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By City Clerk at 12:32 pm, Feb 24, 2021

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**RUTHANNE FULLER – EX OFFICIO**

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VI	Ruth Goldman, Chair
VII	Kathleen Shields
VIII	Matthew Miller

February 23, 2021

Pursuant to Article 10 Section 2 of the City of Newton Charter, 50 certified voters may request a Public Hearing of the School Committee to deliberate on actions or measures requested by petitioners. A hearing must be posted 48 hours in advance and held within 3 months of a petition’s certification by the City Clerk.

On January 22, 2021, the City Clerk certified a petition (full petition linked [here](#)) and to meet its public obligations, the School Committee is announcing:

**A Public Hearing on Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm via Zoom linked [here](#) to hear from all members of the public pursuant to the following request:**

We, the undersigned registered voters of Newton, Massachusetts, qualified to vote at the next general election or special election, hereby petition the Newton School Committee, pursuant to the Charter of the City of Newton, section 10-2, to create a Medical Advisory Committee (the "Committee") to serve the citizens of this City regarding an increase of in-person learning and/or return to full in-person learning at Newton Public Schools ("NPS").

The mission of this Committee would be to follow the best available scientific and medical evidence regarding COVID-19 to safely maintain and further expand in-person learning in NPS. Such committees have played an active role in supporting peer districts such as Brookline, Watertown and Wellesley. The Committee shall be established with the following parameters:

The Committee shall have 13 to 16 members, consisting of:

- o No fewer than seven, nor more than ten licensed physicians who are residents of Newton (each a "Physician Member"),
  - o Three full-time NPS educators (who are Newton residents) - where one is employed at an elementary school a second at a middle school and the third at a high school, and
  - o Three NPS parents (who are neither NPS educators nor licensed physicians) - where one is a parent or guardian of an elementary student(s), the second is a parent or guardian of a middle school student(s), and the third a parent or guardian of a high school student(s) (each a "Parent Member").
- Physician Members shall constitute a majority of the Committee members
  - A majority of the Physician Members shall have a directly relevant practice or specialty, including, though not limited to, infectious diseases, pediatrics, pulmonology, epidemiology, emergency medicine, psychiatry and occupational medicine.
  - No Parent Member or Physician Member may be a spouse of (i) a Newton Teacher Association member, officer, or lobbyist, (ii) a Massachusetts Teachers Association member, officer, or lobbyist, (iii) an employee of NPS, (iv) a School Committee member, (v) a City Council Member, (vi) an employee of the city of Newton, or (vii) a contractor of the City of Newton or NPS.

Committee members shall be appointed by the School Committee and approved by a supermajority vote of two-thirds of School Committee members; Appointments shall be made and approved within 15 days of the School Committee vote on this measure.

- The Committee shall have a Chair and Vice-Chair elected by a majority of the Committee members. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall both be Physician Members. The Committee shall otherwise determine its own rules of order.
- The Committee may seek input from other parties (NPS administrators, outside experts, etc.) as it sees fit.
- The determinations of the Committee will not be binding on NPS or the School Committee
- All minutes of Committee meetings and all reports, studies and/or analysis relied upon by the Committee shall be made public in a timely manner.
- The Committee shall dissolve upon the earlier of (i) its own established rules of order or (ii) there no longer existing a state of emergency related to COVID-19 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

It is anticipated that the Committee may address the following issues:

1. Provide a scientific and medical perspective on the potential risks to children from hybrid or remote learning, including risks to their mental health, and academic, social and emotional growth;
2. Provide a scientific and medical perspective on the risk of viral transmission among educators, staff and students in school buildings;
3. Provide a scientific and medical perspective as to what extent it is safe, as determined by the Committee, to conduct in-person learning at each of the elementary, middle school and high school levels with a minimum distance between students in the classroom of less than six feet;
4. Make recommendations regarding frequency, location and population of surveillance testing programs for educators, staff and possibly students;
5. Provide, as appropriate, metrics-based/data-driven guidance regarding shifts between learning models;
6. Develop, as appropriate, metrics-based/data-driven reopening parameters for a fully in-person model;
7. Provide feedback, at the discretion of the Committee, on any recommendations or proposals from Newton's Health and Human Services with respect to safety measures at the Newton Public Schools;

We, the undersigned, recognize that the School Committee has three months with which to act on this petition pursuant to the Charter of the City of Newton, section 10-2. However, we urge you to act without delay as this urgent matter can and should be addressed immediately.

We are aware of the letter from Newton resident physicians and scientists, delivered to the School Committee originally dated January 7, 2021, and updated January 11, 2021. We urge you to consider appointing physicians to the Committee from this talented pool, as they have already expressed a willingness to assist, and many have directly relevant practices and specialties. Likewise, many of the voters signing this petition are, by doing so, expressing their concern and interest in this matter, and we believe would be appropriate Parent Members of this Committee.

**All members of the public will be allowed to speak on this topic only for up to 3 minutes.**

**To sign up in advance of the hearing, please go to the Google Form linked [here](#). You may also sign up in “live-time” during the meeting by using the “raise your hand” feature on Zoom.**

**Speakers will be called in the order in which they signed up: first come – first speak.**