

Uxbridge School Committee Meeting**December 16, 2020****6:30pm****(Meeting via Zoom platform)**

2020 Uxbridge School Committee Meeting
 2020 *DEC 16* 6:30 PM

Attendees:	Present	Not Present
Matt Keane, Chair	X	
Erik Voight, Vice Chair		X
Paul Paulino, Secretary	X	
Kim Cironne, Member	X	
Brett Pomeroy, Member	X	
Holly Black, Member	X	
Debbie Stark, Member	X	

1. Call to Order 6:31pm by Matt Keane
2. Public Comment:

Matt Keane read the attached email regarding a return to full in-person learning model in all Uxbridge schools.

Matt Keane read the attached email offering support for the daycare program to remain open despite financial troubles.

Eli Laverdiere inquired about the purchase of new plow trucks for the district, and questioned security with respect to storage of snowblowers behind Taft School.

Paul Paulino thanked Uxbridge Boosters.

Debbie Stark shared recognition of teacher willingness to return to school in-person.

Matt Keane acknowledged Erik Voight's resignation from School Committee and thanked him for his service.

3. Retirement Recognition

Dr. Tiano recognized Marianne Cook (outgoing Food Site Service Manager) for 28 years in the Food Service department at Uxbridge High School upon her retirement.

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4. Superintendent Update

Uxbridge High School and Innovation Pathways received two grants, totaling \$40,000; one will bolster the Global Finance and Business Logistics programs, and the second will support virtual and hybrid learning.

For the 5th year in a row Uxbridge High School has won a Program Excellence Award for The Gateway to College program (a partnership with Uxbridge High School and Quinsigamond Community College).

Dr. Tiano shared a School Committee update regarding enrollment and attendance for various cohorts, staff attendance, and Covid 19 numbers.

Principal Rubin spoke to efforts and tactics to engage those remote students who are displaying absenteeism. UHS takes daily and period attendance.

Staff attendance information was provided; often staff are able to work remotely, even while in a quarantine situation. Teachers are live-streamed into the classroom while a substitute is in person to monitor kids in the building.

Review of Covid 19 dashboard and processes to determine when students/groups need to be quarantined.

Binex Antigen testing just arrived; information and update about testing will be provided for next meeting.

Wendy Phillips shared an update on analysis of achievement data.

5. Hybrid Learning Survey Update

Dr. Tiano reviewed the Parent Survey Analysis, including top 3 challenges and top 3 successes for each building.

Principals Bellville, DeMarco, and Rubin spoke to acknowledging and assisting students who are most struggling, including working to get as many students back into the building as possible.

6. Special Education Update

Jennifer Ramsdell provided information on the backlog of testing: consents have been issued and returned, testing has been done and reports written, meetings and evaluations will occur based on feedback gathered.

Suggestion for a mid-year survey to be given to SEPAC families to help determine what additional resources are needed.

7. FY21 Update

Brian Hyde provided an FY21 Budget update including budget to actual, revolving accounts, grants, food service, and day care.

Dr. Tiano reviewed scenarios related to financial situation of daycare.

A survey will be created and sent to daycare families to elicit responses and feedback regarding options.

Matt Keane requested projected operating expenses and impact of the suggested scenarios, so decision can be made at next meeting.

Mr. Hyde answered public comment questions regarding purchase of pick-up truck with plow, and storage of snowblowers.

8. FY22 Update

Brett Pomeroy shared an update on creation of budget for FY22; due to be sent to School Committee by next week and presented to the public on January 6th.

9. Committee Reorganization

Matt Keane will remain as Chair of School Committee; remaining committee members will consider Vice Chair role.

10. Minute Approval

Motion to Approve the October 28, 2020 Uxbridge School Committee Meeting Minutes, as presented, by Kim Cirrone, seconded by Brett Pomeroy. Vote: 5-0 (Holly Black abstained) Approved.

11. Executive Session

Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Union Contract Negotiations by Kim Cirrone, seconded by Brett Pomeroy. Vote: 6-0. Approved.

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:36pm.

School Committee Members:

DocuSigned by:

Matthew Keane

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Matthew Keane, Chair

Holly Black, Member

Debbie Stark, Member

Paul Paulino, Secretary

DocuSigned by:

Kim Cirrone

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Kim Cirrone, Member

DocuSigned by:

Brett Pomeroy

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Brett Pomeroy, Member

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Good evening members of the school committee,

Over the past several meetings we have heard much talk about the financial status of the daycare that is part of the Uxbridge Public Schools. There has been much concern expressed by school committee members regarding the fact that the daycare is in the red this year. It is our understanding that the recommendation of the business manager and the superintendent are to continue to support the daycare through this year given that this is the first time this has occurred and we are in the middle of a global pandemic that has impacted schools and families significantly. As a family in the district, we felt compelled to express our agreement with the business manager and the superintendent.

As we all know, schools and families have had to change the way they operate since March of 2020. With most kids only attending school two days a week families have been forced to work out arrangements for the other days. For some, this means one parent works at home, others have taken leave or hired someone to help out in the house. One of the questions I have heard asked at school committee meetings is where did all the families who were signed up for daycare go. As one of those families, I will answer. We haven't really gone anywhere or made any sustainable arrangements past this week or this month. In order to meet the remote learning needs, like many families, one of us is working from home while the other works outside of the house. For this reason, we did not need the daycare program during this time period because someone was already home and daycare creates another cohort that one must then worry about exposure from. However, just like remote learning, we (and our employees) do not see these plans as permanent but the current solution to get through a pandemic. I am sure that we are not the only family in this position where we can't wait for the day that schools can open full time and we send out children off to Kids Club. Therefore we are very concerned about the current talks to close the daycare. Yes, this is being seen in businesses all over, and yes there are financial implications that will impact us all, however, closing an otherwise successful daycare seems like a very drastic and short-sighted response to a temporary problem. With the vaccine here we are beginning to see progress and movement forward. So when schools and businesses open up full time, where will the students of the Uxbridge daycare (between 80-120 families) go. There is no daycare in town that will be able to accommodate this number of students. Will some be forced to the area private schools that do offer before and after school care? Will others now require busing? Again financial impact for the school which over time may or may not be greater than the one that is being felt right now.

Also, I would ask school committee members to consider the community that is the Kids Club. Staff members who have devoted over 20 years to this program, and are a huge part in the lives of the children that attend the program. These are care providers that we have grown to know and trust to watch our children, help them with their homework, and cheer them on as they move through the challenges of school and life. I know my son constantly talks to his little brother (who would be slated to go next year) about how much fun they will have at Kids Club next year when the virus is better. Will this

become another thing they lose because of COVID. For the sake of the many families who depend on this program, I certainly hope not.

In closing, I ask the school committee to really explore all options that are available and follow the recommendations of the school leadership team to keep the daycare open.

Yes there is a financial impact now but to close the program due to an unexpected pandemic will create potentially many more issues for the schools and the families who have come to rely on these programs.

Thank you
Chris and Beth Ford

To the Uxbridge School Committee,

I am the parent of two children enrolled in the Uxbridge school district. I am writing again to encourage the school committee and administration to return to a fully in-person learning model. The guidance given by the state, is that school districts are expected to move to fully in-person learning if feasible. While it is possible that I am reading the guidance incorrectly, I believe DESE's guidance is that 6 feet between desks is preferable, but 3 feet is the actual minimum allowable distance. Either way, private schools in the area have been fully in person since September. They have managed the pandemic successfully without major outbreaks. I believe we could do the same.

I remain concerned for the wellbeing of all the children in our town. For many children, not being in school poses much more significant risk than does Covid. There are significant health concerns, like depression, anxiety, weight gain, etc. that are affecting our children by not being in-person, at school. There is also significant evidence that the underserved children in our community will fall behind and have no means to ever catch up academically with their peers. While some families have resources available (tutoring, engaged parents, a supportive home environment, etc.) to assist the students, many do not. Are we considering the students and family that do not have those resources? Those parents are probably not attending school committee meetings.

Simply waiting for the vaccine should not be our only plan. Widespread vaccination may not happen until April or later, what long-term effects will there be for our children in the meantime? Experts are and have been encouraging school districts to return to full in person learning as soon as possible. Has the administration and school board reviewed the feasibility of returning to fully in-person learning? If not, when do we expect this to happen? Is there consideration being given to returning in January 2021?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Patrick & Elizabeth Orr

CC: Dr. Frank Tiano, Superintendent of Schools

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