supporting Staff
  - Communication & stakeholder input
  - Promoting habits of self-care
  - Compassionate leadership
- Building Upon our existing MTSS
  - PBIS Tiers 1 and 2
  - Tier 3 (individual needs)
  - District and building based PD



## Technology

- Infrastructure
  - Upgrading network access/bandwidth
  - Content filter upgrades
  - Device ordering & configuration
  - 1:1 management tools
- Staff
  - Chromebook Distribution
  - Workstation / Laptop needs
  - Internet needs - hotspot distribution
  - Technology/Remote teaching training
- Students
  - Chromebook Distribution
  - Internet needs - hotspot distribution
- Technology Training opportunities for families



## Safety / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Working to purchase the necessary supplies to keep all staff and students safe
- Currently developing protocols, based on CDC, OSHA, and DESE guidance, for learning spaces, staff office spaces, mask breaks, medical waiting rooms, entry/exits, recess, storage/disposal, handwashing and sanitizing, ventilation, hallways, bathrooms, signage, safety drills and cleaning and disinfecting.
- Additional considerations for Art/PE/Music



## Transportation

Westfield Public Schools in collaboration with our bus companies will be implementing the following DESE Core health and safety practices to support safe school bus operations including:

- Masks
- Distance
- Ventilation
- Seat assignments
- Hand sanitizing



## Food Services

- Phase 1: We will deliver meals to children in schools as needed. Drive up grab and go meals will continue for remote learners.
- Hybrid Model: Each individual school will formulate a plan for hybrid in person food services based on space and staffing. Drive up grab and go will continue for remote learners.
- Remote Model: Drive up grab and go meals at multiple locations with possible delivery program based on needs and staffing.



## FAQ

**Director of Public Health,  
Joseph Rouse**



## Questions

