

School Administrative District 8 Board Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2022

4:00 PM Emergency Meeting

Board Members Present Zoom – Alexandra McCarthy, Rachel Noyes and Susan Dempster

Penny Lazaro and Cait Clapham (Note minutes were amended at the January 19th meeting, Rachel Noyes did not attend the January 7th Emergency meeting).

Administration Present Zoom – Valerie McKenney, Superintendent, Monte Selby, Principal Bryan Feezor, Assistant Principal and Tina Davidson, Business Manager

I. Discussion and determination regarding Covid in the Vinalhaven School. How to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

A. Review and update of current Covid safety standards – Monte Selby

1. The new CDC guidelines promote in-school learning, in large part because of educational and mental health concerns with remote. As Maine's Commissioner of Education stated Monday, these guidelines offer a minimum expectation in terms of student/staff safety. Local schools are welcome to strengthen guidelines for safety.

2. A person who tests positive for COVID-19 must quarantine for 5 days. After 5 days if there are no symptoms or fever, they return to school wearing a mask. When symptoms are present, continue quarantine until fever-free for 24 hours.

3. Definition: A close contact is someone who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period. Exception: When students or staff are outside, they are not considered close contact, even if near an infected person.

Maine CDC Guidelines for schools (this differs from US CDC).

At Vinalhaven School, a person who is a close contact does not need to quarantine because there is an exception for schools with a mandatory masking policy. A person with close contact attends school as long as they show no symptoms. They should test 5 days after the most recent exposure. If they show symptoms. If they show symptoms at any time, they should quarantine and test immediately.

4. A person who is close contact, but not current with a COVID vaccination/booster, goes to school, but should still quarantine outside of school (in the community).

B. Review and discuss options for the weeks of January 10, 2022 through January 21, 2022

Possible considerations for VH beginning January 10, 2022:

Factors to consider: Risk/Safety. Staffing. Parent needs. Learning. Mental health.

1. **No Change.** Follow the guidelines above. Students continue attending school fully masked.

2. Until covid conditions stabilize, ask that **all close contacts quarantine** (regardless of vaccination) for 5 days, then test. For students, these would be considered excused absences.

3. Offer remote instruction for a set period of time until the number of positive cases and close contacts trend in a safer direction.

4. Continue to encourage students and staff to stay home if they show symptoms.

Vinalhaven School Option #1
Make no changes for January 10, 2022
 (Follow current CDC Guidelines)

STRENGTHS OF THIS OPTION	CONCERNS RELATED TO THIS OPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations are clear to students and staff and line up with Maine CDC for schools. • Close contacts do not quarantine and come to school as long as there are no symptoms. After 5 days they get tested. • Encourage staff and students to stay home if they show symptoms. Stay home until fever-free for 24 hours without medication. • Children are in school, regular routines, with friends, two meals at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is concern about the likelihood of more spread because there are close contacts in the classrooms. • There is confusion because the state CDC and the US CDC (used around VH) are not the same. • Masks may not be worn properly. Or some students cannot wear them and require close contact. • Young students cannot be vaccinated. • Teacher getting sick and not having coverage.

Vinalhaven School Option #2
Make a few changes for January 10, 2022
 (Current school plan with additional Guidelines)

STRENGTHS OF THIS OPTION	CONCERNS RELATED TO THIS OPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations are clear to students and staff • Close contacts would quarantine for 5 days and then test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school would need to close down if too many staff are in quarantine. There is a tipping point in which there would not be enough staff to supervise students • The quality of student learning may be impacted when teachers are out for a period of time

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff and students to stay home if they show symptoms. Stay home until fever-free for 24 hours without medication • Children are in school, regular routines, with friends, two meals at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited substitutes at VHS
--	--

Vinalhaven School Option #3
 Go remote starting January 12, 2022

Please note, the FITA has requested two remote planning days to ensure they can meet the needs of all of their students.

STRENGTHS OF THIS OPTION	CONCERNS RELATED TO THIS OPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides time and distance to ensure that students and staff are not at risk of Covid while in school • Students and staff are familiar with online learning as a way of attending school • Concerns relating to the lack of school schedules, interactions with peers and teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children play with friends during this time of year and may or may not wear masks at home • Parents need to work and some parents are not able to work from home • The Daycare is not currently open • Concerns relating to the lack of school schedules, interactions with peers and teachers • Would need to determine a scientific way of returning back to school; a percentage of active cases or school cases

After much discussion and questions from parents, staff members, and board members, A McCarthy made a motion to go with Option 2/S Dempster seconds (4-0)

With that vote, a letter will go home to all parents about the excused absence if kids need to quarantine due to a close contact.

Adjourn – 5:14