

To: Pelham School Board
From: Chip McGee, Superintendent of Schools
Re: Quarterly Update on Progress on Pelham School District Goals for 2020-21
Date: November 18, 2020
Cc: Sarah Marandos, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Deb Mahoney, Business Administrator

This memorandum provides a quarterly update on the district's progress on our goals for the year. As this is the first quarterly report, I would value feedback on the presentation as well as the substance.

Goal 1: Health and Safety

Rationale: Our goal is to maintain the health and safety of our staff and students. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pelham School District has prioritized health and safety. We have adjusted educational programming to allow for universal precautions and these changes have affected nearly every part of the district.

Measurements: Implementation of the Reopening Safety Plan will be measured through a quantitative and qualitative review of the implementation of the plan. This includes reporting in the four main areas in the plan - Health and Safety, Operations, Teaching and Learning, and Social Emotional Impacts. The review will include the cross cutting themes of Special Education, Technology, and Communication. Given that the public health crisis extends beyond Pelham, measures of success are not whether we fully avoid infections, but rather that we respond to any health and safety event in a safe manner and that we have implemented our plan.

Progress: Health and Safety - Our new safety protocols have become part of our daily routines. We have had to remind ourselves, students and staff, to follow these guidelines. The Pelham Public Health Officer and Superintendent conducted weekly unannounced school walkthroughs in the month of September and October to monitor this implementation. One area of concern is staffing. We have many unfilled positions (instructional assistants, monitors, custodians, and substitutes). Some of our staff live in neighboring school districts, and as those districts pivot to remote, our staff members are encountering child care challenges. Additionally, an increasing number of staff needing to quarantine due to secondary exposures.

Operations - We have been able to adjust physical classrooms and cleaning protocols throughout the district. After an initial struggle to keep

PPE and cleaning supplies in stock, we have been able to maintain supplies as of now. We have been able to install HEPA filters prior to the start of school for all student and staff spaces in the district. As a result of freezing the discretionary budget and additional funding from the state, we have been able to manage within our annual budget to date. As a result of some families foregoing bus transportation, we have been able to accommodate most requests despite reducing our capacity by half. Our buses added assigned seats in November to allow for better contact tracing.

Teaching and Learning - Our remote classrooms and in school classrooms mirror each other and parents, generally, have supported this model. In terms of technology, we have been unable to get a shipment of 300 Chromebooks, which was promised to us in July. As a result, K - 2 classrooms have no in class devices and sixth grade remote students have older devices than we would normally provide. Our instructional coaches for technology in all three schools have provided significant support for teachers in school and remote. The approximately two week pivot to remote at the start of October saw high levels of participation. Despite the transition in our Director of Student Services position, we have been able to complete the majority of our compensatory education IEP meetings with families. We have completed the second Family Choice Survey for grades K - 8 and are developing a second term schedule and class assignments.

Social Emotional Impacts - Each school started the year with a six week unit of lessons on Social Emotional Learning. We use the three signature practices from the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Our guidance staff is prepared and trained in Second Step, a tier two intervention for students struggling with anxiety and depression. Both are research based programs.

In addition to the qualitative review of our plan implementation, we also conducted a survey about how parents were feeling about the efforts that the Pelham School District has undertaken to promote health and safety during the pandemic. The survey was conducted from October 30 to November 13. The results show the responses from parents. Staff, student, and community responses were too low to report. In future surveys, we will attempt other ways to collect those responses.

How do you feel about the efforts that the Pelham School District has undertaken to promote health and safety during the pandemic?

	School			Grand Total
	PES	PMS	PHS	
Excellent	63	39	28	130
Good	22	19	19	60
Mediocre	16	8	4	28
Poor	1		1	2
Grand Total	102		52	220

While it is heartening that over half (130 out of 220) responded “excellent,” the results’ primary purpose is to provide a baseline for future analysis.

Goal: Renovate Memorial School

Rationale: Pelham Memorial School requires an upgrade to its facilities to allow for appropriate teaching spaces for middle school students. The school facility needs adequate core capacity including the gymnasium, library, and cafeteria. The facility also needs to meet basic accessibility standards. The community came very close to a successful vote in 2020 indicating significant support for this project. The planning process for reopening safely has reinforced the fact that Memorial School presents the most challenges in the district in its physical plant.

Measurements: Sufficient support in the community to pass a warrant article in March 2021 to renovate Pelham Memorial School.

Progress: The School Board has recommended a special warrant article for the renovation and upgrade of Pelham Memorial School for the March 2021 ballot. The warrant article goes before the Budget Committee on November 19 for a decision. The guaranteed maximum price for the project is \$31,980,000 compared to \$30,880,000 on the March 2020 ballot, an increase of 3.6% for substantially the same project. This compares favorably to an estimated market rate increase for construction of 7.0% provided by the Trident Group, our owner’s project manager, and a detailed hard cost increase estimate of 4.7% provided by construction manager Bonnette, Page and Stone. The District and Trident have begun coordination with Pelham’s community groups, including ACES, to promote and explain the project to community members.

In addition to these practical steps, we also have survey data on the question of the Memorial School Renovation. Again, this is the results from parents only.

How important do you feel it is for the district to renovate and upgrade the Pelham Memorial School building ?

	School			Grand Total
	PES	PMS	PHS	
Very Important	88	47	30	165
Important	11	17	16	44
Only a little bit	3	2	5	10
Not Important	1	0	1	2
Grand Total	103	66	52	221

These results show 209 of 221 of respondents (95%) reporting this is very important or important. A crucial future question is whether other community members feel the same and if community members will decide to vote for the project.

Goal: Culture and Climate

Rationale: Our goal is to continue to improve culture and climate in the Pelham School District. The intended outcome is to help make the Pelham School District a place where staff want to stay, learn, and grow their careers.

Measurement: Quarterly surveys that show a meaningful improvement in culture and climate measures across the district for staff. Annual turnover of administrative and teaching staff as measured on September 1, 2021 will normalize at 10%.

Progress: In our quarterly survey regarding culture and climate asked how likely a person would be to recommend Pelham School District to others. This is an important baseline as we begin to work on this goal in which we are seeking improvement. We have included the 30 staff members who responded in this survey due to the central role of this group for this goal.

How likely are you to recommend the Pelham School District to others (as a staff member, a parent or a student)?

Role		School			Grand Total
		PES	PMS	PHS	
Parent	Very Likely	49	29	13	91
	Likely	37	28	35	100
	Only a little likely	11	6	2	19
	Unlikely	5	2	2	9
Parent Total		102	65	52	219
Staff	Very Likely	2	8	3	13
	Likely	4	4	4	12
	Only a little likely	2	0	3	5
	Unlikely	0	0	0	0
Staff Total		8	12	10	30
Grand Total		110	77	62	249

These results show 191 of 219 parents (87%) and 25 of 30 staff (83%) reporting they are likely or very likely to recommend Pelham to others. This sets our baseline for improvement over time.