



Minutes from MSAA Vocational Administrators' meeting through Zoom by Karen Guenette on Jan. 8, 2021, from 9 – 10:10 a.m.

In attendance: Kevin Farr (MAVA), Rich Kelly (MSAA), Mark Wood (Tantasqua), Karen Guenette (Bristol-Plymouth), Justin Kratz (McCann Tech), Kathy Duff (Newton), Mike Parker/Gary Linehan (Old Colony), Joe Bianca (Smith Aggie), Shannon Snow (Keefe Tech), Billy Terronova (CCT) Anthony Steele (BVT), Mark Hollick (Assabet), Kevin Braga (Bristol-Aggie), Ron Driscoll (Norfolk-Aggie), Shannon Doherty (Essex Tech/Aggie), Cliff Cloutier (Bay Path), Chris Laganas (Whittier Tech), Brian Spadafino (Franklin Tech), Alan Gates (Dean Tech), Geoff Zini (Blue Hills), Siobhan Petrella (Worcester Tech), and Eric Duda/Carrie Auffrey (Pathfinder).

The meeting began at 9 a.m., and Mark opened the meeting and welcomed all vocational administrators. Discussion points include the following:

- Recap of Commissioner Riley's Supt. Zoom meeting with the group; going to BESE for approval of changing high school CD guidelines for seniors this year and want to continue MCAS to use as a diagnostic tool to identify gaps. ACCESS test is still on target starting in January.
- Progress Reports and Failing Students - discussion about students failing one and multiple classes and strategies to try to assist with these large numbers of students in all of our schools. Ideas were:
 - Adopt a "lowest" score that anyone can obtain
 - Ask teachers to grade a maximum number of assignments each week that are tied to student learning and worth grading or for credit without lowering expectations
 - Offer extra-help sessions for all academic areas for 1.5 or 2 hours after school, as well as open the school for Feb. and April vacation weeks
 - Teachers compliant with extra-help contractual nights, but can meet halfway and have them work from home, i.e. 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. instead of 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. at school when no students are staying after school at this time. Call it "office hours" and make sure students and parents know the schedule.
 - Keep emailing parents and let them know if child not doing the work now, looking at summer school and the same course will cost them; keep track of kids and stay on this communication

- Competitive kids don't want watered down grades or assignments and looking for high GPAs; offer no worse than a grade on report card (59), get parents on board so student can recover from a failure
- Change pass term grade to a passing grade if student passes the following term i.e. Term I received 40, but Term II received a 70, change Term I to 55, so EOY average is higher to pass the course for the year
- Giving no less than a 55 for each term; many students multiple Ds & Fs, decided to cancel all midterms
- Students had less than 50 averages going into Trimester exams, but passed the exam, so discussion with teachers to not fail because not logging on or doing the homework assignments. Student(s) proved that they learned the material; important to look at what the students know and not what they are doing; look at the 20 or 30 grade given and move up to at least a passing grade if passed the end-of-trimester exam; In $\frac{2}{3}$ cases, gave the student the credit for what they learned.
- 20-30 students in each grade level failing and done nothing to this point; making it mandatory for them to return to school
- Looking at competency-based idea for grading; find the most important frameworks to focus on and getting rid of quantity and going with quality
- Using instructional aides for additional support for kids who need it
- Moved to full in-person learning for all students and looked at what other 9 sending districts were doing for any low cut offs for failures and 4 districts had failure ranges from 40-55 and the other 5 didn't have anything
- No common grading practices and pushback from teachers when approached this subject; decided to give teachers permission to be creative, but open on vacation weeks and all Saturdays, too
- Failure is not an option mantra - every 2 weeks run grade reports, teachers must have grades in the system; 2 Saturdays a month mandatory to attend if failing a course and not wait until May/June; also lose all privileges: driving, sports, activities, co-op at school, until grade(s) brought up
- Kids doing the work but not showing up to the online class, but teachers want to fail and no participation grade; change teachers mindsets about this; 8th graders having the hardest time transitioning
- All remote academics seem to be the same passing rate as last year; overall kids doing pretty well; sticking to attendance, but added a buy-back program so 17-30% of students who failed can buyback attendance days if they work with their teachers to bring up their grades; Sat. School makeup; program working well

Question posed to the group about how many PE teachers are employed in schools, are students pulled out of shop for this time, how often, i.e. every other week? Everyone answered in the chat feature (see below).

Discussion about state red, yellow, and green COVID areas and sending districts and any determination or structure for moving to full remote learning for regional-tech schools.

- Some schools have all academic classes remote and teachers are teaching from home, and student go to school for all of their shop classes, so staying open at this time
- Some MOAs have stipulations for xx number of cases reported and that is the determination
- Other schools do not have language in the MOAs and it's the school district's discretion, even if sending districts are full remote
- Biweekly meetings with union staff, nurse, and other reps to look at the data and number of current cases on quarantine
- Some schools moved to full remote for a week after the Christmas break, but are re-opening on Jan. 11th
- Continue to look at multiple data sources for state, county, and local levels especially since numbers have doubled this week since the holidays
- Having a lot of staff members on quarantine and not enough substitutes to cover is a decision maker
- Pressure from families of other children in sending districts who are fully remote, but schools not proving to be superspreaders of virus
- Got COVID test kits from state to have on site at school so easier for contact tracing and immediate results; have kept 75-80% of school open since Sept. Schools safer places with knowing where students are and keeping them in, if possible.
- Only 2 reported cases, but more than 2, per MOA would have to shut down, but kids are separated well in school and haven't had to deal with this yet

Discussion about Fall 2 & Winter Sports Seasons (see chat below for additional comments)

- Assabet - No fall season & no winter season, but looking at the Fall 2 season
- BVT - Yes to both, got storage pods, cleaned out gym, parents can't watch, but trying to get the Fall 2 season in Feb, and coaches giving the best as they can; more recreational, but parents and kids happy with anything offered.
- CCT - Must be in school for practice or play or otherwise not providing transportation; possibly only varsity programs, not sure what Mayflower League going to plan, but meeting next week to discuss further; high modified soccer for this year
- TriCounty - probably get a few games in for athletes, trying to arrange for Fall 2 and Spring, even if just scrimmage-type games to let students play; high school kids are already playing club sports for hockey, lacrosse, and basketball now.

- B-P - really not sure how to make equitable for all student-athletes on remote learning days if no transportation back to school for practices & games; already a policy that fully remote learners cannot participate unless at least in a hybrid learning model; no recent discussions have taken place about this yet.

MSAA - Rich Kelly - lots of PD online offerings (see chat below)

Kevin Farr - MVA Outstanding Vocational Student Award Night will be virtual this year and trying to create Connecting for Success in June as a hybrid, but more on that to come.

A transcript of the Group Chat:

Who is doing the supervision in the gymnasium? Teacher volunteers?

- At BHR we are using 3 instructional aides to supervise the students coming in for academic support - these students are doing their remote academics in the building, then seeing teachers in the afternoon for extra help.
- At Tricounty we are using paras and some underscheduled teachers, dean will be spending some time down there as well
- At CCT we are bringing 25 kids per class and using a program created this year called Mentor Teacher which we moved teachers with "holes" to guidance/mentor role of 15-20 kids to watch and communicate with families. Those holes will be filled with these kids.
- At Norfolk Aggie - Implementation of a 30 minute What I Need (WIN) block each day has evolved to identifying students in desperate need moving to the library and conference room for extra help. The special educators and guidance counselors host.

Tricounty - just to clarify, we are in person for shop, I was talking academics only. are shop scores are where they usually are.

Kevin - do you have a program description you could share?

Please share the number of physical education staff that you currently have and if you schedule the classes during the academic week or vocational week. Thanks,

- Franklin Tech - 3 PE/Health teachers on academic week
- McCann Tech - 1 PE Teacher- academic week
- Norfolk Aggie - 2 FT PE/Health, 1 PT. We have been Hybrid all year, so 50% of the students are on campus each week for academics and vocational.
- CCT - One of my PE teachers is a history teacher (dual cert) the other is a study hall monitor to help fill the hole of no theory during academics for this year only
- Old Colony - 2 PE teachers on academic side at Old Colony
- Bristol Aggie - 2 PE/Health at BA. We are half/half schedule; PE comes out of shop 1 - 45 min period
- TriCounty - 3 teachers for 950 students, academic week

- CCT - On a normal year... PE is in shop cycle, 2 teachers and 1 IA, it is how get preps to tech teachers
- B-P - 2 PE teachers and 1 Health/PE cert. who has 2 PE classes to cover preps each day, academic cycles only
- Pathfinder - 1.5 PE teachers. Pull out during vocational week for 11/12 and class during academic week for 9/10
- Essex Tech/Aggie - We have 6 PE teachers for the 1st semester they taught Career Enhancement out of the CCTE cycle, in Semester 2 they will teach Health.
- Keefe Tech - 3 PE/health teachers. All grade 9 kids get health/pe in academic week, and upper class students get PE out of CTE. We offer health and PE electives for upper class students in academic week
- Blue Hills - 3 teachers, 880 students; this year "blew up" our PE schedule; working with upperclassmen (10-12) during vocational week on remote days; working with 9th grade opposite exploratory for 2 day "conferences" where it is 9th grade's entire day.
- Dean Tech - PE Teacher - 2 -> SEL Support/Lessons and looking at having them focus on Credit Recovery for second semester (Targeted support for failing students) *Asynchronous PE Lessons for their classes to free them up to support across the grade level.

Discussion about failure rates for shop

- CCT - Shop is in person so we have been lucky...
- Norfolk Aggie - Failure rate in vocational is equally the same for us. If they fail both semesters, they cannot return to Norfolk County Agricultural HS. Seniors are the worst. The challenge is them being online for class instead of going to work.
- McCann -Thank you all for the ideas and information- very helpful stuff to consider.

Discussion about MCAS high school test & CD & new US Sec of Education

- Keefe Tech - You do not need to pass a high stakes exam in CT to graduate
- CCT - Shannon good to know, thank you.

Fall 2 & Spring Sports Discussion & Wrap Up:

- Blue Hills - We are focusing on trying to get a spring season in
- Norfolk Aggie - WE are remaining in an in-house "intramural" style of sports.
- Smith Tech - We are planning on Football and Cheer
- McCann Tech - We're with Geoff... crossing our fingers for maybe a spring season but that would be the MAX of what we could/will do
- Norfolk Aggie - Very helpful information. Again, I see we are all in the same boat. Thanks for your insights.
- Bristol-Aggie - Thanks everyone. Have a great weekend. Enjoy
- Worcester Tech - I have another meeting that I have to attend. thank you all of the incite into how you are dealing with the failures.
- Smith Tech - Signing off. Have a great weekend and best of luck until our next meeting.
- Franklin Tech - Thanks, everyone. Have a good day.

From Rich Kelley (MSAA) to Everyone: 10:02 AM

- MSAA is offering SEI courses for teachers, vocational teachers and administrators. All approved by DESE <http://msaa.net/>

LEADERSHIP MATTERS



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