

MARCH 23 2021

UNOFFICIAL NOTES:

**3/23/21 MCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING -
"OPENING SCHOOLS IN RECOVERY OF
EDUCATION"**

MODERATELY MOCO

BY JUNE TRAI COFF

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THIS IS OUR FINAL ONE OF THESE

JUNE IS RETIRING FROM NOTE TAKING AND I WANTED TO THANK JUNE FOR ALL THE TIME AND EFFORT SHE HAS PUT IN WATCHING THESE MEETINGS AND TAKING NOTES FOR OTHERS THAT CAN'T AND TO SHARE THE INFORMATION.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Five board members were in person (Smondrowski, Wolff, Evans, Silvestre, Harris). Three board members called in from home (Docca, Asante, O'Neill). Dr. Smith attended in person.

Board members began the meeting acknowledging the public testimony from several Wootton High School students regarding the lack of ADA compliance at their school and at all 207 MCPS schools. Ms. Smondrowski requested a list of all schools that are not ADA compliant. Dr. Smith said he would talk to Mr. Adams, but the response is complicated based on the year the school was built and retrofitting.

Ms. O'Neill said she has a handicap permit and mobility issues, and it is an overstatement that none of the schools are ADA compliant.

Ms. Smondrowski acknowledged the testimony regarding the lack of special education services being provided in person (ie, students are in school buildings but are still receiving services like physical therapy virtually).

Dr. Smith said services provided by people who travel between schools are still virtual. Ms. Harris suggested altering their travel circuits to offer some services in person.

Dr. Smith discussed the March 1 and March 15 board meetings regarding opening. He noted that 13 million meals were served in 12 months. He said there are many perspectives about school opening. The staff has worked hard. They will adjust and react to the future as it comes to us.

Dr. McKnight gave an overview of meeting topics: metrics, vaccinations, food and nutrition, phase in plan, highlights from the March 15 return, summer school, AP/SAT exams, and graduation.

METRICS

Mr. Turner presented the current case rates of 10.3/100K and 2.8% test positivity. CDC models project numbers to continue to plateau and decline. He suggested not traveling over spring break. He said the MCPS website has the number of cases – staff and students testing positive for COVID-19. Outbreak is defined as 2 or more cases in a school. He noted that the state website listing MCPS outbreaks may be incorrect because the cases were unrelated. He acknowledged that CDC had updated their guidance.

FOOD SERVICE

Ms. McGuire noted that 13 million meals were served in the last year. School meal service was in all 208 schools on March 15. There is also curbside service at 25 schools and 9 additional sites.

VACCINATIONS

Dr. Nixon said that 26,496 staff member names were submitted to their partners at Johns Hopkins and the county DHHS for vaccinations: MCEA 14,608; SEIU 9,761; MCAAP/MCBOA 867; Substitute/TPT 1,800. 15,821 of the total names were submitted to JHU and 10,675 were submitted to DHHS. The names were aligned in groups corresponding to return to school dates.

As of 3/16, 8,408 vaccinations were reported at JHU, 2,196 were reported at DHHS, and 2,675 staff reported receiving vaccines elsewhere on their own.

Q AND A

Ms. O'Neill noted that the positive cases of high school students are athletes. She asked how the current CDC guidance of 3 feet distancing will change plans. Dr. Smith said he doesn't know yet, as guidance was received on Friday. Ms. Evans and Ms. Wolff said they are hesitant to make changes. Ms. Silvestre asked how the CDC guidance applies to staff who are vaccinated and confirmed that staff will be vaccinated before their return date. Ms. Harris said the numbers are exactly what was expected and there is no spreading in school.

She would also like to get arts students outside for activities (theater, dance, music, etc).

Ms. Harris noted that 50% fewer meals are being served this year. She noted a good job with meal distribution, like the Army is running it.

MARCH 15 HIGHLIGHTS

Videos were shown of the return at Strathmore Elementary (Principal Nelson) and Sequoyah Elementary (Principal Jasper), and the principals made remarks and answered questions. Both schools customized learning to the needs of their students and families, had staff involved in planning, and had highly successful and seamless returns.

Sequoyah has 40% of students in person with the number rising, K-2 is either all virtual or all in person, and 3-5 is simultaneous model. There is no support to virtual model. Classes have an additional paraeducator and ESOL teacher as needed and differentiated small group instruction. They have written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The PTA made podcasts for parents.

PHASE IN SCHEDULE

Dr. Wilson said there are 2 points: accelerated phase in and the return date following spring break. There was a resolution to make the return date after spring break **April 8** (grades 4, 5, 6, 12) and to combine the 2.1 and 2.2 groups (7, 8, 9, 10, 11) to an **April 19** return.

The resolution passed unanimously.

Ms. Smondrowski requested adjustments incorporating the current CDC 3-foot distance guidance at the next meeting. Ms. Silvestre asked if this was feasible for principals. Dr. McKnight said it would affect staffing. Dr. Wilson said people might opt out at 3 foot spacing, and principals planned for 6 feet.

SAT/AP EXAMS

Dr. Murphy said April 13 will be the primary SAT date and April 27 will be the makeup date. The PSAT for grade 10 is postponed to October 2021. Grade 11 students may take the SAT in place of the PSAT.

45,000 exams are expected to be taken by MCPS students. The College Board offers 3 testing windows:

- May 3-17
- May 18-28
- June 1-11

Three formats are offered:

- In person paper/pencil
- In person digital
- At home digital

The MCPS default will be at home digital. However, languages and music are required to be in person. And in person accommodations will be provided for special education needs.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Dr. Hazel said summer school will be offered at no cost. It will cover unlearned content in math and literacy and social/emotional well-being. Families will select either in person or virtual.

ATHLETICS

Dr. Sullivan acknowledged all of the hard work by staff and SROs to make fall sports happen. They are working on a waiver so that parents can attend games. Winter sports will have scrimmages in late April/May.

GRADUATION

Dr. Koutsos recommended Plan B (students graduate at their home stadiums and can use Gaithersburg High School if needed).

Q AND A

Ms. Harris noted students taking AP classes have reported feeling less prepared than in previous years.

Ms. Silvestre asked about the report in the Washington Post about the number of failing grades in Maryland schools (posted on Maryland Department of Education website). Dr. Wilson said students could lighten course loads and change their schedules and take summer school. She said MCPS doesn't have to report data to the state. Dr. Smith said he will follow up about the state. Dr. Wilson said it is a high-level summary to MSDE, and Ms. Hazel said MCPS will translate it to percentages.

Note that some parents calculated the percentages following the meeting.

Subject	# students failing 2019-2020 second marking period	# students with a failing grade second marking period 2020-2021	% increase in failing grades second marking period 2019 year to second marking period 2020 school year
ES English	1381	1310	-5.1%
ES Math	1476	2245	52.1%
MS English	1617	2744	69.7%
MS Math	1559	2514	61.3%
HS English	4385	4857	10.8%
HS Math	5067	5519	8.9%

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2021/0322/SecondTermPerformanceMetrics2020-2021.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3logw0HGUIQlzdmtXCQ1egmFW3q2gJlyU2TjWL7Etd1wlchEk8XekZWc>

SCHOOL CALENDAR - 2021-2022

The board voted unanimously for an August 30 start date, June 15 end date, and 1-week spring break.

7,567 survey responses were received; 77% of respondents preferred an August 30 start date and 22% preferred a September 8 start date.

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SLIDES

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BZESVZ7497C5/\\$file/](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BZESVZ7497C5/$file/)

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