

REC'D UXB TOWN CLERK  
2021 JAN 6 AM 10:16

## UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

(MEETING ATTENDED VIA ZOOM)

DATE: 8/26/20

ATTENDEES:	PRESENT	NOT PRESENT
MATT KEANE (Chair )	X	
ERIK VOIGT (Vice Chair)	X	
PAUL PAULINO (Secretary)	X	
KIM CIRRONE (Member)	X	
BRETT POMEROY (Member)	X	
HOLLY BLACK (Member)	X	
DEBBIE STARK (Member)	X	

## 1. Call to Order 6:31 PM By Matt Keane

Meeting being conducted via ZOOM

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments were received from the following individuals and are attached to the minutes.

Mary Roche – Registered Nurse

Caroline Lozeau – Educator

Molly Hendrix – Educator

David Worden – Educator

Gretchen D'Andrea – Educator

Melissa Silva – Educator/Parent letter

Kara Guy – Parent

Nikki Bernasconi – Educator

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Tracy Larkin – Educator

Natalie Daverio – Educator

Erika Tierney – Parent

In person comments were made by the following:

Brian Carter – Educator/UTA President – urging reconsideration of hybrid model

Brett Pomeroy – Comment on letters sent by UTA members

Kyle Heatherinton – Parent – comments on remote learning issues

Sarah Bailey – comments on reopening

### **3. SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN (A)**

Dr Tiano Re-opening status report

Michael Rubin status on UHS cohorts / schedules

Wendy Philips status on curriculum

Jen Ramsdell status on Special Education

Jen Bellville – status Elementary Co-teaching

Leanne DiMarco status 4-7 Hybrid/remote teaching

#### **Holly Black – SC questions**

Air Quality questions – no reports provided

Soap/Hand dispensers

Signage , traffic flow

Personal bins for students

Mask breaks? Where are they occurring?

USC Mask policy?

Tech Integration Special – new requisition

Recommends audio devices for teachers

Teaching Platforms – will they be available online

Taft Question – cohorts / added substitutions

Taft – NO live streaming

Specials for remote teachers

Parabola Project – relationship

Charging stations

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**Kim Cirrone – SC questions**

Filters

Teachers – not returning

High Touch Area Cleaning

Hour By Hour Schedules for Taft – Whitin

Social

**Matt Keane – SC questions**

Inside recess during inclement weather

**Paul Paulino – SC questions**

10 vs 7 PD days to start

Inspection reports needed by 3 sub contractors

Added Hire will 8-10 be enough

**Brett Pomeroy – SC questions**

High Needs if MA mandated Remote

**Debbie Stark – SC questions**

Forcing students to eat lunch on the bus

**Eric Voight – SC questions**

Bussing question – will staggering be necessary

**4. NEW BUSINESS / OLD BUSINESS**

D. Stark asking about alterations to MASC policies

MOTION to Request UPS admin to provide a list of priority items related to the facilities and the related cost per item. Authorize the USC Chair to work with UPS Admin to create the list 1<sup>st</sup>DS 2<sup>nd</sup> HB

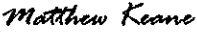
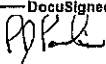

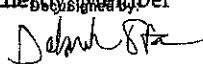
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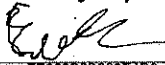

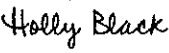
MOTION to ADJOURN 1<sup>st</sup>DS 2<sup>nd</sup> EV

VOTE MK = Y EV=Y PP = Y KC = Y BP = Y HB = Y DS = Y

Respectfully Submitted,  
  
Paul Paulino

School Committee Members:

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Matthew Keane, Chair  
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Paul Paulino, Secretary  
DocuSigned by:  
  
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Brett Pomeroy, Member  
DocuSigned by:  
  
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Debbie Stark, Member

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Erik Voigt, Vice-Chair  
DocuSigned by:  
  
372D1EB0DEF948A...  
Kimberly Cironne, Member  
DocuSigned by:  
  
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Holly Black, Member

10/17/2020

Uxbridge Public Schools Mail - Opening of Schools



Matthew Keane <mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us>

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## Opening of Schools

1 message

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Mary Lou Roche <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 11:40 PM

To: mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am writing to the school committee as a registered nurse.

I would hope that you would reconsider risking the lives of adults in a school building.

We have already lost over 3500 people in Massachusetts due to Covid 19.

Remote teaching would be much safer. Staff in all departments come from a wide range of towns.

The addition of children, whose parents also work in various cities and towns, are also potentially introducing the Corona virus into these schools.

The risk is not worth losing lives of our dedicated workers

Please reconsider

Thank you,

Mary Roche

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August 25, 2020

Dear Members of the School Committee,

I hope you are all well. I start every correspondence this way now because well, one can never know given the circumstances in which we find ourselves this year.

I have been a teacher in Uxbridge for twenty years. Over those two decades I have seen a lot of changes in town, the schools in particular. Not all of these changes have been positive ones but such is life - we roll with the punches. Teachers always roll with the punches - it's what we have to do if we are going to do our job and do it well. I do not know any teachers in this district who do not do their job well. I do not know any teacher here who doesn't love their job. I do not know any teacher here who does not love their students. There are things only teachers would understand just as there are things only police, firefighters, administrators, accountants and doctors would understand.

**You have to walk in our shoes to know the struggle and the fear we are experiencing.**

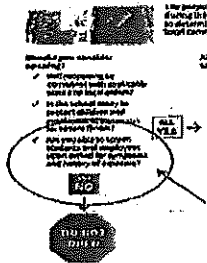
~~We lost a wonderful superintendent to death when his children were still in my classes. We~~  
mourned him. ~~We lost two beautiful and loving paraprofessionals, one lost her life while she was~~  
in the building. ~~We mourned them. I have had 6 principals since I began and 7 assistant~~  
principals, all with different initiatives, goals and expectations. ~~We roll with it, because that is~~  
what we do. ~~No money for supplies? We buy them, no time to get everything accomplished~~  
that's been handed to us? ~~We do it at home, we come in early, we stay late. When a child has~~  
no money for breakfast cart, we reach into our pockets. ~~WE ALL DO THESE THINGS. We~~  
never ask to be repaid. ~~We are teachers, it's what we do. And that, it seems, has sent the~~  
wrong message. ~~It seems that we sent the message that we will do anything, everything and~~  
risk our lives to educate our kids. ~~And because we endured extremely distressing active shooter~~  
~~drills where a gun is held to our heads and the shooter screams, "You're dead!" We've had~~  
years of lockdowns with kids who are scared and those who need to go to guidance after and  
the nightmares that followed, I guess we reinforced that message by *not* saying: **This is too  
much. This has gone too far. I am a teacher, not a police officer.**

**I am having a very difficult time understanding the vote for hybrid when we have NO**  
~~TESTING plans in place. I happen to know the plans of some private schools and universities~~  
and their plan is as follows: they are testing all students prior to arrival on campus. Those from  
out of state must arrive early and quarantine for two weeks before school begins and no one is  
to leave campus until Thanksgiving break. They will be testing 1800 students per week,  
resulting in most students being tested 2 times per week. Harvard and MIT have very detailed  
plans that have not been made public to evacuate all students within 24 hours should the need  
arrive.

How is it that Northbridge, Sutton, Worcester, Mendon-Upton, Franklin and other towns have  
come to their senses and decided it is only safe to begin the year remotely and phase in slowly?  
How is it that Governor Baker has mandated that only 8 people are allowed in a 1000 sf indoor

space and only 25 or less can gather outdoors? How can we think that schools are exempt from this? How will you feel when families of children and educators hold you personally accountable for their illness or God forbid, death?

I am concerned that parents, having seen the below document, believe that we do in fact have a plan in place. There is no way you can make educators feel protected until and unless this happens.



My students and I always track the beginning of cold season as part of our infectious disease unit. It only takes 3 weeks on average for the sneezing to begin and I wonder now - do we expect students to sneeze in their mask? Do they leave the mask on after or do they change it? A few more weeks in and we begin to hear about stomach bugs. Do we expect students to vomit into their masks because we do have students vomit in class without warning. I highly doubt anyone would want to vomit in their mask. How is sanitation being handled? My room gets swept sometimes but cleaned? I clean it. Most teachers clean their rooms. How will I have time to sanitize between classes and what will I be using? Do we know the chemicals being used? What happens when we have children and adults with environmental allergies who should not be around them. What about asthmatics? And let's not forget the children who struggle with anxiety - many of whom have just started to experience it. In the environment you are proposing us to be in, there will be a high level of anxiety at every cough, sneeze and defiant act of not wearing a mask.

There was a time a few years ago we were told we could not use Lysol or Clorox and many types of hand sanitizer in some buildings and there was never an answer as to why but vinegar and essential oils were no match for the flu that year.

I would like to know how bathrooms are going to be safe for use when many times there is no soap, cold water sprays for about 10 seconds with little pressure and the paper towel dispenser is empty. Some of you seemed surprised to hear our buildings are not clean. Again, we have always made do but it's time that changes.

Many educators received calls from central office last week asking if they were returning to school based on the survey sent out earlier in the summer. A lot of questions we had were not answered because the person asking them did not have the answers. The reason for this is because the union is still negotiating and no one should be pressured to make a decision until we have our questions answered. It became immediately clear that not everyone knew we were getting these phone calls and being pressed to make a decision. It seems there has been a breakdown of communication in recent weeks and I'm heartbroken over the texts and phone calls I'm receiving from colleagues who don't know what they are going to do for childcare, are afraid for their health and the health of their families and were told that remote teaching would

take place inside the building, perhaps a closet! I know of at least two doctors who initially thought that was a joke. Sadly, it is not.

We are asking you to reconsider the opening plan to a remote model to start the school year so that educators, students and families can continue to be safe and so that instruction can be high quality and consistent without the need for masks and face shields. Would you want to learn in that environment?

Here is just one article among many that sheds light on the situation at hand, published on August 20th on wbur.org

## **Asymptomatic Children Carry Higher COVID-19 Viral Load Than Adults In ICUs, Study Finds**

August 20, 2020

- 
- [Tonya Mosley](#)
  - [Allison Hagan](#)

A study released Thursday shows that children may play a larger role in community spread of COVID-19 than previously understood.

The research out of Massachusetts General Hospital and MassGeneral Hospital for Children shows that infected children — even those without symptoms — can have higher levels of virus in their airways than adults hospitalized in intensive care units.

The entire article can be found here: <https://wbur.fm/2YATkxz>

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Thank- you and may you continue to be safe.

Best in Health,  
Caroline E. Lozeau, M.Ed  
Health and Wellness Education



10/17/2020

Uxbridge Public Schools Mail - comments for public comment



Matthew Keane &lt;mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us&gt;

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**comments for public comment**

1 message

Molly Hendrickx <[REDACTED]>  
 To: Matthew Keane <mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us>

Tue, Aug 25, 2020 at 8:56 PM

Good evening Mr. Keane,  
 Below you will find a public comment that I would like to submit for tomorrow night's school committee meeting (8/26/2020).  
 Thank you,  
 Molly Hendrickx

For public comment 8/26/2020:

My name is Molly Hendrickx and I am a Spanish teacher in Uxbridge. I have worked here for several years and I care deeply about this community. I wrote a letter to the Uxbridge School Committee last week with evidence supporting my thought process for why I believe that Uxbridge should open in a remote model. The letter was quite long and I will spare all the details but I would like to highlight my thoughts for public comment tonight.

First, I would like to say that the building and district administrators in Uxbridge are caring, approachable, and I trust them. We disagree on beginning the year in a hybrid model but I still recognize that they built the best hybrid plan that could have been built. They worked tirelessly to try to make everyone happy in a situation where that is impossible. I believe that their hybrid plan would work very well in the future if the pandemic were to be suppressed. Still, I believe that starting the year in a remote model for a period of time, then moving into a hybrid model, followed by a subsequent goal of all-in learning is the best choice for the following reasons:

1. Hybrid learning, in our plan, at the high school level, is about 71% remote so teachers need to be experts at remote learning.
2. People confuse the instruction that happened in the spring with remote learning. At that time, teachers were not asked to deliver a robust learning plan with accountability. That was not properly planned remote learning; it was crisis-learning.
3. Properly planned remote learning has been proven in many studies to be as effective as in-person learning therefore teachers need both proper training and practice teaching remotely.
4. There are still concerns about returning to the building including: a lack of substitute teachers, testing result wait times of over 10 days, and the recent waves of positive cases among schools that have returned to hybrid and in-person learning. We need to pay attention to these deficiencies.

As someone who commutes everyday from Providence, RI where our COVID-19 positivity rates are higher than Uxbridge, I want to keep the students and their families safe. I miss my students very much and I look forward to teaching them again soon. I am prepared to do my best work to enhance the students' Spanish language proficiency but I will feel much better about doing so if we keep this community protected. Please reconsider your decision to return to school in a hybrid model until it is a better time to do so.

Sincerely,

Molly Hendrickx

Dear Matt Keane,  
Please read the following letter during the **PUBLIC COMMENT** portion of the School Committee meeting.

Dear members of the School Committee,

I urge the School Committee to reconsider fully remote teaching from home as a safe and successful way to start to the school year.

My name is David Worden, and I have been teaching Science at Uxbridge High School for nearly a quarter of a century. I have taught 22 different courses, at all levels, in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, and even Technology and Math courses. When asked to teach a new course, or fill in as the only Chemistry teacher when we lost our Chemistry teacher, or to change my schedule on the first day of school to accommodate new hires, I always stepped up. One year I returned to school the day after being released from the hospital, weak but eager to teach, after battling a two weeks long infection. I have devoted my life to teaching. I am 'dying' to get back to teaching in person, as we did in the past, but I **do not want to die teaching!**

I have been avoiding visits with friends, relatives, crowds of people, children, and enclosed environments (except for quick shopping) for 6 months due to my age, the ease of transmittance of this virus and our lack of knowledge about the virus. Children and young adults can have no symptoms and spread the virus, thus making it impossible to trace. I am not comfortable going back to school until there is a vaccine. I think we can do a great job teaching remotely at home, while protecting our community. Below are reasons backed up by studies from the National Institutes of Health, and the CDC.

Parents are offered the choice to have their students be taught totally remote at home. Many parents think the risk to their child is too great! So why am I, as well as, other faculty and staff forced to end our quarantine. As far as my risk, compared to the 5-17 student age group, the average risk of someone in my age group (50-64 years old) being hospitalized is **36 times higher**. My risk would actually be higher than that, being 60 years old, I am at the higher end of that age bracket. As far as dying goes, the average risk of death from Covid-19 of faculty and staff in my age group (compared to students) is **500 times higher**. My risk would actually be higher since I am 60 years old. If people understand the risk of my return to the school, why not insist I teach from home.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-age.html>

"Information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that children with confirmed COVID-19 generally had mild symptoms. Person-to-person spread from or to children, as among adults, is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19."

"children with COVID-19-like symptoms should avoid contact with older adults and people of any age who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19."  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

**Why (2 Meters) 6 Feet of Inter-Personal Distance Could Not Be Enough.**

"... recently published studies support the hypothesis of virus transmission over a distance of 2 m from an infected person."

"Based on the available knowledge and epidemiological observations, it is plausible that small particles containing the virus may diffuse in indoor environments covering distances up to 10 m from the emission sources, thus representing a kind of aerosol transmission. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32340347/>

This is why the two of the four factors that are used in decision making of opening businesses or school is whether:

1. If the space is enclosed
2. How long is the duration of the exposure

Basing safety on local infection rates of Uxbridge residents is short sighted, because faculty, staff and school choice students are coming in from dozens of communities. There isn't any tracking of where students and their families have travelled or whether they have followed self-quarantine during their travels. No faculty, staff or students from the other communities are required to be tested to show they are not positive for the virus. No students are tested for the virus, and no attempt of tracking fevers before they enter the bus is planned. Even if students, faculty and staff were excluded for entrance to the building because they have symptoms, it does not prevent the 70% of infections due to pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic people that spread it.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/planning-scenarios.html>

My Son was told by his work manager that his risk of getting Covid was low, because they would take temperatures of all employees entering the building, and everyone will be wearing masks all the time. A worker had no symptoms for the first two days of the week, but halfway through the week was sent home because he had a fever. But it was too late, my son and other workers, though working in the enclosed space with their masks on, were infected and soon thereafter got the virus. It is foolish to think you can keep everyone safe even with temperature checks, masks and social distancing. The duration of exposure eventually allows enough viral particles to infect a few individuals. The opening of schools around the country have given us enough evidence of the risk putting students together helps in spreading the virus.

The CDC stated the best way to spread the pandemic is to keep schools open.

In the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, despite the mask wearing mandates, and social distancing, 10 million people died in the first wave. When people were eager and decided it was safe to go back, 40 million additional people died. Why teach History if we don't learn from it? Why teach Science if we don't regard what the Science is telling us?

Please consider opening schools remotely, not within the school buildings, so we can contain the spread of the virus, maintain a healthy community and contribute to the end of the pandemic as soon as possible.

Sincerely,  
David Worden  
UHS  
Science Teacher

**PUBLIC COMMENT Dear Matthew Keane, Chairman of Uxbridge MA School Committee:**

Uxbridge teachers love kids! We work for a unique community, and our kids have character and potential. Many students have gone on to make a positive mark in our world. They have entered colleges and universities all over the country. Some former students have established lasting friendships in town and continue to live in the area. The one thing they all have in common is us, *their teachers. We are the backbone of the school and are proud of the work we do. Teachers rose to the occasion last spring, designing powerful lessons, and delivering these lessons to our students at home. We want to work, but we don't want to die.*

Teachers are professionals and stakeholders throughout this process. Everything should be done to insure safety for people working and learning in each building. The indoor air quality has never been terrific at Whitin, and the age of these systems does not inspire confidence. I know the ventilation systems at Whitin are quite old because the repairman visits us several times every couple months to work on the system. Recirculated air can potentially spread viruses as it moves throughout the school.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/08/05/ventilation-part-of-school-reopening-conversation/>

<https://hartfordhealthcare.org/about-us/news-press/news-detail?articleid=27158&publid=395#:~:text=The%20WHO%20now%20says%20aerosol,a>

Can we provide COVID testing for students and teachers? Viruses enter through mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose, mouth or cuts and scrapes, common in both children and adults. The opportunistic nature of this virus is such that it spreads like wildfire. Those who see a larger number of students are most at risk in a school setting. Some teachers will have a class of 24 divided into 2 cohorts, and other teachers will have large numbers of students each day. This puts teachers of certain subjects more at risk. In mid April, phys ed teachers, music teachers and counselors were some of the first teachers to die of COVID-19 in American public schools.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/05/04/850195271/coronavirus-victims-students-from-three-states-remember-their-teachers>

The *hybrid* model is untested. It is complicated. It throws teachers, administrators, and kids who are hungry for social interaction, into restrictive settings where regulation and compliance are so necessary, they interfere with free communication. Facial cues; evidence of educational engagement and human connection are lost behind masks. The process of school will feel unnatural, bearing little resemblance to educational settings our students are accustomed to.

<https://www.wired.com/story/hybrid-schooling-is-the-most-dangerous-option-of-all/>

Creativity thrives best in an environment of participation. Performing arts classes are process oriented, where kids learn by doing. Under DESE regulations, kids will not be able to play recorder, sing or play band instruments at school. There is a crucial window of time in a child's life, when interests in creating music vocally or instrumentally are best nurtured; in the early

middle school years. Remote teaching and learning will enable students to learn instruments and sing from home. We can provide 'hands-on' opportunities for direct experience and engagement with these performing arts, which were taught remotely from home last spring.  
DESE additional guidance on school reopenings: July 24

What does *remote* learning offer that hybrid learning does not? The opportunity to see one another's facial expressions; the opportunity to use remote technology as a 21st century skill expectation; the opportunity to see students become fully engaged! The opportunity to offer live participation in the performing arts! Above all, remote learning offers an opportunity for *everyone* to be safe.

*Submitted by Gretchen C. D'Andrea*

*Whitin School General, Vocal and Instrumental Music Educator/Theater Arts*

*August 25, 2020*

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Please read the following letter during the public comment section of the School Committee meeting on August 26, 2020.

Dear Members of the School Committee

As an educator and parent, I implore you to reconsider your decision to begin the school year using a hybrid model. As the days pass, more and more school systems across the US continue to report positive cases of COVID-19 and the question is not will this happen in Uxbridge, but when will this happen. The emergency school closures and quarantines, reminiscent of the spring, are quickly proving a strain on even the most dedicated education departments and communities, our goal overall is to prevent entering an unplanned remote learning situation again. In Uxbridge alone our small district employs staff members from 50 different communities dispersed throughout 3 different states, which does not account for the many school choice students that come from communities surrounding Uxbridge as well and along with these individuals come their germs.

I love my job as a teacher, I am very invested in keeping the children of this community safe and I don't believe the hybrid plan will succeed in doing this. People, especially children, are human and will make mistakes and forget the seriousness of this virus especially when put into a huge social environment like a school. For years we have worked on creating this sense of family within the school system and it's this familial feeling that leads to guards being let down especially when students are moving throughout the building during passing times. Passing times are traditionally the times when the students "let loose" and socialize with their friends in other classes or grades, and it's during this time that it is most important that they adhere to the strict guidelines set forth by the CDC, because there is no way to remain socially distant. Students also realize that the teachers will not be focused on monitoring the halls at these times because they will be following cleaning protocols and logging into the next zoom call, so students will continue to disregard safety measures.

Additionally, Governor Baker's current regulations only allow indoor gathering up to 25 people in an enclosed space for safety reasons, because experiences within the state have shown that when people gather the virus spreads. While most individual classes will meet that requirement, the hallways during passing times will grossly surpass the limit multiple times per day. At the same time, multiple teachers and paraprofessionals who don't have one assigned classroom, but share many classrooms with others, must move throughout the day changing their exposure from approximately 50 students daily to 300 students daily, which leads to more questions that are yet to be answered.

- o How are the teachers who move throughout the building supposed to follow safety precautions when they need to be in two different places at once? How will this impact student learning time?
- o Who will monitor the students in the classroom and their adherence to safety protocols while they are waiting for a teacher to arrive from another room?
- o How will we protect the students and staff who move throughout the building who are high-risk or who live with high risk individuals?

- If staff members do become ill, are there sufficient subs to cover the absences?
- Who will monitor the situations on the bus, the driver must focus on keeping the bus on route and not student adherence to guidelines and monitors are not required.
- Will outdoor air supply rates be increased in school buildings, including classrooms, and how will the school verify that ventilation is adequate with students in the school? How often will air filters be changed in the ventilation systems? Will these ventilation reports be posted publicly?
- Are there any guidelines in place for the classrooms regarding acceptable classroom temperatures and what measures will be taken if the classroom does not meet those guidelines?
- If the CDC considers tables and desks frequently touched areas that need to be cleaned regularly, why is Uxbridge not following this guideline in their plans?
- If it is not recommended that students enter a school with a temperature, how is this being monitored in order to reduce the spread?
- Who is there to help the school nurse should multiple students/staff exhibit symptoms at the same time? What about students who need to report to the nurse regularly, where will they go if the amount of space has not changed?
- If you are considering classroom space outside, how are you going to maintain student safety given other safety protocols schools are supposed to follow?
- What guidance for contact tracing, testing and quarantine is in place for students and teachers? Are students required to sign a class contract in agreement with maintaining contract tracing?

Our focus should be on keeping students, families and teachers safe while providing the best education possible instead of trying to divide our attention between following safety protocols, teaching students in the building and monitoring remote learners. Additionally, starting remotely keeps our work and learning schedules consistent, and allows educators to get to build initial relationships with students without wearing a mask. We know that facial feedback and learning new faces and voices is important for all levels and all students. Our first impressions must be our authentic selves as educators. Finally, a remote start removes the immediate anxiety of policing students' behaviors and hygiene in a live setting. In consultation with public health experts, a remote start provides educators time to learn behavior management strategies to support healthy hygienic practice in the school setting, especially for our youngest learners. It will teach both educators and the community best practices for the seasonal likelihood of an all-remote setting. A growing chorus of experts is predicting a difficult autumn and flu season, and starting remotely would develop firm behaviors and practices to serve as a foundation in the event of another full shutdown. If we continue to press forward without these practices and protocols clearly outlined our community staff and students will suffer the consequences.

I understand the appeal of the hybrid model as it was presented, but a remote start to any hybrid model will help us identify the most effective means for starting in-person school gradually by

supporting our learners who need it most, while simultaneously remaining socially responsible in curbing community spread. Ultimately, each cohort of students will only receive 8 hours over 2 days of school, of face-to-face time with their teacher a week, based on the current hybrid model and they will have to rush between being in school on a computer to being at home on a computer to finish out their day, is this push for in-person learning worth the risk we are putting ourselves and the students at? It is important for us to remember that the only acceptable death count for our school community is zero. The stakes have never been higher. I implore you to reconsider your recommendation to start the school year in a hybrid model and to call for a new vote based on current information. By committing to a remote learning model we can focus our efforts on the best possible learning opportunities for our students in the safest environment for everyone, while constantly monitoring the evolving situation and reevaluating our progress as a community and as a state throughout the ever-changing weeks.

Sincerely,

Melissa Silva

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10/17/2020

Uxbridge Public Schools Mail - Open comment for meeting tonight



Matthew Keane &lt;mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us&gt;

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**Open comment for meeting tonight**

1 message

Kara Guy &lt;karaguy@gmail.com&gt;

Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 4:20 PM

To: Matthew Keane &lt;mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us&gt;

Dear School Committee Members,

I'm the parent of a preschool aged student who has a disability and is planning on attending school in-person at Taft this Fall. We are very fortunate to have district leadership that understands the unique needs of students with disabilities and the importance of their learning to occur in-person when necessary and possible. Although transitions are difficult for most young learners, for children with disabilities and specifically children on the autism spectrum, transitions and changes in routine can be earth shattering and at times unbearable. As such, an incredible amount of work goes into helping prepare some of these students for a change in their routine. We have begun this process with our son, to help prepare him as much as possible to be in school 5 days per week after a very long break in his normal schedule since March. We understand the plans of the district to be in-person for Pre-school students, however we have concerns given the recent Uxbridge Teachers Association statement that the UTA will not be returning in person teaching at the start of the year. We sincerely worry that it will be the final hour before school begins and plans will change due to negotiations. Many parents of special education students have concerns about this potential scenario. Would the School Committee and/or administration be able to update the community on negotiations with the UTA? Has an agreement been made to start in-person at the beginning of the school year?

Thank you all for all of your hard work for our kids.

Sincerely,

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Kara Guy

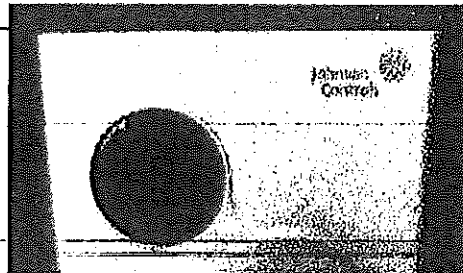
Dear Administrators and School Committee Members of the Uxbridge Public Schools,

I hope this letter finds you healthy. My name is Nikki Bernasconi and I am a social studies teacher at the high school. I was talking with my department the other day about this upcoming school year, and I told them I am really scared someone is going to die. Even with all of the active shooter drills that we have done in the past, I have never had concerns like that at the start of a school year. Those thoughts and emotions are not a healthy way to go into teaching. Once again I ask you: isn't it better to be safe than sorry? I believe the acceptable number of COVID-19 deaths in our school community is zero. If you feel the same way, I ask that you call for another vote and vote in favor of a remote start. The risk in this situation greatly outweighs the reward. To all the parents and other community members listening to this meeting, if you are concerned about the health and safety of our students and staff, please call or email the school committee members and administrators and ask them to support our remote plans.

The remote learning experience we had in the spring is NOTHING like the remote learning that would happen in the fall. If we are able to prepare for a remote learning experience, and use the professional development time we have before the students start, we will be able to address the issues and obstacles we faced in the spring. When quarantine started, we as teachers were flying the plane as it was being built, so it was not a perfect situation. Now that we have been through that and if the decision were to be made that we would be remote again, then we would use our time, energy, experience and resources to make sure that all the problems are addressed.

The hybrid model is only going to offer students one to two hours of face to face instruction per class a week. Only one to two hours! One to two hours a week is not worth a student or staff member getting sick. One to two hours a week is not worth traumatizing a student over how different school procedures are. One to two hours a week is not worth putting students or staff in unsafe and uncomfortable buildings. I have included a picture from 7:45 this morning of the thermostat in my classroom. It was already 83.5 degrees fahrenheit (and it was 55 degrees outside). One to two hours a week is not worth sitting in a hot classroom, with closed windows and no fan, all with a mask on.

Again, please call for another vote on the model we use to start the school year and protect our entire school community by voting for a remote start.



Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Nikki Bernasconi

Hello School Committee Members,

I have written to you twice and I would like to follow up with all of you once again in the public comment section of your meeting.

I have been in Uxbridge for 7 years now and I can honestly say, this is the most disheartening 6 months I have ever experienced here in this community. The nasty comments and conversations I have seen and heard are disgusting. The faculty here at Uxbridge High School are the hardest working group of people I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I am honored to call them my colleagues and the community should be grateful to have them all educating your children.

There are so many unanswered questions yet you have chosen to embark on a very large epidemiological study without any of these answers, putting your children, families, faculty and this community at the center of the study. We have protocols in place for the worst case scenarios to the mundane. The question that has not been answered is this... What is the protocol to provide a safe working environment for teachers and students when someone tests positive for COVID? Why is UPS the school that will measure the risk of illness, or god forbid, death? Why are we the school district that will be compared to others who have chosen to start remotely? Why is it we are the ONLY community in the area to open up the school doors? Why does UPS feel as if we should be the heroes? Why do you, the school committee, feel we should be the heroes?

Close contacts will happen whether there is 1/2 the students, no students, etc in the building... Shared office spaces, shared classrooms, sharing bathroom spaces.... we have para professionals who support the students from one classroom to another... Have you gone through every little portion of the day?

Have you thought about the fact that teachers and staff pose risks to one another: break rooms, bathrooms, sharing of rooms, sharing of prep areas and offices?

Do we seal ourselves off in our classrooms and stay in there for the 7 hour day? At the high school, we have been told that our doors are to remain open in order to have proper circulation, exposing us to all the traffic in the hallways. A new study from MIT and Oxford University was just released yesterday, stating that the 6 foot rule is outdated and the distance should be more than 20 feet to effectively deter the virus from spreading.

You are sending us, students and faculty, back into a building that is not ready, nor safe.

Why can you not trust your professional educators, who have worked tirelessly all summer, to start remotely and safely, delivering instruction in the safest way possible at this point? The spring was CRISIS mode, we were all in shock but guess what, the teachers kept going and did the best we could. Faculty and staff have been working all summer to develop engaging,

rigorous and empowering instruction, remotely. Trust in your teachers, we love your kids, we love our jobs and WE know what and how to teach them.

I am tired of listening to "but here in Uxbridge the numbers are low". We do not live in a bubble. We not only have students who school choice in but our staff and faculty come from over 50 different communities. Also, have you thought of the amount of parents who work outside of their homes and come home to their children. How many of these people work outside of Uxbridge? How many of you work outside of Uxbridge?

I want to work and like everyone else in this world, I would like in a safe environment. There have been so many questions asked but have not been answered clearly, regarding safety, proper protocols, sharing of materials, mask breaks, etc etc... Please reconsider this decision of starting in a hybrid model. Please allow us to start remotely and phase back into the building as the data continues to show us that it is safe to do so.

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Regards,

Tracy Larkin, M.Ed  
Science Curriculum and Instruction Leader  
Uxbridge High School

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10/17/2020

Uxbridge Public Schools Mail - public comment for 8/26 meeting



Matthew Keane &lt;mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us&gt;

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**public comment for 8/26 meeting**

1 message

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**Natalie Daverio**  
To: Matthew Keane <mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us>

Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 4:55 PM

Mr. Keane,

I would like to submit the following statement for public comment at tonight's school committee meeting.

Thank you,  
Natalie Daverio

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**Dear School Committee Members,**

As a math teacher, I often think in terms of numbers and I wanted to share a few with you to consider. All of the data presented comes from the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The current US infection rate is 1.75% and only slightly lower in Massachusetts, at 1.69%. Of those infected, 3.09% across the US have died and 7.48% of Massachusetts residents with COVID-19 have also passed away.

In the Uxbridge Public School system, we currently have 1,718 students enrolled. Using the rates above, we likely will have 29-30 students infected with COVID-19. This does not consider the over 200 faculty and staff who will also be affected and are at higher risk due to age, medical conditions, and other factors. Out of those students infected, based on the statistics, 1 to 2 will not survive. Which students are you willing to let die?

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I strongly urge you to call for another vote and to support starting the year on a remote learning plan to protect all those in our community. I cannot wait to reconnect with my students and begin teaching this year, but it is essential that we do so safely, as no loss of life is acceptable.

Thank you,  
Natalie Daverio

UHS Math Teacher

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/><https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-dashboard-august-25-2020/download><https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

10/17/2020

Uxbridge Public Schools Mail - Tierney Family Medical Concerns



Matthew Keane &lt;mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us&gt;

## Tierney Family Medical Concerns

3 messages

Tierney Family [REDACTED]  
 To: "mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us" <mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us>

Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 5:48 PM

On Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 5:45 PM Tierney Family [REDACTED] wrote:

On Sat, Aug 22, 2020 at 10:44 AM Tierney Family [REDACTED] wrote:

This e-mail has also been sent to Principal Demarco, Principal Belleville, and Dr. Tiano. Thank you for reading and understanding all families concerns.

Hello, I am writing in regards to Governor Baker's recent statements about mandatory flu vaccination and onsite testing at schools. I have concerns about both.

My first concern is that while I personally plan to vaccinate my children against the flu this year I do not agree with it being mandated. I believe that that decision should remain with the parents of the child especially for a vaccine where it isn't able to remove the possibility of someone getting the flu, it lowers it. I completely understand why someone would choose to not vaccinate against the flu. I also do believe it will make it easier to mandate the COVID vaccine and I am planning on fighting that if/when it happens. I will not be vaccinating my family until I am confident the vaccine is at least safer than if we got the disease itself. I believe that it will take years to know that information. My understanding is that the flu vaccine will be mandatory for all registered public school students regardless of the learning model chosen. Therefore remote learners would also have to vaccinate. I believe if the mandatory flu vaccine is to be enacted families at very least should have the option to opt to remote learn and not vaccinate.

Secondly, the onsite testing for COVID. I am very uncomfortable with the idea of there being any medical procedures of any kind at school. I am aware that testing is becoming less invasive, but I believe that it is a line that should not be crossed on school grounds. I understand that testing at school would be convenient. Convenience should not trump boundaries. I believe there should be a boundary here even if there are procedures in place to obtain permission slips. Permission slips get lost and misfiled. I, myself, was given the Polio Vaccine twice at school when I already had it at my doctors office because of incorrect records. I told the school that I had already had it and I was pressured to take the polio drink or else I couldn't go back to class, I would have to go to the office, and wait until they called my mother. As an adult I can see that they probably meant so they could verify my claims but as a child I felt like if I didn't drink the drink I was in trouble. So I took it. It happened again only a few weeks later when they didn't document the first time. If my mom was with me at the doctor she would have been able to advocate for me. I understand we are talking testing versus vaccines but I think the answer isn't to decide which medical procedures are acceptable at school but rather to advocate for zero. School grounds should not be a place for kids worrying about having something medical done to them. During a school committee meeting that I watched my understanding was that if a child was exposed or expected of being ill with COVID a 14 day quarantine was an option over testing. Is that still on the table? Is there a possibility of that freedom being removed? I think if a person is ill with minor symptoms that could be attributed to any number of other illnesses they should not be forced to test. If the state wants to make it convenient for communities to test then I would propose a site in town, not on school grounds, that can be accessed if a family chooses. The other option being contacting their family pediatrician and receiving guidance on how to access testing of their choice or how to manage the condition without testing if it is deemed safe to do so.

I selected hybrid for my family, but I am very closely watching how things develop. It makes me uncomfortable knowing that at any point any aspect of what the plan has been can be changed at any level. I understand that the next several weeks will likely see the State making policies during negotiations. I ask that Uxbridge Public Schools advocate for having options available for families who want access to these services, but protect school grounds from blurred boundaries. I understand that full remote or even homeschooling is an option for families. But, it is very important that families feel like they have a voice in this process as much as possible and they don't feel as though those options being available makes it no longer possible to have a say in policies as they develop. What is being built in our education today is how things will be for several years, if not permanently, and if families are

10/17/2020

Uxbridge Public Schools Mail - Tierney Family Medical Concerns

encouraged to choose remote if they aren't comfortable with policies as they develop they will have very little recourse to change it when they decide to resume in person learning.

Thank you for your time and advocating for families of all opinions and positions.

Erika Tierney

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Matthew Keane <mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us>

Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 5:55 PM

To: Tierney Family <[REDACTED]>

Would you like your comments included during the public comment section tonight?

On Aug 26, 2020, at 5:48 PM, Tierney Family <[REDACTED]> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

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Tierney Family <[REDACTED]>

Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 5:58 PM

To: Matthew Keane <mkeane@uxbridge.k12.ma.us>

I would be ok with that thank you. I know there are many different opinions surrounding these issues and I how ever it all turns out it feels good to be heard. Thank you.

[Quoted text hidden]