

District Planning Committee

Agenda, 8/12/21

6:30 pm

[Zoom Link](#)

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Participants:

Amanda Kozaka, Library Media Specialist, CEMS

Gallagher, Brianne, School Counselor, PCES

Cynthia Voltz, School Board Member

Del Peavey, Director of Special Services

Erin Taylor, School Nurse, PCES

Heather Altenburg, School Board Chair

Ingrid Whitaker, Grade 4 Teacher, PCES

Jess Rosie, Parent

Jason Manjourides, Principal, PCES

Jeff Thoreck, Athletic Director, CEHS

Jill Young, School Nurse, CEMS

Julie Merriam, 4th Grade Teacher, PCES

Kathleen Raftice, Director of Community Services

Katherine Bock, Science Teacher, CEHS

Kimberly Carr, School Board Vice-Chair

Karen Jenkins, School Nurse, CEHS

Kyle Morey, Assistant Principal, CEMS

Laura Ellis, Interventionist, CEMS

Marcia Weeks, Business Manager

Melissa Bam, Special Education Teacher, PCES

Nathan Carpenter Assistant Principal, CEHS

Peter Esposito, Director of Nutrition Services

Sarah Dodwell, Parent

Sarah Forrey-Pettit, Assistant Principal, PCES

Smita Sonti, School Physician

Troy Eastman, Principal, CEMS

Zakia Nelson, Parent

Michelle McClellan, Assistant Superintendent

Troy Patterson, Director of Educational Technology

John Springer, Principal, CEHS

Elizabeth Yarrington, English Teacher, CEHS

Christopher Storer, Director of Transportation

Sonia Medina, French/Spanish Teacher, CEHS

Chris Record, Superintendent

Purpose of the District Planning Committee

- Committee of stakeholders to review and discuss Covid-19 information in order to provide the School Board and School Administration recommendations on how to operate the district for the 21-22 school year

Process

- District Planning Committee will provide recommendations to the School Board for consideration at a meeting on 8/16/21 at 6:30pm

Norms for our meeting

- Be respectful
- Share the air
- Aim for consensus
- Aim to conclude by 8:30pm

Underlying Goal: Have all Cape Elizabeth students and staff safely in school full-time for the 21-22 school year.

- “Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.” ~ **CDC**
- “We need to prioritize getting children back into schools alongside their friends and their teachers -- and we all play a role in making sure it happens safely,” said Sonja O’Leary, MD, FAAP, chair of the AAP Council on School Health. “The pandemic has taken a heartbreaking toll on children, and it’s not just their education that has suffered but their mental, emotional and physical health. Combining layers of protection that include vaccinations, masking and clean hands hygiene will make in-person learning safe and possible for everyone.” ~ **American Academy of Pediatrics**
- **Resources for Consideration by the DPC & School Board**
 - A link to the Dr. Shah briefing on 7/29/21 can be found [here](#).
 - A Q&A document has been prepared from the questions that were submitted during the webinar with Dr. Shah, and can be reviewed [here](#).
 - [Updated CDC Guidance](#) provided by US CDC earlier last week
 - Additional resources that may be helpful include:
 - [U.S. CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Guidance for Schools](#)
 - [Maine pooled Testing FAQ](#)
 - [DHHS memo on staff vaccination data collection](#)
 - [American Academy of Pediatrics Updates Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021](#)


- This Rand report has some helpful information about implementing school testing, including strategies for community engagement (box 5)
 - https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR_A1100/RR_A1103-1/RAND_RRA1103-1.pdf
- [Maine Vaccination Rates by Zip Code](#)
- [Maine DOE COVID Toolkit](#)
- Studies (or lack thereof) of impact of mask wearing on children)
 - <https://dana.org/article/losing-face/>
 - Insufficient data exists on physiological outcomes of mask wearing in children.
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8014099/>
 - However, mask wearing over this past year+ has demonstrated they are unlikely to be physically dangerous to healthy children or adults.
- **Still working on FAQ document**

Current situation according to Dr. Shah presentation on 7/29/21

- The Delta variant of COVID-19 has increased its presence in Maine as it has throughout the country. Cases are multiplying greatly from week to week.
- Dr. Shah noted in the presentation he provided on July 29, information is changing very quickly, and data is being updated constantly. More and more is being reported within the state and national news as to the ease of spread of the Delta variant, as well as the impact on those people who are not vaccinated, including our younger population. Incidents of hospitalizations due to COVID-19 are increasing, mostly for those who are unvaccinated, and many of these are children.

Agenda

- Review any updates from CDC, Dr. Shah, MDOE, etc. since 8/12/21
 - Maine's seven-day average of new cases has climbed to levels not seen since May, and 60 people were hospitalized Wednesday, the most since June 6.
 - **Cumberland County transmission of SARS-CoV-2 has remains in “substantial” levels (8/3 - 8/9)**
 - <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- Review previous meeting minutes from (8/12/21)
 - [8/4/21 District Planning Committee](#)

- Key outcome: The Committee recommends universal masking for all people in all our schools no matter vaccination status. (8/4/21)
 - Determined to revisit discussion on pooled Testing
 - Determined to revisit other mitigation measures
- Revisit discussion on pooled Testing
 - According to the ME CDC, pooled PCR testing will help keep unvaccinated children and staff safe. The early detection and reduction of spread provides peace of mind for students, staff, and families, as well as the added benefit of reducing education disruption and exclusion from extracurriculars due to quarantine as a close contact.
 - As of July 29, 2021, 166 schools are enrolled, representing 50 districts. At least one school in every county has enrolled. Enrolled schools reflect a mixture of public and private schools, large, small, rural, and urban.
 - This Rand report has some helpful information about implementing school testing,
 - [Covid-19 Testing in K-12 Schools](#)
 - Last meeting, we determined more discussion and information around impact on students is needed before a recommendation is finalized. All medical professionals on DPC recommend K-12 pooled testing.
 -  Pooled Testing Presentation 8/12/21
 - Dr. Sonti voiced her support for pooled testing as it is a community effort to keep our students, schools and community safe. Children have done well with the self-swabbing. Having students in the comfortable setting of school can make this a more comfortable experience for children.
 - School nurses are supportive of pooled testing. Karen Jenkins, CEHS nurse: it is important to view this program as a whole-school approach, as students interact and mingle with each other throughout the day. Although this seems daunting, it is supported by health officials and is an important response to the current level of transmission and impact of the Delta variant.
 - Erin Taylor, PCES nurse, also supports pooled testing as it is another measure that will allow our schools to stay open and for students to attend regularly, with minimal disruption. Nurses will partner with school counselors to educate students, staff, and families as we implement and navigate this process.
 - Jill Young, CEMS: because of the continual movement and mixing of students in classes throughout the day, cohorting is not a viable measure, as it limits the ability to provide a broad spectrum of educational options

for our students. Pooled testing allows for a full offering of academic options typically available to our students.

- Pooled testing is conducted weekly and screening takes place daily. Pooled testing allows a positive but asymptomatic case to be detected. Students attending while waiting for results seems counterintuitive, however, the viral load is likely low and will safely be picked up in the subsequent round of testing.
- Laura Ellis, CEMS Interventionist: Is there a minimum number in a pool? *A minimum number of 5. Is there a stigma in participating? While this is a possibility, it points to the importance of education. There is a choice for parents as to whether or not their child participates.*
- Bri Gallagher, PC School Counselor: Will young children be self-swabbing? *School is starting soon, there is much to be done to put this into place. We will not rush. Training and understanding are important to get this right.* Are those who are close contacts still exempt from quarantine, even in elementary classrooms? *Those who are involved in pooled testing are exempt from the need to quarantine.*
- Kathy Bock, Science Teacher CEHS: If one opts in, would they be tested every week? *Yes, everyone who participates is tested every week. About one in 100 swabs are testing positive in schools that are participating.* Would close contacts be able to be tested at school even if they are not in the same pool that tested positive? *We will be learning more about this as we move forward. But it is important to remember that within the 3-5 days, the close contact would be tested again in the pool.*
- Jess Rosie, pediatrician and parent Dr. Perry, local pediatrician, are supportive. MDOE support is important to the program. Better to start with this plan and shift later if things improve. Wisconsin has a great resource available for community education.
- Ingrid Whittaker, 4th Grade Teacher PCES: Students really want to be in school and safe. If this is presented in this way, students will be on board. It will be helpful to provide parents with resources to help talk to their children about the purpose and in allaying fears.
- Why can't students who are not participating in pooled testing and are identified as close contacts get tested on their own as a means of returning to school before quarantine time is finished? *Pooled-tested participants are getting tested multiple times over the time of potential sickness. Whereas the example is one-time tested. That individual may be building viral load that goes undetected after the test is administered.*
- What accommodations are available for neurodiverse students? *School counselors will work closely with nurses to support students as smoothly as possible to accommodate.*

- Update on pooled testing impact on children
 - Lisbon School Department has been using pooled testing this summer. It has gone extremely well, with students being very cooperative. They emphasized the importance of educating students, staff and families. The actual time it takes to test is down to 2 minutes.
 - There have been no found studies on the negative impact of swabbing on children. The question has been asked, “Isn’t this coercive?” Allowing parents to opt in and out gives choice to whether their child participates or not.
- Other districts (Cumberland & York) utilizing pooled testing
 - 7 districts in Cumberland and York are moving in the direction of pooled testing.
 - 6 others are considering.

Recommendation to the School Board:

Implement the pooled testing program in all schools as a mitigating strategy in a layered approach to safety and the least disruption of access to continuous learning.

- Consider other mitigation measures
 - Vaccines
 - School District encourages vaccination
 - Willing to host future vaccine clinics
 - Social distancing
 - Buses - every effort will be made to have one run to ensure no additional disruption to learning. We will continue to implement the safety measures identified in the MDOE SOP.
 - Cafeteria - 3 feet distancing with seating chart will be the standard.
 - Classrooms - 3 feet distancing will be the standard to the degree possible. Ventilation systems have been updated in all schools - Reme Halo System and iWave systems are being used, which utilize UV lights, needle point bi-polar ionization. If closer than 3 feet, we would have seating charts and follow procedures for close contacts if there is a positive case. Teachers are asking for clarity around closer than 3 feet teaching situations.
 - The more the community increases the vaccination rate, the more successful the layered protection. The school department will provide clinics if needed and helpful.
 - Symptom checks
 - Contact Tracing
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Disinfecting
- Volunteers & Visitors

- At this time, with the increase of the Delta variant, volunteers and visitors will not be invited or allowed in buildings.
- Field Trips
 - Outdoor field trips will continue. No indoor field trips at this time.
- SOP for Positive Cases
 - Just came out this evening. We will be reviewing and implementing procedures to align with the updated SOP
 - One change - if school is universal masking AND students are appropriately masked AND identified as a close contact they will not be required to quarantine.
- Athletic updates
 - Concessions, locker rooms, gym capacity & spectators - following all safety parameters as determined by DHHS. Outdoor gatherings are not limited at this time. No spectators indoors at this time. Will revisit.
 - All coaches are required to participate in COVID training. Coaches can also help provide information regarding pooled testing to athletes and families.
 - Students participating in extracurricular are required to self-screen prior to daily participation.
- Other
 - Open House events are still under consideration.
- Review recommendations to the School Board
 - ***The Committee recommends universal masking for all people in all our schools no matter vaccination status. (8/4/21)***
 - ***The Committee recommends implementing pooled testing on a voluntary basis. (8/12/21)***
- Reminder of 8/16/21 School Board meeting at Town Hall at 6:30 pm (masks required)
- Next meeting?