

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
6:15PM, Tuesday, September 1, 2020
By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Alex Salop, Roxanne Ackerman*, Kate DeVane, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter,

Others: About 100-150 attendees (see participants list) including:
Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Nancy Dugan, Hope MacLeod,
MVEA: Nedine Cunningham, Anne Davey,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
Chilmark: – Warren Doty, Rob Hannemann, Marina Lent, Matt Poole,
Press – Kelley Marolf – MVTV,
Recorder: Marni Lipke *Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC members

Call to Order (Agenda Item #I)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order.

Minutes Read and Approved (Agenda Item #II)

The UIRSC thanked Marni Lipke for clear minutes on many complex, highly charged meetings.
• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 13, 2020, AUGUST 19, 2020 AND AUGUST 27, 2020 MINUTES; KATE DEVANE AND SKIP MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYE, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: KATE DEVANE—AYE—ABSTAIN FROM AUGUST 27, 2020, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) (Agenda Item #III)

A. Discussion of Fall Reopening Plans (See 8/27/20 AISC Minutes.)

* During this conversation Roxanne Ackerman entered the meeting at 6:25PM.

Although the revised Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Reopening Plan was a clear improvement on the previous one, UIRSC members had been receiving feedback pertaining to the UIRSD to which the UIRSC was committed. The requests were for more in-person learning, more and longer days, implemented sooner, difficulties with unreliable internet access, needs of working families, complaints that middle schoolers were being shorted, and the need for a visible set metric.

• **ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN REVISED AS OF AUGUST 27, 2020 WITH AMENDMENTS FOR THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT:**
- GRADES SIX THROUGH EIGHT STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL TWICE PER WEEK EACH TO START RATHER THAN ONCE PER WEEK AS DESCRIBED IN THE PLAN;
- A WEEKLY MVYPS DASHBOARD SIMILAR TO THE ONE FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS IS MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL PARENTS, SELECT BOARDS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO MONITOR THE INFECTION RATE ON THE ISLAND—WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

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THROUGH THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION;

- THE CURRENT PHASED IN APPROACH IS REVISITED ON A WEEKLY BASIS USING THE DASHBOARD METRIC AND THE STATUS OF THE TESTING PROGRAM TO INFORM ANY MODIFICATIONS.

- There was a discussion on protocol.

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN REVISED AS OF AUGUST 27, 2020; ALEX SALOP SECONDED.*

- West Tisbury School (WTS) Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt explained the situation at this point in time.

- Current enrollment (which was still very fluid) and the larger middle school (see 10/3/19 Minutes p.2), suggested a possible two cohort model for 6th-8th grade students, which could result in additional hiring to accommodate class splits. This would mean that half the middle school students would be there two days a week and the other half another two days a week, resulting in kindergarten through fifth grades as well as half of grades six through eight in-person four days a week.

- Grades six through eight would be in a separate wing and there would be very little intermingling with the primary grades. Hallway traffic times could be staggered.

- The UIRSC considered the following issues:

- The Health/Safety Committee, Task Force and Administration had examined many layers of the larger situation at length and strongly recommended against bringing large groups together too soon—including the total number of students/staff in a building at one time. The Health/Safety Committee was particularly concerned about a spike in the virus that would endanger the community and force the schools to retreat. There was some agreement that it was important to stand together with other MVPS and not increase the risk to the Island community.

- There were likely to be Union negotiation difficulties regarding special UIRSD configuration.

- MVPS Administration had also heard significant feedback from middle school parents and would be watching metrics and infection rates carefully to alter or expand the plan if appropriate as the October 27th middle school in-person implementation date approached.

- This was not a “poison pill” and did not fundamentally alter the Reopening Plan.

- Others felt the conservative action was an unacceptable price for middle school students. The UIRSC could also alter their action if infection rates warranted.

- Others felt they should heed student wishes to return to school, and the MVPS should look for other public spaces that could be utilized.

- The UIRSC was discussing an unknown number of students, along with unknown implementation logistics two months in the future, and consequently the MVPS Reopening Plan could be adopted and the UIRSC could amend it as the information became available.

The UIRSC considered the proposal would allow the Superintendent to work with the building administrators.

- This was an immensely complex issue, and the greater concern was that once the infection had spread it would be impossible to go backwards. The UIRSC should start with the MVPS Plan and change it as the situation unfolded.

- Public comment was also fielded.

- The one day a week when the entire school was in-person presented some risk, for example there was only one nurse.

- The larger number of students in the building increased the risk to educators, potentially crippling the primary resource of the schools.

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- The proposal was unexpected and there was an exchange over it being adequately publicized and examined in the course of one meeting. The UIRSC was trying to re-invent the wheel at the eleventh hour, disregarding the long careful consideration of the MVPS Task Force.
- There was disagreement over the difference between the same and equitable education; a UIRSC member arguing that as the UIRSD had the space they should be able to utilize it. Several staff emphasized the importance of fairness at different schools across the Island, feeling this last minute change to be unfair, especially for those not lucky enough to have the space.
- Remote learning and Covid-19 isolation were serious challenges to student and family mental health, friendships had been lost, families and teachers seriously impacted. Mental health support should be prioritized in any plan.
- The MVPS Reopening Plan designated Fridays as the one middle school in-person day, to allow the building to rest over the weekend before the kindergarten through fourth grade cohort. However this did not seem an adequate configuration for middle school students.
- Bringing middle school students into the building in two cohorts without sufficient professional teachers watered down the instructional experience they needed.
- There were internet connectivity problems all over the Island.
- Remote learning results were universally poor.
- The middle school four days/one day model strength was five days of synchronous learning with teachers. If the WTS re-instituted a hybrid/split middle school that strength would be a loss for both staff and students.
- Administration acknowledged the pressure placed on all school leaders and strongly advocated for an Islandwide plan as recommended by the Health/Safety Committee at this time. There was some hesitation about jumping forward and have having to retreat.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ALLOW GRADES SIX THROUGH EIGHT STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL TWICE PER WEEK EACH TO START RATHER THAN ONCE PER WEEK AS DESCRIBED IN THE PLAN; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; AMENDMENT PASSED: 3 AYES, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, KATE DEVANE—NAY, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*
- Superintendent Matt D’Andrea stated the requested information could be easily posted. There was a discussion on what metric was being used. The State metric had some problems. The Commissioner of Education would publish a metric on district positive cases. The Board of Health agents warned against restricting decisions to town/district specific metrics with so much crossover in the Island population. The Island case count was already published daily in the press and by the Boards of Health. The emphasis was on public access to Islandwide metrics, with a suggestion that decisions not be made by “sticking a finger in the air”. There was a protest that the UIRSC was stepping out of its purview.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION’S WEDNESDAY DASHBOARD BE SHARED WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; AMENDMENT PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—NAY, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*
- This amendment would codify the Administration’s commitment to constant plan revision.
- The UIRSC discussed alternating and/or piggy-backing on the All Island School Committee (AISC) weekly meetings regarding:
 - time to consider proposals between meetings;
 - shorter streamlined meetings;
 - Chair’s wish not to codify meeting frequency;

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- a short-term push during the crisis;
 - further over-burdening staff;
 - suggestion for increased budget lines for extra staff support.
 - *SKIPPER MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION THAT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEET ONCE A WEEK UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE TO REVIEW THE REOPENING PLAN AND MAKE ADJUSTMENTS AS APPROPRIATE; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; AMENDMENT FAILED; 2 AYES, 3 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—NAY, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—NAY, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—NAY.*
 - *MOTION WITH TWO AMENDMENTS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*
- The UIRSC emphasized the best interest of the UIRSD students.

B. Full-Time Nurse for the Chilmark School

There was a discussion on funding resources. Skipper Manter objected to use of contingency funds as unfair to West Tisbury taxpayers. It was agreed the position could be authorized leaving some leeway for Head of School Susan Stevens to determine at the end of the year.

- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE FUNDING AND POSITION FOR FULL TIME SCHOOL NURSE FOR THE CHILMARK SCHOOL;*
- A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT AUTHORIZED USE OF CONTINGENCY LINE FUNDS; AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN;
- MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

(Agenda Item #IV)

- * During this discussion Roxanne Ackerman left the meeting.

Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt in consultation with school nurse Kristine Cammorata proposed advertising for a nursing assistant to help with the increased duties for about 450 students and staff, documenting and reporting testing, testing and trainings on personal protective equipment (PPE), etc. in addition to the normal duties of distributing meds, dealing with student health, etc. At this point qualifications were as yet unknown, although another nurse would be ideal. The UIRSC hesitated to authorize an unknown position that might involve substantial funds. The most likely configuration would be a part-time possibly substitute nurse.

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO SUPPORT WEST TISBURY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DONNA LOWELL-BETTENCOURT TO PURSUE AND ADVERTISE FOR SUPPORT FOR THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL NURSE AND TO PUT THE ITEM ON THE NEXT UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AGENDA REGARDING FUNDING AND JOB DESCRIPTION; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE.*
- School entry/re-entry protocol was again raised and administration noted that some protocols were in place.

Adjournment

- *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:09PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED;*

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MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE – AYE, ALEX SALOP – AYE, SKIPPER MANter – AYE, KATE DEVANE – AYE.

Documents on File:

- Agenda 9/1/20
- UIRSC Participants 9.1.20 (4 p.)
- Friedman/Salop email re: UIRSD Voucher Signatures – June – August (4 p.) 9/1/20

Minutes approved 11/9/20