

Wappingers Central School District Legislative Action Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 20, 2021 -- 3:00 p.m.

This meeting will be held remotely via Zoom and live stream to the public at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbmirHxXLln0yrMBhi6XJTA/videos>

Attendees: Eddy Sloshower, Allison Conti, Sanjay Natesan, Carl DeMarco, Jr. , Rob Rubin, Jaclyn Coffman

Others Present: Alberta Pedro

Not Present: John S. Morgan, John Lumia

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Eddy Sloshower at 3:08 p.m.

1. **Approve Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 22 meeting, as stated.

Motion by Allison Conti

Second by Rob Rubin

Yes: Eddy Sloshower, Allison Conti, Sanjay Natesan, Carl DeMarco, Jr. , Rob Rubin, Jaclyn Coffman

Motion passed.

2. **Discuss Research on Assigned Goals**

- Funding to Keep Schools Open – Unfunded Mandates to Require School Districts to test for COVID and provide PPE - [J. Coffman & A. Conti](#)
- Mental Health (Social Emotional Well Being) - [R.Rubin and S. Natesan](#)
- Preventing 20% Reduction/Withholding of State Aid -- \$9.6-11 million - [J. Morgan and C. DeMarco](#)

Funding to Keep Schools Open – Unfunded Mandates to Require School Districts to test for COVID and provide PPE - [J. Coffman & A. Conti](#)

- A new administration was sworn in today, which indicated additional stimulus funding to states, local municipalities, and schools. The Governor is requesting \$15 billion to get NYS out of the deficit with a portion going to the schools. Districts don't have any idea the amount of funding will be provided to schools at this time.
- See the attached **Funding to Keep Schools Open** summary, which outlines the research done by J. Coffman and A. Conti. Topics include

mandatory COVID testing on school grounds for staff and teachers in New York State; zone testing when designated by NYS (see Riverhead SD letter); the personal choice to vaccinate; and the testing pilot in NYC to test 20% of in-person school population including students and staff.

- The Committee discussed the potential impact of mandatory testing on union negotiations, along with the costs associated with testing kits and who would administer the tests.
- NYC partnered with NYC Health and Hospitals for the administration of tests. However, the committee does not foresee this being required for all of New York State, as things are changing over the last 30 days since the last meeting of the committee.
- If WCSD were mandated to have testing in our schools our main concerns are:
 - 1. Funding to pay for the testing kits
 - 2. Staff to administer the process or would we need to hire an outside company such as a lab
 - 3. How would the schools choose who will be tested
 - 4. Consent forms and would this need to be mandatory for kids to attend in-person learning
 - 5. Internal staffing to make sure all consent forms are signed and documented
 - 6. Designate a room and cleaning supplies for the people being tested
- More research is needed on the availability of the County Medical Reserve Corp being able to assist school districts in the administration of testing kids, if needed.
- The purpose of this goal was to make a recommendation to the Board relating to advocating for additional funding to keep schools open. We are not at that point right now. Additional discussion is needed.
- Next Steps: Chair Sloschower will contact Dr. Bonk for an update. Dr. Bonk attends weekly meetings with the County Department of Health. He will be able to provide the committee with information on the current status of mandatory zone testing of students and staff in the schools.

Mental Health (Social Emotional Well Being) - [R. Rubin](#) and [S. Natesan](#)

- There is strength in numbers. Collaborating with area school districts and organizations like the Dutchess County School Boards Association and the Lower Hudson Education Coalition will have a greater impact in furthering this goal.
- There are mental health resources available through the district's partnership with CAPE, as well as the County Help Line.

- Next Steps: It was recommended that Mr. Zipp be contacted to provide information on where to find mental health resources for students on the website or in student handbooks. Contacting Kelly Lappan from DCBOCES may also be helpful. The focus should be on advocating to the State for funding to provide resources that would help the students. Mr. Rubin and Sanjay will continue to discuss this topic.

Preventing 20% Reduction/Withholding of State Aid -- \$9.6-11 million - [J. Morgan and C. DeMarco](#)

- \$4 billion will be sent to New York State for K-12 schools. It is unsure how much the district will see of that. This goal is important because the impact of not receiving funding would result in layoffs and program cuts.
- It may be beneficial to speak with Senator Serino and Senator Lalor's offices, and contact Gilibrand, Maloney (Newburgh office), and Schumer (Peekskill office) to clarify the potential impact on school districts with the loss of State Aid.
- Next Steps: continue research and further discussion on this topic.

3. Schedule Next Meeting Date - The tentative meeting scheduled for next Thursday will be rescheduled. The next Legislative Action Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 27 at 3:00 p.m.**

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Rob Rubin

Second by Carl DeMarco

Yes: Eddy Slosower, Allison Conti, Sanjay Natesan, Carl DeMarco, Jr. , Rob Rubin, Jaclyn Coffman

Motion passed.

The meeting ended at 4:05 p.m.

The community is welcome to submit suggestions to Chair Eddy Slosower via email.