

DECEMBER 15 2020

UNOFFICIAL NOTES:

**12/15/20 MCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING -
"OPENING SCHOOLS IN RECOVERY OF
EDUCATION"**

MODERATELY MOCO

BY JUNE TRAIKOFF

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12/15/20 MCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING - "OPENING SCHOOLS IN RECOVERY OF EDUCATION"

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Ms. Wolff stated that the purpose of the meeting was to vote on the plan to return to school.

The meeting started with playing the public testimony videos that could not be played at the December 3 meeting due to technical difficulties. These were Dougherty, Speck, Hasson, Montilla, Berkholtz, Allsopp, Gordon, Shear, Smelkinson, Herschler, Weiner (a fifth grader!), and Simonson. The testimonies from Johnson, Angel, and Traicoff were not played again.

Ms. Wolff said the next meeting with public comment is Tuesday January 12. Signups will be on Wednesday January 6.

Dr. Smith said there are many perspectives in the public comments. He said it is not accurate that one group of people control decisions on returning to school. He talks with state health officers every week and follows the governor's metrics. He said there are no right answers like $2+2=4$ for COVID-19. He quoted Albert Einstein, "Make as simple as possible, but no simpler."

RESPONSE TO DIRECTION FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION AT DECEMBER 3 MEETING - METRICS

Dr. Smith began the discussion on the direction from the BoE at the December 3 meeting to reexamine the metrics and the prioritization of students for return to school.

He said the CDC and state metrics are aligned and MCPS uses them as a guide. He said the state has no desire to change the thresholds of 5% test positivity or case rates of 5 to 15 per 100,000. However, there is room for shift within the 5 to 15 per 100K range. He said there is agreement at the local, state, and CDC levels that more students can be brought back more quickly at the 15 per 100K

threshold. He said MCPS would accelerate the pace of students coming back at 15 cases per 100K (instead of doing different actions at case rates of 5, 7, 9, 11, and 12 per 100K).

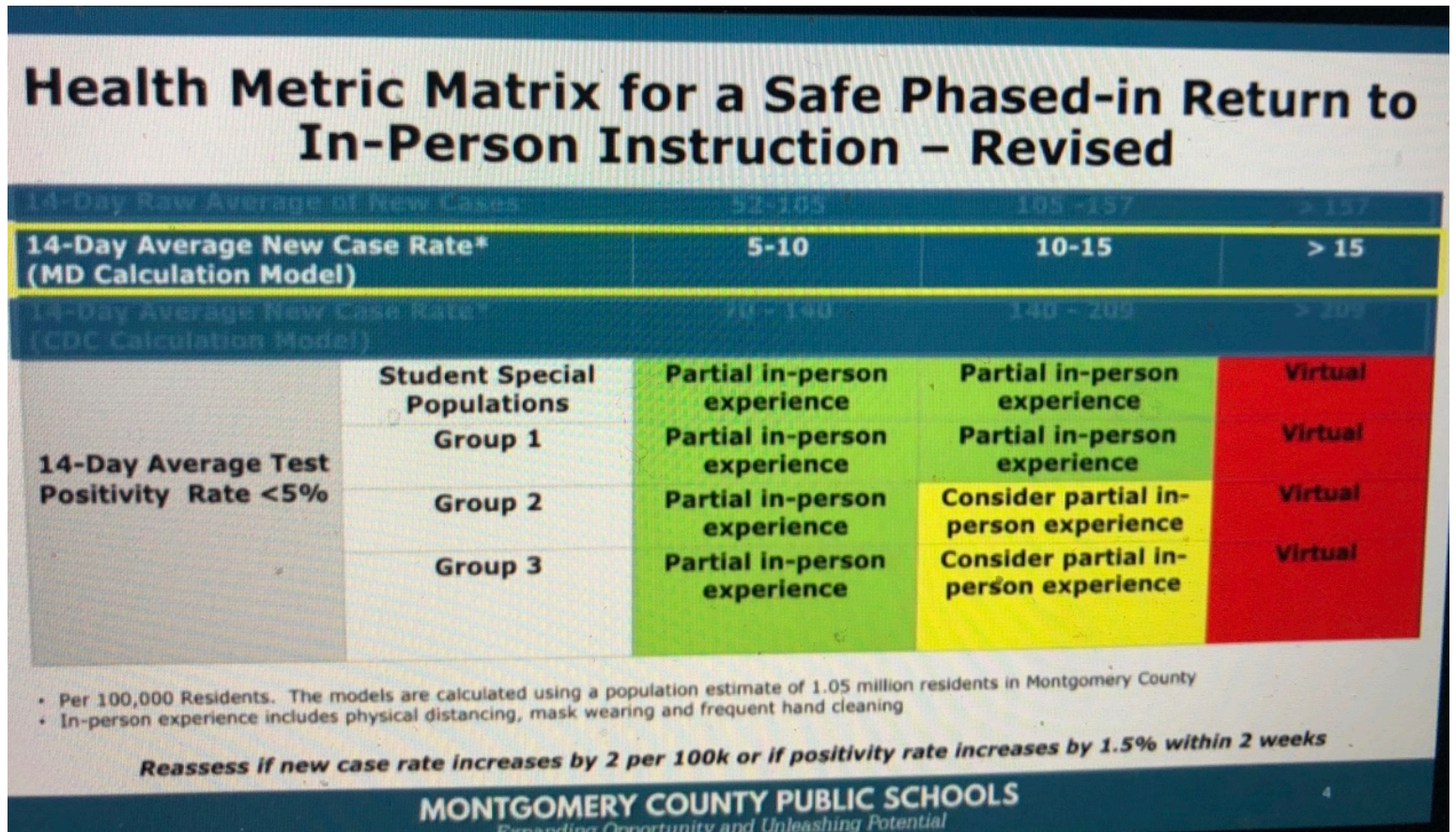
HE ALSO SAID THAT AT <5 CASES PER 100K, SCHOOLS WILL FULLY REOPEN.

Dr. Smith noted that Dr. Fauci had recently mentioned the potential to achieve herd immunity by spring. He hopes for a phased re-opening on the first day of the second semester.

He noted that his job is to advise on schools, and elected officials make decisions on bars and restaurants. However, he can encourage the community to make good decisions to keep COVID-19 cases down.

Mr. Turner showed the new chart for the MCPS metrics and thresholds. Hybrid return would now begin at a case rate of <15 cases per 100K.

PRESENTATION CHART



This is slightly different from what is currently on the MCPS website – the website has Groups 1 and 2 instead of Groups 1, 2, and 3.

MCPS WEBSITE –CURRENT CHART

Health Metric Matrix for a Safe Phased-in Return to In-Person Instruction – Revised (12/15/20)				
14-Day Raw Average of New Cases		52-105	105 -157	> 157
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (MD Calculation Model)		5-10	10-15	> 15
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (CDC Calculation Model)		70 - 140	140 - 209	> 209
14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate <5%	Special Student Populations	Partial in-person experience	Partial in-person experience	Virtual
	Group 1	Partial in-person experience	Partial in-person experience	Virtual
	Group 2	Partial in-person experience	Consider partial in-person experience	Virtual

• Per 100,000 Residents. The models are calculated using a population estimate of 1.05 million residents in Montgomery County
 • In-person experience includes physical distancing, mask wearing and frequent hand cleaning

Reassess if new case rate increases by 2 per 100k or if positivity rate increases by 1.5% within 2 weeks

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The were several differences from the previous chart on the MCPS website (what the BOE considered at the December 3 meeting). This had a return to hybrid learning for the general population at case rates of <5 per 100K. It also had Groups 1, 2, and 3 of students.

MCPS WEBSITE – PREVIOUS CHART

Health Metric Matrix for a Safe Phased-in Return to In-Person Instruction

14-Day Average New Case Rate* (MD Calculation Model)		< 5	5-10	10-15	> 15
14-Day Average New Case Rate* (CDC Calculation Model)		< 70	70 - 140	140 - 209	> 209
14-Day Average Test Positivity Rate <5%	Student Special Populations	Expanded in-person	Limited in-person	Consider minimal in-person	Virtual
	Group 1	In-person	Consider in-person	Virtual	Virtual
	Group 2	In-person following Group 1	Virtual **	Virtual	Virtual
	Group 3	In-person following Group 2	Virtual **	Virtual	Virtual

* Per 100,000 Residents. The models are calculated using a population estimate of 1.05 million residents in Montgomery County
 ** If numbers are trending toward 5 then consideration for hybrid in-person can be accelerated

Reassess if new case rate increases by 2 per 100k or if positivity rate increases by 1.5% within 2 weeks

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Q AND A FOR MCPS RESPONSE TO BOE - METRICS

Dr. Docca, Ms. Evans, and Ms. Wolff had no questions. Mr. Asante had no questions, but he noted that the new metrics chart was clearer than the previous one.

Ms. O’Neill stated that using an adjusted threshold of <15 and accelerating return of students was good. She hopes everyone uses good judgment over Christmas to keep cases down.

Ms. Smondrowski asked about the potential for using outdoor spaces with heaters, rec centers, and libraries. Dr. Smith said they have looked at outdoor space but need indoor space attached for inclement weather.

Mr. Turner said MCPS has space and can accommodate all students who want to return in person. Ms. Smondrowski asked if portables would be used. Mr. Turner said yes.

Ms. Silvestre said that schools aren't superspreaders but mobilizing thousands of students could be dangerous.

Ms. Harris asked when information could be shared with families and students about logistics in buildings. Dr. Smith said it would be shared in the weeks before moving students back in schools. She suggested working with community partners to disseminate the information in a culturally responsive way.

BOE RESOLUTION

The board discussed a resolution using thresholds of 5% test positivity and a case rate range of 5 to 15. Ms. Smondrowski asked for clarification on one or both thresholds being required. Mr. Turner said both thresholds need to be met. He said the current Montgomery County case rate is 41.9/100K and percent positivity is 6.2%.

The board unanimously approved a resolution to use thresholds of 5% test positivity and 5 to 15 cases per 100K and to accelerate the return of more students when the threshold of 15 cases per 100K is reached.

TIMEFRAME FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL

Mr. Turner presented a CDC forecast model and said the predicted case rate for Montgomery County is 28 to 30 per 100K in January 2021.

Dr. Smith recommended not bringing the small groups of students (eg, special education, CTE students) back as previously planned on January 12 and delaying this until Feb 1, 2021. He also recommended enlarging the options for appointments and services (ie, special education). He said they will determine if metrics can be met at the January 12 BOE meeting.

Ms. Smondrowski questioned voting on this before the discussion of the student phase-in.

Ms. O’Neill thought the appointment only services are good. She said MCPS can’t turn on a dime. COVID-19 cases are rising and she has read that the next few months will be the darkest in history.

BOE RESOLUTION

The board voted unanimously for delaying return to school from January 12 to Feb 1, 2021.

FAMILY PREFERENCE SURVEY RESPONSES

Dr. Addison shared results of the family preference survey. There were no responses for approximately 38,000 students. She also showed responses by school level and demographics (details can be seen at the full presentation slides link at bottom of this document)

Responses Overall and By Level

	Response Received		Non Response		Remain Virtual Only		Partial in-person		Needs Transportation
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
MCPS TOTAL	127,112	76.7%	38,513	23.3%	63,760	50.2%	63,352	49.8%	25,979
Elementary Schools	59,451	81.7%	13,308	18.3%	29,990	50.4%	29,461	49.6%	10,674
Middle Schools	29,692	79.4%	7,717	20.6%	14,929	50.3%	14,763	49.7%	7,313
High Schools	37,463	74.3%	12,976	25.7%	18,618	49.7%	18,845	50.3%	7,775
Special Schools	321	55.8%	254	44.2%	149	46.4%	172	53.6%	154
Home Instruction	67	1.6%	4,122	98.4%	15	22.4%	52	77.6%	14

Approximately 50% of respondents (63,352 students) selected partial in-person learning. Approximately 41% of those students (25,979) need transportation.

Q AND A FOR FAMILY PREFERENCE SURVEY RESPONSES

Ms. Evans, Ms. Wolff, Mr. Asante, and Dr. Docca had no questions.

Ms. Silvestre asked for clarification on the effect of the non-responders on the numbers. Dr. Addison clarified which slides included the non-responder numbers (some are labeled responses received, others are labeled non-response, default to virtual). Ms. Silvestre noted the preference of Latino non-FARMS families for partial in-person learning. She said MCPS needs to do a better job of reaching out to families in poverty.

Ms. Smondrowski asked if MCPS was monitoring responses by child or family, because some families misunderstood and only filled out the survey for one child instead of each child. The schools are contacting families if they didn't respond.

Ms. Smondrowski also asked if the data for special education students is broken down by specific programs. Dr. Lowndes said yes, MCPS has these data.

Ms. O'Neill asked if the data could be overlaid with zip code or cluster maps. Ms. Harris reiterated the same cluster map question. Dr. Smith said OSA(?) is working on this and data could be pulled by cluster but not zip code.

Ms. Harris also asked if non-responders who are reached would have the opportunity to change from the default virtual-only option. Dr. Smith said they will accommodate if they can and there is space.

RESPONSE TO DIRECTION FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION AT DECEMBER 3 MEETING – PRIORITIZATION OF STUDENT PHASE-IN

Dr. Wilson discussed the revised phase-in options. She noted that all families who requested transportation will get it. Elementary school students will be prioritized.

She noted plans will be in place in early January and commented that there are higher transmission rates of COVID-19 in adolescents. There are no specific dates in the phase-in schedule because they want to see how phase goes.

There will be a Phase I and Phase II with 2 groups each.

Proposed Phase-In Models

Phase I	Group 1.1	Group 1.2
Phase II	Group 2.1	Group 2.2

There are some changes to the previous order of students, for example, 8th grade now returns before 7th grade.

Proposed Phase-In Model: Phase I

Group 1.1	Group 1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Special Education Programs • CTE • Grades K-3 = 18,673 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Special Education Programs • Grades 4-5 = 9,833 • Pre-K = 1,183 • Grade 6 = 4983* • Grade 12 = 4,371*

CTE Programs Phase 1

- Construction
- Automotive Technology
- Cosmetology
- Restaurant Management
- Student-built House Construction
- Internship Experiences
- Health Professions

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Proposed Phase-In Model: Phase 2

Group 2.1	Group 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade 8 = 4966 ● Grade 9 = 5411 ● Grade 11 = 4186 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade 7 = 4840 ● Grade 10 = 4956

Secondary schools may initiate bringing some students in based on academic and engagement needs before their particular grade level returns.

Secondary Schools - Focused Outreach Initiated by Schools

School-based teams will initiate contact with families based on a variety of student needs to increase engagement and/or performance.

High School:

- Not on Track to Graduate - 12, 11, 10, 9
- College Application Processes - Various
- Counseling
- Students Not Engaged
- Special Education Assessments

Middle School:

- Failing Grades
- Counseling
- Students Not Engaged
- Special Education Assessments

This opportunity is available for all students whether they selected a virtual or in person experience

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Dr. Lowndes discussed plans for special education students. He noted that for special education students that are in general classes, there will be support provided in schools for them to come back early before their grade level returns.

He also noted that more groups will be brought back together in the first phase than in the previous plan.

PREVIOUS PLAN

Phase-in Schedule: **Special Education** Proposal Shared Earlier

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
K-12 Autism Program	Select Pre-K Programs	Asperger’s Program
Extensions Program	Learning for Independence	Elementary Learning Centers
School Community-based	Bridge Program	Social Emotional Special Education Services

CURRENT PLAN

Program Detail for Special Education Phase-In

Group 1.1	Group 1.2
K-12 Autism Program (E, M, H) Bridge (E, M, H) Extensions Program (E, M, H) Learning For Independence (E, M, H) Learning Center School Community-based (E, M, H) Special Schools (E, M, H) Select Pre-K Grades K-5, Grades 6 and 12: Asperger's GTLD School Based Program Social Emotional Special Education Services (SESES)	Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Asperger's Program GTLD School Based Program SESES

Q AND A FOR MCPS RESPONSE TO BOE - PRIORITIZATION OF STUDENT PHASE-IN

Ms. Harris asked about CTE programs and how to support teachers doing hands-on instruction (such as cooking) when teaching virtually. Dr. Smith said more people are needed for instruction and there are budgetary considerations.

Ms. Harris noted that more clarity on how schools will operate would ease the anxiety of teachers and staff. Dr. McKnight said MCPS will provide professional development and noted the importance of instructional leadership teams at the schools.

Dr. Wilson said student schedules will drive where teachers are needed. The parent preference survey provides the core information for the schedules.

Ms. Smondrowski asked how many CTE students chose the virtual-only learning option. Dr. Smith said schools have that information. Outreach to secondary schools is happening now.

She asked about the timing between groups coming back. Dr. Wilson said they will learn from the first groups coming back (such as K-3) and the metrics to determine the pace of additional groups returning.

Ms. O'Neill asked about the logistics of possible temporary reassignment to different schools and different teachers. Dr. Wilson gave examples of schools with 80% or 40% of students selecting in-person instruction and said these numbers could affect the frequency of instructions. She also mentioned a tiered system where a student might need to log into some specialized classes (eg, AP Physics) for virtual instruction even if they are onsite.

Ms. Wolff asked if there will be a 5-day a week schedule for return to school. Dr. McKnight said that information will be provided in January and that elementary school will meet more often.

Ms. Silvestre noted that if there is no transportation for the appointment services, then MCPS needs to be flexible. Dr. Smith said they will try to provide transportation for appointment services. Ms. Silvestre asked if a parent is not comfortable with the new phase in-plans (such as the thresholds or timing of groups), could they switch to the virtual only option. Dr. Smith said yes.

Ms. Smondrowski clarified with Dr. Smith that the appointment services would begin in the second week of January. He said yes, if the metrics and staffing allow this. The special education assessments are currently open. She mentioned a possibility of appointments being like the learning hubs.

Ms. Smondrowski also noted that attending another school temporarily does not mean you have been redistricted. Dr. Smith concurred and said that school will look much more typical in spring and fall of 2021. Ms. O'Neill noted a

past example of Oakland Terrace school being out of space and the entire kindergarten went to Sligo Middle School for 1 year.

Dr. Wilson noted that the alternate locations would likely affect elementary schools more than middle and high schools based on the number of families indicating interest for in-person learning.

Ms. Smondrowski said short, concise responses would be very helpful for families.

Ms. Wolff asked what would happen if a whole elementary class wants to return in person. Dr. Smith said they will need to make 2 classes and possibly use additional teachers or para-educators. He said it is like a 10,000 piece jigsaw puzzle.

Ms. Evans, Dr. Docca, and Mr. Asante had no questions.

BOE RESOLUTION

The board voted unanimously in favor of a resolution to tentatively approve the framework for the phased-in instruction.

SLIDES / FULL RESOLUTION DETAILS

Full Presentation:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWCUCT7B6A65/\\$file/Opening%20Schls%20Recovery%20Ed%20201215%20PPT.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWCUCT7B6A65/$file/Opening%20Schls%20Recovery%20Ed%20201215%20PPT.pdf)

More extensive details of the resolutions not discussed at the meeting are here:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWBTVG79341C/\\$file/201215%20Final%20Action%20Resolution_ADOPTED.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWBTVG79341C/$file/201215%20Final%20Action%20Resolution_ADOPTED.pdf)

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWBTVJ7936E9/\\$file/201215%20Health%20Metrics%20Resolution_ADOPTED.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWBTVJ7936E9/$file/201215%20Health%20Metrics%20Resolution_ADOPTED.pdf)

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWBTVE7931BB/\\$file/201215%20Delay%20of%20Return%20Resolution_ADOPTED.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BWBTVE7931BB/$file/201215%20Delay%20of%20Return%20Resolution_ADOPTED.pdf)

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If you're looking for pet sitting services, check out Happy Paws:
<http://www.happypaws-pet.com/index.shtml>



The advertisement features a warm, golden-brown background with white paw prints and cartoonish animal faces. On the left, a green parrot is in a wire cage. The main title 'HAPPY PAWS' is in large, bold, white letters with a black outline, and 'PET SITTING SERVICE' is below it in smaller, bold, black letters. A white box on the right contains contact information, including the website 'www.happypaws-pet.com', email 'info@happypaws-pet.com', and phone number '301-515-5800'. A cartoon dog is next to the phone number. At the bottom, a blue cat face and a grey and white cat are shown. The slogan 'WE LOVE YOUR PETS AS IF THEY WERE OUR OWN!' is written in bold, black letters.

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