SC Questions October 27, 2020

In tonight's discussion regarding the metrics for shifting among learning models, I emphasize that there needs to be equal, if not more, focus on the metrics for shifting to 100% in person learning. I realize that there is a high level of attention on plans to move to remote learning, however, there are many people in this community and across the state that are worried about our children.

We are worried about their emotional state and the long term effects of remote and hybrid learning on their well-being.  It is very important that these risks are being balanced with the risks of COVID.  It is apparent from previous school committee meetings that the focus has been solely on the risk of COVID and these other risks are not being considered. You have also mentioned the additional strain on teachers in supporting the current model, which is a constantly shifting model between in-person and remote.  Moving to 100% in person will solve this issue.

There are multiple nation-wide studies that show that the virus is not being spread in schools.  Additionally, there is promising news that a vaccine will be available in December.  Given these factors, the risks of keeping our kids out of school, and the additional strain on our teachers to support the current model, there is a strong case for a plan to move to 100% in school learning. **Karen Gozdeck**

DESE Commissioner Riley and Governor Baker have said that only school districts in communities at high risk (red) for COVID for three consecutive weeks should consider remote-only learning,  And today, they added that schools shouldn’t switch to remote-only learning unless the virus is spreading in the school.  
  
None of these conditions exist at LS.  This proposal for two weeks of planned remote learning completely flies in the face of what the state has said we should do.  We seem to be coming up with our own data points to consider that contradict the state.  Why is this OK?  Why would we even consider not following state guidelines? We need to stay hybrid until and unless the state guidelines have been met. **Ilona Blosfelds**

I would urge the school committee and school leaders to define and articulate a clear set of criteria to make decisions about when the school should be remote and for how long.  There should be health and safety metrics driving decisions and among them, a crucial data point is whether or not there has been in-school transmission. There will be COVID19 cases that impact students and teachers, as there are at many schools, however, the key question related to school staying open or not, is whether or not COVID19 is spreading AT school.  If there is not and the metrics do not require, we should be trying to keep the school open as long as possible, in order to best support student learning and student social and emotional well-being.

It is clear from the presentation that school being open is a source of additional stress for many students.  It is helpful that there is a remote option that can be used to address this stress.  In contrast, there are many students who experience significant stress, social-emotional challenges, and learning challenges due to isolation and other factors when in full remote mode. If the school switches to full remote for all students when it is not necessary according to health metrics, there is no alternative for those students.

Thank you for your consideration **Stefanie Reinhorn**

There is guidance from the state. The school committee is ignoring it.

**Question:**Setting aside the data-drivers around when and if to switch to remote for the moment, what does the district perceive as the primary roadblocks to remaining in a hybrid model? Is it the effort/time to do contact tracing? Are there significant complaints or concerns from the teachers? How can the community support the school in finding solutions to these or other challenges in order to enable maintaining or expanding the hybrid model?  
**Comment:** Until there is data and evidence to prove that the hybrid model is measurably driving covid cases above and beyond the rate of community spread, and/or is the primary source of a major covid outbreak, school should remain hybrid or look to increase in person learning. Stated another way, if the hybrid model is not shown to be the driver, protocols are working, and switching to remote isn’t going to mitigate spread in the community; in fact switching to remote may accelerate covid transmission in the community as students, absent the exposure to peers through in person classes and sports, inevitably will be driven to congregate in alternate settings without protocols. In short, the Superintendent should withdraw the proposal to revert to all remote absent compelling data showing the hybrid learning model is measurably driving cases; this position has been endorsed via petition by 531 parents and over 350 students on a separate petition.

**Claudine Coulon**

Q: Thank you Kevin and Harold for voicing the concerns of the majority of your constituents. With all due respect, it is not your right or anyone on the school committee's decision to decide when my child's physical health is at risk. It is my choice. If I feel she is at risk, I can have her stay home and do remote learning. Everyone has that option. In my opinion and in the opinion of many parents, going to school is less risky than many other activities she can do each day. The protocols are WORKING.

What is the point of assuming cases are going to a) originate at school and b) transmit at school? Literally ZERO students have transmitted IN SCHOOL. Students are not driving community spread in SCHOOL.  **Claudine Coulon**

Q: Maybe this was articulated, but I did not hear in the conversation: What are the underlying testing assumptions driving the cost? i.e are you testing students daily? weekly? every other day? What about teachers?   I'd just like to better understand how you came to the decision about the need for this asymptomatic testing and its frequency.

**Claudine Coulon**

Q: Good morning, after last night’s meeting I’m left with questions.  There seems to be such a focus on working to move full remote, but without the real data here in Sudbury behind it.  The recent spike in numbers was related to a specific incident (a sports team), and we should be expecting that on a weekly basis, we are going to have a few positive cases.  Contract tracing is working, until we have evidence that this is being spread in school, we should not be focusing on full remote.  A plan to move full remote when we need to, YES.  This is where technology will be mostly in play, if we need to shut down school for a real outbreak, we are already set up to work remotely.  This brings me to setting metrics, as Harold spoke about last night.  What is the REAL metric /data set we want to use for going full remote as well as full in person???  This is what the parent community wants, not slides from the state site to show what other towns are doing as far as case numbers.  We need to focus on Sudbury. The metrics for going full remote should include evidence that it’s spreading in school.

I’m feeling like the lines between positive cases in school (that are NOT being spread in school) and your view of the hybrid model being unsustainable for staff are bring blurred here.  If it’s about staff fatigue as you’ve mentioned previously, let’s work as a community to address those specific issues.  What we should NOT be doing is finding ways to go remote because that’s easier.  Easier for staff, not better for kids.  Let’s work together to find that balance.  Our kids going to school in person full time would alleviate a lot of the staff stress, if you’re going to ask the community to pay for their students testing, then why wouldn’t we be going back full time??

I’m concerned that the community petition was not even mentioned.  You are not addressing the needs of student and parents when you didn’t mention that as a topic of conversation last night within the discussion.

Why are nurses needed for contact tracing??  Anyone can contact trace with training, ask the community for parent volunteers to be trained.  We should be able to find a way to hire per diem contact tracers that is less complicated as indicated during the meeting.   And why is the school fully responsible for contact tracing and not the town?

Planning for an assumed uptick in student cases and shutting down school for Thanksgiving break pre-emptively is unjust.  Are you planning to do this after every holiday week/weekend?  Students will/can get the virus at any time/anywhere.  When you can prove to the LS community that it’s transferring to each other in school, then you will have the support to shut down.  Those who want remote have it, and should in no way be influencing the in person community’s situation. **Stacey Ladieu**

S: PLEASE READ

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/sudbury/s/hajwi/state-sustains-pressure-on-districts-to-have-kids-in-classrooms?utm_source=nearby-news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alert>

**Mary Cunningham**

Q: Why go remote BEFORE thanksgiving?  If quarantine is 2 weeks, why not the 2 weeks after? **Lauren Hochberg**

 Q: Am I to assume that testing can’t be mandated? Rather than test all, can we do targeted random testing? **Lauren Hochberg**

**Q:** Perhaps LSPO can lead the fundraising for testing. Also, testing would be more important in January after the break when students return.  **Lauren Hochberg**

**Q:** It’s my understanding that the department of student services would  be discussing remote learning plans with parents for students on IEPs. I know there are many competing things going on this year, but when will these RLP discussions occur since we are 6 weeks into the semester? **Lauren Hochberg**

Q: Has there been any discussion with the Board of Health about having students convert to the more effective paper surgical masks (Duke study issued in August) instead of cloth masks which can still allow transfer of virus ? **Brenda Hart**

Q: Do we know what has contributed to the increased in need for emotional student services over the past 4 years, pre-pandemic? And how do you anticipate the need for emotional services post pandemic? **Brenda Hart**