

**Oyster River Cooperative School District
March 31, 2021 WORKSHOP MEETING**

School Board Present: Al Howland, Tom Newkirk, Yusi Turell, Michael Williams, Dan Klein, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros. **Student Representative:** Megan Deane

Administrators Present: Todd Allen, Dr. James Morse, Misty Lowe, Suzanne Filippone, Jay Richard, David Goldsmith

Staff Present: Janet Martel, Kim Felch

Guest Present:

Called to Order at 7:00 PM by Chair Michael Williams

Chair Michael Williams began with his opening statement.

Dr. Morse recapped last week's workshop meeting and goals of tonight's workshop and stated his intention to bring all-in model into voting at the School Board meeting scheduled for April 7, 2021. Dr. Morse thanked the parents of the school district for completing the surveys that were sent out and reviewed the survey results in a PowerPoint. Dr. Morse moved to discussing the goals of the All-In Model, and the pros and cons of keeping Wednesday as a re-learning day.

Dr. Morse introduced Misty Lowe and David Goldsmith.

Misty Lowe reviewed what a full-day model will look like for the elementary schools. She discussed the time it will take for students to re-acclimate to being in school full-time again. There will be less prep time for teachers, as most of the student work will now be done at school instead of at home. Students will be distanced at 3 feet, 6 feet during lunch and snack times because they will be unmasked; Students will be outside for recess as often as the weather permits.

David Goldsmith reviewed what remote/hybrid learning will look like at the elementary level. When looking at what the mix of morning and afternoon student populations will look like with 24 students in one room, the spacing doesn't look like what we think a classroom should look like. Some classes can combine their morning and afternoon classes, some classes need to be reorganized. He will ask teachers and families to volunteer to move teachers. Fewer students in the classroom allows for more movement in the classroom. David discussed why a hybrid student may need to change their teacher for in person learning. Students are very resilient and have been successful so far with the transition. 24 desks with three feet distancing and allowing six feet for teacher distance is a very packed classroom.

Misty discussed what classroom arrangements may look like with the current student population. First graders at Moharimet didn't need a remote teacher, if a family wants to be remote, they can transfer to Mast Way. Mast Way will stay the same at first grade. Second grade at Mast Way wants more students to be in-person, those remote student from Mast Way

and Moharimet would technically all be Mast Way. Third grade at Mast Way remote students would come back in, Moharimet is considering multi-age remote class for third and fourth grades (remote) and everything else would be the same.

David: Misty and I have looked at all options and breaking it up by grades creates the least amount of issues for all students.

Misty: Some parents felt as though they were answering unknown questions, the Transition Committee wants to let parents know who their students' teachers will be before they return.

Dr. Morse introduced Jay Richard

Jay Richard: Any plans the middle school is making now will most likely stay in place in the fall due to the lack of space at the middle school. There will not be additional room until the beginning of 2022 when they move to the new middle school. He wants to have remote Bobcat time once or twice a week and wants to have UA teachers in the building to provide to students. Music spaces will be a great challenge. World language staff wants to be back in the school, spacing becomes an issue, looking into all options and trying to keep it fluid. World Language is still in the talking phase now. Lunch can happen in a large outdoor tent, with 6 feet distance; coming up with a plan for movement if it rains outside. Remote coverage is appropriate currently, we will also have substitute coverage daily for two teachers (separate from remote teachers). Anticipating 90% of students to be in school, possibly 10% staying remote.

Dr. Morse introduced Suzanne Filippone.

Suzanne: Wants to minimize any quick and drastic changes due to the number of models already taken under this year by the high school. Student will need to be physically reintroduced to being in school, and she wants to review protocols and procedures. A lot of concern about equity to learners, but we are still monitoring the progress of students, regardless of model. If it is too hard for teachers to be equitable, they may need to split their classrooms; We will need to have more lunch periods and may need new start and end time due to busing. Classrooms may need to shift in order to ensure proper social distancing. We need to provide all CTE services. We are looking to improve signage with occupancy limits, tutorial for accessing building, and address fears or anxieties students may have with returning to school. Hopefully, a tent will be coming for the courtyard for outdoor lunch and we also will have bleachers out there.

Dr. Morse introduced Kim Felch

Kim Felch: We are looking at another change and transition, and we want students to feel safe, supported, cared for, and connected to have minimal impact to their mental health. We can try to focus on community and connection as they transition to seeing their classmates, relationship building may need to start again, much like when the school year starts. We need to model positive thought process as adults, focus on results and resilience to push students forward. High School students are nervous about the change from six to three feet social

distancing and are nervous about being in people's spaces. We need to be conscientious of student safety and providing staff and students a voice, is important. Using advisory programs to discuss changes, excitement, worries, and focus on the positives. Open Circle for elementary students. Most people are resilient to trauma and can build from the experience, they may just need to be aware and focus on positive. We need to identify at-risk students to help provide intervention. The more we change and the less prep time we give students, the more it will create stress for students. Remote students may become a minority.

Misty Lowe returned to share information on behalf of Catherine Plourde.

Misty: The goal is to minimize disruption for students with learning differences, and there will be no changes in case managers. Some students may need to change service providers, but instruction and support can continue as planned. We would like to continue Wednesdays for instruction, re-learning, and assessment, as well as additional support for students that need it. One-on-one instruction may be needed for some of these students.

Dr. Morse stepped in to share transportation data.

Dr. Morse: As the transportation survey was analyzed, we discovered that the numbers of students on the buses doesn't change very much. Students will need to keep their masks on and the windows open. The start times can change for schools to allow time to clean buses between runs; numbers can change but based on our current surveys the averages are good.

Dr. Morse introduced Todd Allen.

Todd: Depending on how we interpret the CDC metrics influences the All-In-Model and the direction we can go in. CDC says three feet in schools is okay, with some caveats. This assumes all other protocols are in place, masks are worn, maintain contact tracing, isolation quarantine, etc. Regarding the current numbers available, we are moderate currently, but keep in mind that UNH skews our numbers.

Todd discussed the Georgia Tech Risk Tracker and what our numbers could potentially look like. He presented local data and reviewed the current district data. He reviewed the local variables, and there not being a legitimate way to tease out UNH data from the Town of Durham there have been no UNH spread to the ORCSD schools

Todd: As of April 19th, all staff will have had the chance to receive the vaccine. The CDC study shows that the vaccinated person 14 days after the 2nd shot drops the spread by 40% to others that are not vaccinated. As of April 2nd 16 year old students may be able schedule their vaccines.

Dr. Morse transferred the meeting to Michael Williams, and he called for questions from the School Board regarding elementary schools.

Denise Day: Will class sizes stay the same if volunteers don't step up?

David Goldsmith: We'll have to see what the numbers come out to and hopefully nobody will be forced to make a move.

Michael Williams: What is the typical number of Mast Way students on Wednesday?

David Goldsmith: NE Passage at Moharimet is less than 20, but they are connecting remotely with a lot of students. Moharimet would use this time for planning.

Michael: If schools are forced to have five-day weeks, what happens to things currently offered on Wednesdays?

David: They have to stop due to staffing and lack of substitutes at elementary level.

Michael: What is the impact of school day time change based on transport needs?

David: Really the staff and teachers can move meetings to mornings instead of afternoons if needed.

Misty Lowe: A 20-minute shift is not a terrible change.

Yusi Turell: How does Wednesday impact elementary students?

David: It's a tremendous amount of work to help students get adjusted, but it will lead to a positive and smoother transition for students back to a full day.

Misty: Going from 4 half days to 4 full days is very tough, but it would be even more difficult if we went to 5 full days.

Janet Martel: It is going to be difficult blending the morning and afternoon students into one schedule again.

Michael Williams calls for Questions from the School Board regarding the middle school.

Denise Day: I was confused by how music is going to happen. Will it be fully remote?

Jay Richard: When students are home, they have music class, if they are in school they cannot practice music. I am currently discussing with our music staff how we can provide a music experience for students when they cannot do it in school.

Denise: If students are fully remote, can they get a full music experience?

Jay: Yes, but there is no way we can have it in the school.

Michael: Students can't do it in school?

Jay: We are discussing what different options we can provide for the music experience.

Megan Deane: There are instruments we can explore such as guitar or ukuleles where breath doesn't need to be expended.

Jay: We have such limited spacing both indoors and outdoors for these classes, we're not sure it can happen.

Yusi: Would you be able to do more if you had another tent outside?

Jay: There are great things we can do outside with the tents, but we do want to have open space for the kids too. We may need to resign music at the school for the rest of the year, but we want to plan it out more for the fall.

Dr. Morse: The problem isn't going outside, but just where the space will be for an additional tent.

Jay: The opportunity to use the bleachers is exciting too, so we can explore that option.

Dr. Morse: We need 8-10 feet between musicians and singers, so our music staff is looking into creative solutions.

Michael: Music and World Language are areas we need to understand better for next week.

Denise: Do students have a language option? Are they travelling to the classes?

Jay: We have a problem with cohorting regarding language courses. Teachers can travel to the students for other classes, but World Language teachers may have to take the students other places due to the different options.

Michael: About 1/3 of the students are in on Wednesdays. If all students come in, what happens to those Wednesday programs?

Jay: They will be different, but those 1/3 students will still be there. Students have taken to Wednesdays as more laid-back day to find extra support, and it's taken on a different atmosphere.

Dr. Morse: If the other 2/3 of students come in, there will be support offered to that many more students to help them return back to normalcy.

Yusi stated that referring to PowerPoint slide #18 for the schedule, can we discuss the schedule more?

Jay: We need a little more time to make sure these numbers are accurate, these were numbers last week and they have come down; I want to have a respectful conversations with families to see if they want to come in instead of being remote.

Yusi: What if the numbers come down but there are still students that want to be remote?

Jay: We may need to adjust the remote options available.

Dr. Morse: The nice thing about the team structure in middle school is that teachers can be more flexible to accommodate those needs. If we don't need to have a remote for a team, they can expand as needed.

Dr. Morse calls for Questions from the School Board regarding the high school.

Denise: Are you still considering a 50/50 model?

Suzanne Filippone: If the school Board wants to keep the 50/50 model then we can reopen and see who wants to return to that schedule.

Megan: I have spoken informally to students, and quite a few want to keep the schedule the way it is currently. Students will engage more with the current model because losing their Wednesdays is undesirable. We've had a lot of changes so another change is not wanted; I can poll students to see if they want current model or All-In and we can find real numbers.

Janet Martel to Todd Allen: With cohorting and the age of students, what are the risks of going back to school?

Todd: The risk is reduced because 16-year olds are considered adults and will start having the opportunities to get vaccinated. Increasing the population is a risk, but it will be safe with the number of people vaccinated.

Denise: We need to discuss quarantine and college visits at our meeting next week.

Dr. Morse: It is on the agenda for next week's meeting.

Suzanne: If we add Wednesdays for all kids to be in, we would not make it a blue day or white day. This impacts any type of services we are offering and makes it very difficult. We would figure out something else, but all students would be coming into school.

Tom Newkirk: If this goes into effect, when is last day of school?

Suzanne: Graduation is Friday, June 11th, everyone else is Friday, June 18th

Tom: Is that counting exams?

Suzanne: We're not sure what we're doing for the end of year, our faculty is working on it now. Last year we didn't have final exams, we didn't have traditional midterms. We had assessments, but not traditional ones.

Tom: So, seniors will have one month, everyone else five weeks with the model.

Tom to Megan (regarding the survey): Can you ask for an option for current model, one for All-In but Wednesday, and one for full 5 days.

Megan: Yes, I can do that.

Dr. Morse: As a point of clarity: Megan's survey should be clear that it is for interest gauging for additional models for students.

Michael: Despite two different surveys, parents and students answered almost exactly the same in their interests.

Michael Williams calls for Questions from the School Board regarding SEL and Transportation.

Yusi: It looks like the middle school and high schools would be starting earlier. Is this a temporary move?

Dr. Morse: Yes, we pushed it to 8:00 am for just this time period to allow for cleaning of buses between runs.

Michael to Dr. Morse: What should we expect for next week's meeting?

Dr. Morse: I will be bringing a K-12 proposal with World Language and music answers for the middle school. We will bring a 5-day model and allow for a lot of changes. It will be easy to change into 4-day model as well if needed.

Michael: Thoughts on Wednesdays?

Dan Klein: Can we focus on what the recommendation is and then highlight the differences?

Al Howland: We should start with a recommendation and then have a clearly defined 5-day model in case we need to go back again. If things change, we know what to do.

Dan: Then we can communicate well in advance to parents what the change will mean in a practical sense.

Dr. Morse: So, bring my recommendation, but with what we can give up?

Dan: If it's a minor detail we need to change, then we can highlight what will be different in the 5-day model. If there are substantial differences, then we can decide if it will be a different model entirely.

Dr. Morse: There will not be too many substantial differences, so it will be relatively easy to do. We will have a 5-day model just in case the governor decides that's what needs to happen.

Michael – Final thoughts from Board?
(None)

Michael – Final thoughts from anyone else?
(None)

Michael: I would like to start next week's meeting early for a non-public meeting.

Denise: What time for the non-public meeting. 6:30?

Michael: That would be a good idea, so we don't run out of time. We will call to order at 6:30 and start regular business at 7pm.

Chairman Michael Williams thanked attendees for their thoughtful questions and work from last week.

Chairman Michael Williams adjourned the meeting at 9:04pm