

PTAC Special Meeting - February 3, 2021 - 6:00 PM via Google Meeting

This isn't a full meeting with updates from the chairs, just a meeting to vote on the Student Appearance Reminder and Mask Compliance.

Student Appearance Reminder reading and review

First, Dr. Hillary included part of the Student Appearance policy, then there are conduct expectations and Eric added the whereas section with a link to the whole policy.

Discussion on Student Appearance Policy

Margot: I really feel that this is not, I understand progressive discipline, but also know that if we have taught the students and sent out expectations, because this is a health and safety matter, I don't think we can go with language that's not strong enough.

Eric: The mask mandate is the next resolution.

Laurie: Would like to see something in there that says excluding masks.

Eric: We'll talk about masks in the next resolution.

John Hazners: The mask could fall under student appearance, so we're worried that when push comes to shove on masks people are going to point to this one. We want a statement in here that this document won't be referenced for masks.

Mehdie: I think that takes away from the universality of this policy. This is completely separate from the mask policy which will only be relevant in extreme times.

John Hazners: So the mask policy should say it supersedes the student appearance policy.

Laurie: I like that.

John Hazners: Just want to make sure that if the mask is in question that no one can use this policy to supersede the mask policy.

Lucy: On page 1, bullet point number 2, the ending of that sentence (faces remain visible), trying to find if that was in the policy.

Dr. Hillary: It was cut and pasted directly from the policy.

Lucy: Any items that obscure the face or ears etc. in the actual policy...

Eric: It's just a reminder of the policy.

Paul Hengels: The first part of that sentence does specifically reference hair, so I think it's clear that it just pertains to hair. Policy could say most of the face or majority of the face.

Laurie: I'm worried about kids pulling out the student appearance policy to say they can't wear masks because they cover their faces.

Mehdie: Mask reference shouldn't be in the dress code because it's permanent.

Ta-Nika: We need to be very careful about policing students' bodies and how we decide whether it's covering most of their face or not most of their face. Who is making that judgement, is it consistent?

Timothy: I agree with Ta-Nika. From a teacher's perspective, I don't want to spend time on things like policing students' hairstyles.

Call it for a vote?

Dr. Hillary has a question related to the vote, who votes? There are so many people on the call who weren't there in the past.

Eric: The committee will vote. The people on the committee who have met the qualifications are the ones who will vote.

Paul Hengel: Any more public comment?

Lucy: How does the team feel about #3, do we need to be very specific and have public or private shaming instead of just shaming?

Margot: The training would include both so it would be covered either way.

Timothy: I think it could hurt to add that because then it makes it seem like it's okay for it to happen in both settings.

Katie: Who is doing the training?

Dr. Hilary: The Office of Student Outreach is developing the training and will lead it during different stages. The first training was this last Thursday with Culture and Climate Specialists, it will continue in waves.

Paul Hengels: Call a vote to amend three, then vote pass with the amendment.

Vote to amend the resolution by adding "public or private" before the word shaming in number 3. (Passes)

Vote to accept the Student Appearance Policy with the amendment. (Passes)

Review of Mask Mandate

Discussion of Mask Mandate Compliance Item 1

Laurie Haibeck: It needs to be a number because "generous" is too vague.

Nelson: Different schools have different numbers, so while generous is vague, giving a specific number could be a problem because different schools have different numbers.

Reminder from Dr. Hillary that the masks have already been ordered by operations.

Reminder from Eric that we're just making recommendations to the district. What wording?

Laurie: I would go with 90% because that's what we're trying to get for attendance.

Lucy: Looking at number four. (Eric – we'll come back to number four after one)

Andy Friedlieb: How about 3 times the number of masks as the number of people (staff and students) in that building.

Ta-Nika: Number 1 was included in the projected hybrid plan, they detailed how there would be “plenty” or “generous amounts” of masks supplied in all common areas. So this information specifically was in the presentation that was already done.

Margot: As a teacher who has experienced supplies not being there when they were promised, I would want there to be 3x as many masks as humans in the building before we go back.

Timothy: Would like to word it in a way that’s on a classroom basis. That’s where they’ll really need masks, in the classroom.

Paul: Based on what Mr. Friedlieb said, we could base it on 2 or 3 times total students present, not necessarily enrolled.

Katherine: I like the classroom based idea and think it’s important to have multiple masks available for each kid. It’s likely they’ll need replacements.

John Samuelian: The SB 100 was passed pre-pandemic, just something to think about.

John Hazners: When we throw around numbers, part of me thinks this is way over my pay grade. More research needs to be done to talk to medical professionals and nurses etc. because none of us are experts on this topic. Would like an outside source to say appropriate numbers. Is this one drop in the beginning or do we need daily minimums? There will always be a surplus but if we say three times as many at the beginning and at the end of the semester we’re all out, that’s a problem. There should be a daily minimum. On any given day it should never be less than X.

Katie: There’s Board policy that says “we’re gonna wash masks,” we’re not going to do that, correct?

Tasha: They have bought masks that are meant to be sanitized and washed. It’s not saying that each student will get only one. They will keep supplying them as they’re needed instead of just one number. If a school calls at 9 and then again at 10 needing more, they’ll give more and more again as many times as needed. That’s why it’s not a specific number, that will just upset one building or another. It’s generalized to accommodate everyone as needed.

Katie: Who’s responsible for washing the masks?

Tasha: Operations will be taking care of that.

Helen Athanasopoulos: I’ve had an emergency bag in my classroom for quite some time. The items in those bags were never changed, like hand sanitizer, food items etc. I requested them to be changed out for years but it was passed around and never done. It’s really important we consider the safety of students and staff, the masks are too important an issue.

Margot: Teachers need a number, we don’t trust “generous.”

Extensive discussion of possible additional language for number one.

Linda Asma: Need a quantifiable number. We don’t get soap, toilet paper, paper towels etc already so if we don’t quantify in some way we’re opening the doors to putting our staff in a bad situation. We need to have a number or a quantifiable value.

Vote on amendment to item 1: A replenishable, generous supply of masks based on three times student enrollment and staffing. (Passes)

Janet: When will #1 be reflected?

Eric: It's in the notes so all these changes will be added.

Discussion of Mask Mandate Compliance Item 2

Paul: Can we add resources in both Spanish and English to number 2?

Helen: Offer any other language as well, just a suggestion.

Ta-Nika: Is it possible to include titles other than parents? Some people have guardians, aunts, uncles etc. Change the beginning of number 2 to parents/ guardians.

Vote to add “and guardians” and “in both Spanish and English” to item 2. (Passes)

Discussion of Mask Mandate Compliance Item 3

Janet Ritter: It has to be a doctor's note including the specific reason the child cannot wear a mask. It concerns me that all it says is this, sometimes kids come with a really vague note that wouldn't suffice for this. Not sure how to word it but we need additional language there to support the school nurses.

Paul: It should be amended to say before being admitted and teachers and staff. When it says alternate PPE, I know the recommendation from ISBE in August recommends face shields as the alternate. When it says alternate PPE, who would declare what that alternate PPE would be, does it need to be more specific?

Eric: That would be part of the plan.

Laurie Haibeck: It needs to say per current law or something like that so it's specific.

Lucy: Do we want to clarify calendar days or school days? Could you spell out PPE completely instead of the acronym?

Laurie: I would like to see something that talks about social workers etc. who have small offices and can't be six feet apart.

Katie: That would just be an amendment to the IEP anyway.

Timothy: Wouldn't that make us more open to liabilities, if a kid's note isn't specific enough then he's made to wear a mask until the doctor sends another note?

Janet: The nurse will be the one required to make that determination. Whatever documentation is required of staff should be required of students. There are practitioners that will sign the notes for no reason. It's best for staff and students to be specific.

Katie: I thought we were including something else about alternate PPE.

Janet: Who's providing the alternate PPE? Should say per CDC or IDPH or LCHD policy etc.

Helen: It needs to be specific.

Paul: What if we included recommended PPE?

Vote to add to item 3: “teachers and staff”, “seven calendar days”, “provided, specific medical documentation”, “Personal Protective Equipment” and “alternate PPE as recommended by the CDC and IDPH”. (Passes)

Discussion of Mask Mandate Compliance Item 4

Lucy: “All staff members in each school receive training on body positive language to avoid public or private shaming during mask correction for students” should be added to the end of number 4 to keep with the spirit of the student appearance policy.

It doesn't take anything away from it so no reason not to add.

Ta-Nika thinks it's covered in #5.

Katie thinks it fits well in 4.

Nelson would like staff instead of just teachers. Katie agrees, all staff

Vote to amend item 4 to begin with “All staff” and include “All staff members in each school receive training on body positive language to avoid public or private shaming during mask correction for students.” (Passes)

Discussion of Mask Mandate Compliance Item 5

Margot: Training and everything should be prior to coming back to in person so they're prepared to wear a mask when they return.

Katie: It's not just about good citizenship it's an official mandate. The wording should be stronger for the protection of everyone involved.

Timothy: Wearing a mask is absolutely good citizenship, doesn't diminish from the importance.

Mehdie: Agree that we should probably include that it should start being taught while we're still in remote only.

Janet: The wearing of a mask is a public health mandate so it's more than being in uniform or being polite or respectful. It's necessary, it's what we have to do to protect each other.

Margot: We don't want any kind of wiggle room on this.

Suggestion to add: Given opportunities prior to return to in-person learning / during remote learning. Students who are observed not wearing a mask..

Margot: We need something simple like masks will be worn at all times. We couldn't enforce the dress code so we got rid of it. It should say students will be expected to comply with state and fed mask mandates at all times while in school.

Dr. Hillary: This should be for students only, not staff members. The policy for staff members is already written and not within our scope.

Suggestion to replace item 5 with: Students will be expected to comply with state and federal mask mandates at all times while in school.

Paul: What are we going to do with students in the building as “discipline” if they make a mistake?

Nelson: I agree with Paul, that was the original intention.

Suggestion to add “Students will be expected to comply with state and fed mask mandates at all times while in school” to number 5 and keep the original wording after that.

Ta-Nika: If we're changing it to what's already there, our recommendation is already policy? Are we saying that our recommendation is what's already there? Just because we give people an opportunity to learn at home doesn't mean that we know that will happen. There could be kids learning to wear masks improperly from their parents with perfectly good intentions.

Christina: We can't control what's happening outside of school.

Eric: We covered some of the at home stuff.

Paul: We're about to listen to the proposal, I wanted to reiterate that the Board has already said everyone should be wearing a mask in the building but we want to make a recommendation about how we react when they make a mistake or remove their masks temporarily.

Nelson: Paul makes a very good point. Masks are of course mandated.

Helen: What is the consequence if they remove their mask? What are the other districts doing?

Paul: We should vote on 5 first and then move on to 6 which is more about the consequences.

Vote to add "Students will be expected to comply with state and fed mask mandates at all times while in school" to the beginning of item 5. (Does not pass)

Vote to replace item 5 completely with "Students will be expected to comply with state and fed mask mandates at all times while in school." (Passes)

Discussion of Mask Mandate Compliance Item 6

Paul: There shouldn't be anyone in the building without a mask anyway.

Margot: We've had problems with progressive discipline in some buildings, especially if they start over every quarter. This is a life or death situation for people, when you're spreading a deadly disease there's not as much opportunity to be as flexible.

Mehdie: Does that mean that we're going to advocate spelling out specifically what each instance leads to? We would have to re-word this with specific penalties.

Christina: With SB 100 you can't have zero tolerance, the discipline is at the administrator's discretion.

Paul: I don't find that to be an accurate reflection of SB 100 and a mask mandate supersedes that.

Mehdie: If a child takes their mask off to itch their nose then puts it back on are we kicking them out of the building? That's what we're opening the door to.

Christina: SB 100 allows for removal in situations of safety.

Andrew: I don't want to talk about this like penalties, like with detention then suspension etc. It's if we get to the point where the teacher and principal have tried to re-teach to no avail then at some point in time the student will be instructed to be remote for a while. It's not a penalty, it's a different option for someone maybe not responsible enough to be doing in person learning at this time.

Katherine: Agree with Andy, we're not talking about punishment. We're talking about continuing learning outside of the building. Maybe we have a student who is repeatedly

endangering other students, the student is removed from anyone else they could affect. We're not talking suspending, the kids will still have their computers and be in class.

John Samuelian: The parents or the student or both are choosing to go back to school. They chose to be there; they have to follow the rules. If they're sent home it's not like they're suspended or expelled, they're still learning and have the opportunity they just have to do it at home.

Nelson: Agree with that Andy said, we can't look at it as normal progressive discipline in schools. I like the idea that there should be some sort of opportunity provided but if mandates aren't followed eventually there has to be an option for the student to be remote only. There's limited space in the building as it is.

Nelson: Suggest taking the section from item 5 that begins students are to be given.. and then Students who refuse to comply... with the rest of number 6. We can't assume that every child will be well prepared when they return. Once they're in the building our responsibility as adults and educators is to educate them.

Margot: I've taught developmental kindergarten where we taught them where their nose and ears were, this is basic stuff. There's pictures and everything else, how much teaching do they really need before knowing how to wear a mask properly. It's a matter of life saving skills.

Paul: We should create language similar to what was adopted for the teaching staff. There are students who might try to take advantage of the opportunity to get sent home.

John Hazners: The kids get how to wear the mask, the question, are we taking this really seriously as a health risk or not? If we are, if you refuse to wear the mask you get the corrective and if you still don't you get sent home to do remote learning. We're not taking any educational opportunities away, they can still be in school it's just remote.

Janet: In regards to a student picking their nose, frequently they'll be sent to the nurse and the nurse will talk to the parent. There's often an underlying medical condition causing that. The reality is that we all have to wear masks and whatever your persuasion is, students who say, "I'm gonna take my mask off and be defiant about it." I think they just need to go home and the parents need to be informed. If kids want to be in person learning, which most want to be, then they should adhere to the mask policy.

Mehdie: You're absolutely right, it is an issue of public safety and I get that. I'm going over the same things with them 5 or 6 times a day. Not because they're malicious, not because they're trying not to get it, it just takes time. If we kick them out the 2nd or 3rd time then we're not teaching them.

John Hazners: Teacher discretion is important in these situations. The teacher will know about health issues and that adds to the discretion. I'm just thinking of the more egregious cases where it's an unsafe situation for everyone because of a kid who just can't get the hang of it.

Margot: We need an enforceable policy, there will always be teacher discretion. We need the policy ready to go.

Dr. Hillary: Classroom teachers report behavior incidents in the form of an ODR and those matters are escalated to school administrators who make the decision related to what comes next.

We might be going into a moot point because it's always a discipline referral and the consequence is decided by the administrator. We can't usurp our current processes. We have whole departments working on this.

Andrew: We're also not taking away the rights of the staff in the buildings because administrators don't want to make the call to have someone teaching hybrid to teaching remote because that could put the teachers in an unsafe environment. We could end up losing teachers because they won't be willing to work in an unsafe environment.

Paul: We should mirror it to the policy for the expectation of personnel.

Nelson: So where is the counseling part? It should be spelled out.

Ta-Nika: Agree, counseling should be a spelled out step. There's no room for assumption.

Paul: So it could be step one reteaching, step two verbal warning with parent contact and then step 3 removal.

Christina: There should be parent contact the very first time.

Ta-Nika: So students won't have an opportunity to correct their own behavior?

John Samuelian: We're talking about blatant situations.

Paul: Parent contact required the second time but not required on the first, optional with teacher discretion.

John Samuelian: The more parent contact the better.

Mehdie: I agree with Ta-Nika that the very first time it shouldn't be disciplinary, it should just be a corrective action.

Eric suggests voting options: First option is to keep item 6 as it was. Second option is to remove item 6 completely and end with the new 5. Third option is to spell out progressive steps.

Margot: Can we vote? Let's strike what's there in number 6 and list the steps: Step 1 is counseling, reteaching, adding it to the plp contact log, step 2 is oral warning with parent contact, step 3 is remote learning for a week and step 4 is remote learning for the remainder of the year.

Nelson: Can we adjust to administrator instead of principal? Also parents should hear from the teacher before the administrator. Margot added that into the chat.

Friedlieb would like to add that steps can be skipped.

Eric reminds us we're creating our recommendation.

Friedlieb: Put parent contact if possible.

Hazners: Am I going to be making 12 calls the first day?

Eric: Contact could be sending a parent note home with the student as well.

Janet: At my school, before we go to discipline we always contact parents and guardians. I believe as a nurse what might happen is kids might get sent to the nurse and if so the nurse will call the parents.

Vote to amend item 6 so say "Students who refuse to comply with the mask mandate will be subject to progressive discipline. 1st instance to result in counseling/ reteaching/ documenting in PLP contact log and parent contact when possible. 2nd instance to result in an oral warning with parent contact by principal or other administrator. 3rd instance to

result in remote learning for one week. 4th instance to result in remote learning for the remainder of the school year.” (Passes)

Vote to accept the entire document with the amendments accepted. (Passes)

Next meeting in two weeks. Behavior committee a week from tomorrow.

Janet would like the minutes emailed to her. All documents are on the website

Paul would like to meet with Eric at some point to go over the path to getting open meetings act certification to share with everyone.

Lucy: Will this be ready for Tuesday’s presentation to the board?

Eric: Yes, will get ready for Tuesday.

Lucy: Should I yield my committee time to you or would you like to send an email?

Eric: Will talk to deputy super and get it to the super to find out how they want to handle it officially.