



MicroSociety Academy Charter School
591 West Hollis Street, Nashua, NH03062
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Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 23, 2021
6:30PM
Multipurpose Room - MACS

I. Board Meeting Called to order

- A. 6:33 p.m. Present: Amy Bottomley, Barbara Halevi, Thomas Malone, John Dagianis, Tom Dougherty, Cathy McNamara, Suzanne Barkley, via Zoom: David Glasier, Andrew McWeeney. Absent: Amanda Schneck and G. Frank Teas.

II. Public and School Community Input.

- A. Erika Brown, Nashua, spoke in support of universal masking. Her children 6 and 3 recently got Covid at daycare. 25 kids at daycare got it within a week. Daycare closed for a week. No mask mandate for kids. Staff wore masks and didn't get it. Don't want schools to close and families to be disrupted like that.
- B. Pamela Misner, Nashua. spoke in opposition to mask mandates. Summer hasn't had a lot of talk about mandates and now with school coming mask mandates are being discussed. Kids at indoor summer camp never got Covid and never had masks. Parents should have right to choose.
- C. Sabrina O'Connell. Spoke advocating for mask choice. Her kids are in 6th and 1st. Her family hardly ever wears masks and didn't get sick. Mask optional has worked at her workplace. Advocating for freedom for children and parents' choice.
- D. Eliana Grenier. Spoke in opposition of mask mandates. Hard to breathe when she wears a mask. Should be allowed to choose if you don't want to or can't wear a mask.

- E. Devin Fritchie. Nashua. Spoke as an advocate for mask mandates and vaccination mandates, especially since vaccines are now FDA approved. There is valid argument against wearing masks. It is simple step to prevent kids from getting sick.
- F. Dr. Wendy Grenier. Nashua. Spoke in opposition of mask mandates. Has seen no evidence or studies that masks help prevent spread of Covid. Masks are constantly contaminating by people touching surfaces and masks. Believes mask wearing is physically, emotionally and spiritually damaging to children.
- G. Michelle Whistle. Merrimack. Spoke as an advocate for mask choice. Haven't seen studies that masks work. Don't want kids to wear masks all day.
- H. Shannon Osero. Nashua. Advocate for mask choice. Daughter won't necessarily keep a mask on all day. Concern about repercussions if daughter can't wear one all day.
- I. Tom D. noted emails from Kiren Latka (MACS parent) (advocating for universal masks required) and Laura Colquhoun (advocating for mask choice). Noted that Ms. Colquhoun may not be a parent or otherwise affiliated with MACS (post-meeting was confirmed that she is unrelated to MACS).

III. Discussion of Covid Framework (Mask Policy)

- A. Tom D. refers to DHHS guidance board has been given and reviewed by governance committee.
- B. Tom D. mentioned mitigation measures that MACS has already taken: ventilation upgrades (UV lighting, high quality filters), full time custodian, full time nurse
- C. Tom D. – read proposed language regarding masks. Noted that it is to be discussed by the full board.
- D. Tom M. agreed that committee discussed masks and wanted full board to discuss.
- E. Amy – explained voluntary testing program MACS would be joining through UNH (would test 25% of students/staff who “opt in” to the program each week).
- F. Amy – explained that the proposed mask policy allows her to instituting mask use for particular classrooms or whole school if there are Covid cases in a specific classroom or classrooms.
- G. Amy – noted that Dr. Chan (head doctor of DHHS) has explained weighing health and safety against other needs of children
- H. Amy – noted that the school would not mix cohorts (classrooms) when community is in substantial transmission (no lunch room, no mixing of cohorts (classes)). Bus rules are not made by MACS. Masks will likely be needed during arrival and dismissal.

Dr. John makes a motion to accept the proposed language regarding masks. Cathy 2nds.

Board members continued further discussion on the proposed mask policy:

- A. David opposes the motion. Noted that the Board hasn't discussed CDC and AAP recommendations to have universal masking in schools. Board would be going against those recommendations and believes that would be a mistake. Additionally believes that having students in particular classes putting on masks after a positive case is not logical.
- B. Barbara. Also opposes the motion for the reasons David said. Also noted that NHDHHS recommends universal masks in schools in when communities are at a substantial transmission rate. In addition, doesn't want the mask optional policy to create divisions in classrooms between students who wear masks and those who don't.
- C. Andrew. Notes that there is not any 100% guaranty and believes the plan addresses what needs to be done. Important that the plan is adaptable. Agrees that masks should be a choice. Believes decisions are best made at local levels with the ability to adapt when things change, and this leaves mask decisions to families.
- D. Dr. John. Notes that he is an eye surgeon. Some topics in medicine are universal. Believes we need to outlast the virus. Notes that we won't stop it from getting into school. Therefore, we need mitigation policies to limit its spread. We know virus is mutating. It may change again. School needs to be responsive and fluid. School's priorities are keeping kids safe and give them a good educational experience. Goal is to create a workable framework. It is not going to be perfect. Believes that it is very likely that MACS will have Covid cases this year.
- E. Cathy. Notes that the school's decision is likely to change during the school year because the situation keeps changing. Notes that the school will have a number of mitigation factors in place, particularly vaccines and asymptomatic testing.
- F. Tom M. Notes that vaccines are also encouraged and hopes ages 5-11 will be eligible for vaccines soon. Also wants to emphasize that everyone on the Board cares about the health and safety of children and about providing a good learning experience.
- G. David. Notes that the Board is able to revise the policy. What is set now doesn't need to last all year. Does not agree with the policy's approach that if there are Covid cases in school, then the school will require masks. Seems like this policy is backwards. School will be reacting to students getting sick rather than being proactive.
- H. Susanne asked how individual students will be treated in classrooms. Amy responded that teachers will work with individual students on following rules and procedures.

- I. Dr. John feels very strongly about asymptomatic testing as a primary mitigation strategy. That is not being used enough in other fields. A substantial number of carriers are asymptomatic.
- J. Tom M. - Asks should we have a goal for % of families that are willing to sign up for asymptomatic testing? Dr. John noted that Amy will need to keep Board up to date on sign ups for the testing program.
- K. Dr. John. - Emphasizes that this Board needs to be flexible and speedy in its responses to changing circumstances.
- L. Amy – noted that if children (or whole classes) need to be quarantined, remote schoolwork will be assigned.
- M. David – Asks what would have to change in our community to prompt a change of policy?
- N. Barbara – notes that right now there would have to be a COVID case in the building for Amy to mandate masks. Feels like we'll just be waiting for the first few kids to get sick before we make a change.
- O. Dr. John – it's hard to put a number on what would need to be happening in the community to require a change of policy. NH is not the same as Miami-Dade Florida.
- P. David – again emphasizes that the school needs to be proactive. Facts today suggest changing/increasing Covid landscaping in Nashua, NH and New England. If we wait for Covid cases in the building the Board's changes to policy will be reactive and come too late.
- Q. Cathy – expects more vaccinations soon with full FDA approval. Also notes that cases are rising in the area.
- R. Andrew – understands people want to be protective as possible. Feels like this plan is similar to decision to start with hybrid and then school pivoted to remote when circumstances on the ground changed.
- S. David – notes that asymptomatic testing appears to be a key element of this policy/plan. Because families will need to sign up as part of registration, this is unknown and we're making an assumption about whether that element is in place.
- T. Tom M – notes that Amy should be seeing registrations on asymptomatic testing.
- U. Tom D – noted that he expects Amy to bring any follow up on asymptomatic testing registrations to executive committee if needs to be acted on before next board meeting.

Tom D. again reads the proposed mask policy language.

Roll call vote taken:

Thomas M - YES	David - NO	Cathy - YES	Barbara - NO
John D - YES	Tom D - YES	Andrew - YES	Suzanne - YES

Six YES's and two NO's. Motion passes.

Tom M makes motion to adjourn the meeting. Cathy 2nds.

Thomas M - YES	David - YES	Cathy - YES	Barbara - YES
John D - YES	Tom D - YES	Andrew - YES	Suzanne - YES

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.