

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 01035  
Minutes January 4, 2021**

**Zoom Meeting**

**5:30 PM – Regular Meeting**

**1. Call to Order**

Klesch asked for motion to call the meeting to order. Fasihuddin made motion seconded by Phifer. The vote was 5-0-0.

**2. Adjustments to the Agenda-** no adjustments

**3. Public Comment**

**Ethan Label's Mom-** asks about using data from Hadley to determine learning mode as opposed to just Hampshire County. Klesch responded that the Hadley statistics would be considered.

**Emily Pheiffer-** expressed appreciation for the SC support of the GSA crosswalk proposal. She also expressed concern about lowering data threshold for in-person learning during this time of high community transmission. Pheiffer suggested that learning modes be established for 2-week periods rather than by the week. She thanked the SC and administration for their thoughtful diligence in trying to keep everyone safe.

**Cassie Stewart-** Agreed that a 2 week notice of learning mode would be helpful with planning as both a parent and an educator.

**4. Presentations/Discussion Items**

**a. Winter Athletics When Students Are Remote**

Sudnick, A.D. was present to update the SC on winter athletics guidance for winter sports. He said that there were no changes in the state guidelines that had been previously set. Sudnick also addressed the local conference, providing information for participation each school district in the 60-school conference had decided on. Schools that are in remote learning phase but participating in winter sports include most of the schools that Hopkins competes with. All safety mitigations are in place. Fasihuddin asked if the schools that HA is competing with could be included in the COVID metrics dashboard. Some of the schools are in a different county. McKenzie said she would add those schools to the dashboard. Sudnick reviewed the practice and game schedule. Phifer and Klesch expressed support for the winter sports program as presented. Sudnick assured Brugger that the conference schools participating were following the same safety mitigation strategies. SC members voiced their confidence in the AD.

**b. Review of Public Health [Data](#)**

McKenzie reviewed the weekly public health dashboard, which is posted every week in the Superintendent's Update Newsletter. The data remains higher than the established threshold. She mentioned the state requirements for flu vaccines for students and the extension allowed. She asked SC members if there were any questions or comments.

**c. Review of Thresholds and Metrics**

McKenzie pointed out that there was a 5% decrease in enrollment which would impact the FY22 budget. She also said that the CDC guidelines have a higher threshold than the District. The dashboard provided risk of transmission based on core indicators established by the CDC. McKenzie reviewed the criteria she would use for deciding to remain in the remote learning mode. Phifer said that Hadley is in moderate to low risk zones and suggested considering accepting more risk as the costs to our children are higher than the risk. He wants to go on record as advocating for in-person learning as he feels the costs to students outweigh the transmission risk. Brugger asked Phifer to obtain some more information from UMASS regarding their transmission rate. She said that she does not feel any changes to the thresholds should be made at this time but a review the recommendations be done regularly. She said there is new information and research that should be reviewed thoroughly before making any changes. Brugger offered to meet with the local health board representative to obtain further information. Fasihuddin asked about information on vaccinations. McKenzie provided the most recent vaccine information, including the groups and projected dates. Children vaccines have not yet been approved. Percy added that the metrics used so far worked but was open to reviewing new information.

**d. COVID-19 Testing**

Phifer summarized the testing that was taking place at UMASS. He sought information about potential testing for Hadley schools' staff and students. He said he was trying to find a way to get students back in class using testing. McKenzie said there may be funding for testing and would update the SC when she received more information. Phifer said there was no commitment from UMASS but he was waiting to hear back from them. Logistics and types of testing was discussed. SC members thanked Phifer for looking into this option. McKenzie said she supported looking further into the testing options. In response to inquiry from Brugger, McKenzie provided information on the status of PPE supplies, air purifiers, disinfectants, etc. She said supplies needed for the remainder of the year were in place and funded from CARE grants.

**e. HA Principal Appointment**

McKenzie said that as the appointment authority, she has decided to appoint April Camuso as permanent Principal at Hopkins Academy. She provided background and qualification information and elaborated on why she selected Camuso for the position, including her accomplishments at HA. SC members congratulated Camuso and thanked her for her service to HPS.

**f. Update on HA Phase III Plan and Review of Survey Data**

Camuso shared some Phase III informational charts to SC members, which included a staggered approach to the transition. She said that with the approval of the SC, she would

share the information with staff and parents. Klesch said she trusted Camuso with the logistics of the Phase III transition. Brugger expressed concern about removing the cohort model and the significant increase in students entering the building and still advocates for a week-long transition. Camuso explained that the students do not want to attend school in the cohort model so she tried to create a compromise model. Fasihuddin spoke to making the attendance in the transition cohort model a requirement. McKenzie said she would have to check on the enforceability of such a requirement. Brugger would like to see the final plan which includes the transition time for cohorts before voting for approval. McKenzie confirmed that there is no start date established for Phase III due the current community spread data. SC decided to delay an approval vote on Phase III Plan until 2/11/21.

Camuso reviewed the response data from a recent survey regarding instruction and the schedule. All students provided input on safety measures. The area of biggest concern is the area of mental health. Over half of students responded that their mental health and motivation were not good. She mentioned the significant increase in failing grades in a comparison to failing grades in previous years. Camuso is working with staff in reaching out to struggling students with counseling services, check ins, and support. Fasihuddin spoke to the importance of teachers making connections with students, even in a remote setting, and suggested some teacher interactions and professional development along that line. Phifer quoted some of the survey statistics and voiced extreme concern about the state of the students' mental health status. He indicated that the SC should listen to the students and do more to open schools for in-person learning. Phifer said the SC is not doing all that it can and it is a disservice to the students. Klesch responded that some of the mental issues may not be all school-related. Brugger said she would like to see the survey repeated quarterly to gauge impact of interventions and to compare the mental health stats to those of other schools in the state. She also asked if the survey could be broken down to students who are learning in-person vs. remotely and students on IEPs vs. those who are not. Brugger asked about the planning for transition from grade 6 to 7. Dowd and Camuso responded. It was noted by Camuso that some students choose not to respond to overtures for connections and participation and she would continue to work on ideas for more success in that area. McKenzie thanked Dowd and Camuso for their work on the surveys and gave a message of concern, support, and encouragement to any students who may be watching the meeting.

## **5. Business Manager Reports (1/25/2021)**

### **6. School Committee Reports/Discussion**

- a. CES – Fasihuddin said she is reviewing the documents recently provided and noted that there is an interim director during the search for a new director. Klesch said the interim director could be invited to a future meeting.
- b. Negotiations – no updates, discussions will begin soon
- c. Policy – no updates
- d. Fields – Phifer mentioned a compromise established with snowmobilers and the athletic fields with signs posted.

- e. Finance – Percy said there were no updates

**7. Action Items**

- a. Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2020 and December 7, 2020  
Fasihuddin made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/20/20 and 12/07/20. Percy seconded and the vote carried 5-0-0.

**8. Next Meeting Dates**

January 11 (special meeting data review only) @ 5:30 pm

January 25 (regular meeting) @ 5:30 pm

Fasihuddin announced the upcoming meetings at [hadleylearns.com](http://hadleylearns.com)

- 9. **Adjourn Regular Meeting 8:00 pm-** Motion to adjourn by Fasihuddin and second by Phifer. Vote to adjourn 5-0-0.