

NEWINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit 50
48 Post Road, Greenland, New Hampshire 03840
Phone (603) 422-9572 Fax (603) 422-9575

A special meeting of the Newington School Board took place on Wednesday, July 29, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. via remote access through Google Meets.

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Dr. Mark Joyce
Ms. Samara Robertson
Mr. Chris Russo

Administrators: Salvatore Petralia, Superintendent
Kelli Killen, Assistant Superintendent
Mindy Ryan, Business Administrator
Sarah Reinhardt, Special Education Director
Brian Grattan, Director of Technology
Peter Latchaw, Principal
Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Visitors: Emily Savenilli

CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Joyce called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Dr. Joyce read aloud a brief statement required by law. The statement ensures all school board meetings are compliant with the Right-to-Know Law during the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and are in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-4, the public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Dr. Joyce noted the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss updated Re-Entry Plan. The Board reviewed the plan previously and Mr. Latchaw was asked to provide highlights of the revised plan to those in attendance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Re-Entry Plan

Mr. Latchaw noted that he worked with Administrators, teachers and town officials to gather information and recommendations to establish the re-entry plan for Newington Public School. Changes have been made to classroom arrangements; desks spread out to minimally 3-6 feet apart and each will have a plexi-glass partition. The partition will allow students to take their masks off when at their desks. Anytime students are standing or moving around they will be required to wear a mask. Staff will be required to wear mask full time and may take them off when outside. Mr. Latchaw has been working with the custodian to eliminate all unnecessary furniture to allow for more space. A storage pod has been rented for the furniture not being utilized at this time.

Mr. Latchaw noted that the plan clearly outlines the use of face coverings. Another goal is to utilize outdoor space for teaching. The Newington School Supporters donated \$500 for the purchase of outdoor equipment for teaching students such as portable desks, screen blockers, chairs etc.

The plan outlines bus protocols. If possible, parents will transport their student to and from school in an effort to keep numbers low and ensure bus transportation is available for the families who really need it.

Mr. Latchaw noted that the plan includes clear direction for Special Education; he deferred questions to Ms. Reinhardt on specifics.

As far as possible the goal is to focus on core subjects. Subjects such as gym will be held indoors if raining and the gym will be thoroughly cleaned between classes.

With regard to remote instruction, all students will utilize the Google platform. Seesaw will also be used as a portfolio sharing tool.

Ms. Robertson questioned how new Kindergarten student (who may have not attended preschool/daycare), will be introduced into the school and made to feel comfortable in the new environment.

Mr. Latchaw shared that he and Chef Tom had been working together to get the school ready and plan to create video tours of the school and protocol to send to students. Mr. Latchaw is also working to get clear PPE including face shields for K, 1 teachers, so students can see teacher expressions for such things like reading aloud.

Mr. Latchaw noted that the last piece of the plan deals with exposures and health; most of these details came directly from NHHS and CDC guidance.

Mr. Petralia added the strongest point of the State Plan is the reporting of Covid cases and steps that are required if specific situations related to Covid exposure occur at school. The State Plan has specific guidance and they will ultimately investigate the situation locally.

Ms. Reinhardt has also worked with the attorney at Drummond and Woodsum to prepare a letter stating that the Districts are to follow the guidelines the Governor and State set forth in order to protect the Districts from liability. Our insurance provider Primex offered similar advice.

Dr. Joyce discussed the possibility of sharing the current Re-Entry plan simultaneously with an enrollment survey to parents to assist in their decision making regarding in-school or remote learning.

Mr. Petralia reiterated that the intention of this special meeting was to address any remaining critical items in the plan. As has been done with other SAU 50 districts he will advise a final approval vote on the plan take place no later than the August 11th meeting. The plan will then be sent to staff and parents and placed on the Newington website. At this stage it is important to get feedback from the public on the draft plan and include an enrollment survey to ask if parents are willing to send students full time in the fall and secondly if they will be available to transport their

child to and from or depend on bus transportation.

Mr. Petralia requested approval from the Board to construct correspondence following the meeting, with the most updated plan and then disseminate to parents with a deadline to provide answers to the previously stated questions. He reiterated that at some point the plan needs to become static unless otherwise instructed by the Governor's office.

Mr. Russo questioned how Covid cases within the school community would be handled. While he understood Ms. Reinhardt's statement that they would defer to the DHHS to investigate situations that arise, he feels the plan is lacking real protocols and clear explanations of how the administration will respond.

Ms. Killen reflected on sections of the plan that gave specific guidance. She noted the page including that should any student/staff member show any symptoms they are instructed to remain home. If a student/staff member are showing symptoms upon arrival to school they will be send home. If a student/staff member show symptoms during the school day they will be assessed by the school nurse. If the nurse determines it is a possibly a Covid case they will follow state guidelines and the individual will be sent home. At that point the individual will be encouraged to go take a Covid test.

Students and staff may not return to the building unless 24 hours fever free without any fever reducing medication. If an individual tests positive the nurse will contact public health officials. Public health officials will then do the contact tracing, ultimately determining who needs to be quarantined and what information needs to be communicated.

Ms. Robertson asked if there would be an isolation room in the school and or what would happen if a child has a fever but the family refused to take a Covid test.

Mr. Petralia reiterated that legal counsel has advised the SAU to strictly adhere to what the Governor's office has stated.

Ms. Robertson reflected on the re-entry plan from Danvers Massachusetts and the health and safety guidelines they have written within the document. She felt the Newington plan should incorporate similar guidelines used in that document to provide clear and concise direction for parents.

Mr. Reinhardt noted that guidance is different between Massachusetts and New Hampshire. She requested permission to go back to the attorney's and get additional advice.

Dr. Joyce summarized that the revising of the plan should include clarification of the language pertaining to health and safety specifics to more closely resemble the example from Danvers (provided). Mr. Petralia will investigate the tightening up of the language and review with the SAU 50 attorneys.

Mr. Latchaw and Ms. Reinhart will work to make the revisions on the plan and sent to the attorney.

Ms. Killen will also add more clarification regarding full-time remote learning for students who are unable to return to school.

It was decided that the revisions would be made by weeks end and sent to the attorney. A message from the District including the plan and survey will be sent to families next week in order to get feedback in time for the August 11th meeting.

Academic Calendar

Mr. Petralia noted the proposed calendar includes a post Labor Day start date of Tuesday, September 8th. The additional time would allow professional development opportunities for staff. Staff are returning around August 25th so the additional time would allow for five days of professional development and preparation. With the post Labor Day start, the last day for students would be June 11, 2020 which meets the prerequisite for instructional hours based on daily schedule.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board approved the revised 2020-2021 academic calendar with a September 8, 2020 First Day for students and to include instructional hours as the school year requirement. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Non-Resident Tuition Students

Mr. Latchaw include in the Board's shared drive for review, information on enrollment numbers and tuition applications.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board approved the current applications for Non-Resident Tuition Students for the 2020-2021 academic year. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Memorandum of Agreement

Mr. Petralia noted that he updated the Board on the MOA status in his previously provided written report. A meeting is schedule for Monday, August 3rd at which Dr. Joyce and Mr. Petralia will represent the Newington Board.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Petralia informed the Board he had received a letter of retirement from Elisabeth Brown earlier that day.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board accepted with extreme regret the retirement request of Elizabeth Brown effective September 11, 2020. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Emily Savinelli asked if more could be added to the plan regarding the CDC guidelines and specifics similar to what other districts are doing. She reiterated that if proper protocols are not put in place, she will not jeopardize her family's health and safety.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board adjourned the meeting at 3:08 p.m. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Approved by the School Board 9/08/20 Virtual Meeting - Approval

Samara Robertson, School Board Secretary

Date