

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

The regular monthly meeting of the Newington School Board took place on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 3:00 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

Staff: Nels Tooker, Teacher

Visitors: Jaclyn Karabinas, Christine Poulin, Emily Savinelli

CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Joyce called the meeting to order at 3:01 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 that public comment will be recognized twice during the meeting before and after the discussion of the re-entry plan.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the public minutes of July 14, 2020 were approved.
Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

Mr. Petralia asked that the non-public minutes of May 12th and July 14th be deferred as Board members have been unable to review them at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Petralia shared a communication from the NH Charitable Foundation for the approval of a \$2,125 grant from the Clipper Fund towards the Newington School District Brady Grant.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the manifest for June 30, 2020 through June 30, 2020 was approved in the amount of \$27,468.35. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the manifest for July 1, 2020 through August 10, 2020 was approved in the amount of \$167,505.46. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Mr. Petralia noted that a portion of the July manifest was attributed to the Newington School District expenditure to the SAU 50 budget.

Ms. Ryan shared that the District is in good shape as far as encumbrances. She added that going forward any expenditure transfers over \$5,000 would require Board approval. Transfers ranging from \$2,500-\$5,000 may be approved by the Business Administrator and Superintendent and below \$2,500 merely the Business Administrator's approval.

Ms. Ryan noted there will be need for Board approval for the air duct cleaning for the HVAC system and Split-Vac system of a \$6,650 transfer of funds. The transfer of fund will be made between the Health Insurance account line to the Heating System Repairs account line.

RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDIAL VISITORS

Dr. Joyce thanked community members and staff for attending the meeting.

Ms. Karabinas relayed that she had connected with Mr. Latchaw recently regarding her statement made at the July 14th Board meeting. She added that Mr. Latchaw had promised to keep the concerns she relayed in said statement on the "front burner" going forward.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Petralia reiterated praise to the hard work completed by the SAU 50 Administration, Principal Latchaw and Newington Staff as all worked diligently over the last several weeks to put the finishing touches on the Newington Public School Re-Entry Plan. He also thanked the NPS parents for their timely responses to the enrollment survey and transportation data.

Mr. Petralia will ask to go into non-public session later in the meeting to discuss updates regarding the MOA and ACT documents.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Ms. Killen presented the Social Emotional Learning Curriculum. The curriculum is established to teach children to "understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." (CASEL, 2020). She noted that the guidance counselor and classroom teachers will provide direct instruction in these areas to all students so they develop the social and emotional skills to be able to learn. The frameworks are divided into the areas of Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision Making. There are two separate curriculums for the Board to approve; one for K-4 students, the second for 5-8 students.

Ms. Killen reiterated that a majority of the SEL Curriculum points will be interwoven into morning meetings. This will assist in helping students deal with the trauma they have experienced. She is asking the Board to adopt the SEL Curriculum at the September meeting.

Ms. Robertson thanked Ms. Killen for making the SEL Curriculum a priority.

Ms. Killen noted that once the SEL Curriculum is approved by the Board it will then be posted on the website for the public.

Special Education Report

Ms. Reinhardt had no formal report but offered to take questions from the Board.

Ms. Robertson inquired about how Special Education families choosing to remain remote will be integrated with families while they are not in the building.

Ms. Reinhardt explained that IEP teams will agree on what service and goals will look like case by case. Some will not be able to be implemented in a remote environment therefore they will be adapted appropriately. Newington staff will implement remote service to those students as much as possible to keep connections thriving.

Principal Report

Mr. Latchaw reiterated praise for the hard work both Linda Lowey and Tom Lienhardt have done to prepare the school for the opening of school including making plexi-glass partitions.

Mr. Latchaw highlighted the upcoming goals for the 2020-2021 school year: 1) Continuing to place focus on student achievement and growth; 2) Social and Emotional Curriculum; 3) furthering skills in technology and remote learning.

Policy

Mr. Joyce informed the Board that there would be a number of required policies for the September meeting including several required by the audit report. He reiterated to the public that policies are introduced to the Board members for first reading, then second reading and third/approval. He added that the policies related to the audit report may need to be read and approved at the October meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Re-Entry Plans for 2020-2021

Mr. Latchaw shared highlights of the re-entry plan. The plan calls for four in school days a week with one remote/planning day. All children and staff will be required to wear masks. Students will be kept in their classroom cohorts. Classrooms will not mix. Newington School Supporters have worked with Mr. Latchaw to gather materials to use for outdoor learning space. The goal will be to have as much outdoor classwork as possible. Students will be spaced 3-6ft apart at all times. Students will be allowed to remove their masks when seated at their desk behind the plexi-glass partition. The testing, tracing and isolation protocols follow that of the State guidelines.

Mr. Latchaw thanked Ms. Reinhardt with her assistance in revising the plan and sending to legal counsel for review. He reiterated that even in the event of a building closure and remote learning building interventionists will be able to oversee the special education students and will work closely with classroom teachers.

Mr. Latchaw indicated the enrollment survey sent to parents indicated that out of 40 total students two will be remote learning and one will be homeschooled. The majority of parents will be dropping off/picking up their students, which will allow space on the bus for those families that truly need that mode of transportation.

Dr. Joyce shared a question a public member had brought to his attention; why not have a remote Wednesday (mid-week), rather than a remote Friday. Mr. Latchaw noted the main reason for the remote day occurring on Fridays is to be in line with the other SAU 50 districts for reasons of professional development and collaboration.

Ms. Killen reiterated that it had been decided that Friday was the best option to allow for collaboration time for teachers across districts. It is important for such collaboration to take place due to the magnitude of information regarding virtual instruction and social/emotion and trauma training. Ms. Killen added that Friday is generally an easier day to have remote instruction for parents that work; allowing the weekend to complete school work if necessary.

Mr. Joyce inquired about how new parents/students would be able to see what inside the school looks like prior to the first day of classes. Mr. Latchaw explained that once all the plexi-class barriers were in place and hall stickers etc. placed he would then create a video of what the school will look like with the new protocols in place. This will allow new and returning students to have a clearer understanding as they head into the building. He also added that he is working with the new Kindergarten teacher to plan an outdoor Kindergarten Camp/Meet and Greet for families prior to the start of school.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Emily Savinelli shared her concern that families were being asked to make a definitive decision regarding in-school versus remote learning for students. She asked if there was any flexibility when asking families to make that decision.

Mr. Petralia noted the main reasoning for asking parents to commit one way or another was to eliminate students bouncing in and out of in-school and remote learning. Administration made decisions based on data from the enrollment and transportation survey. The data is crucial in establishing roster, staff assignments, etc. He reiterated his understanding that special circumstances will arise and if positive cases increase the school district will need to pivot/quarantine and shift to remote instruction.

Mr. Petralia emphasized the need for everyone to be vigilant in following safety protocol. In order to keep the students, staff and Newington community safe there needs to be understanding that this is a collective effort, “without the entire communities’ help our efforts will be in vain.”

Nels Tooker thanked Mr. Latchaw for soliciting teacher input when creating/revising the re-entry plan.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board approved the Newington Public School Re-Entry Plan for the 2020-2021 academic year. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

Nursing Staff Hourly Increase

Mr. Latchaw shared his opinion that it would be in the best interested of the NPS community to provide full time nursing service to students during this time of the pandemic. Upon speaking with the nurse he asked the Board to approve amending her schedule to reflect that for at least the first four to six weeks of the school year she will be in the building from 8:00 am – 10:00 am all for school days.

NON PUBLIC SESSION

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board entered into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:III (c) at 2:55 p.m. Roll Call: 3-0.

RE-ENTRY INTO PUBLIC SESSION

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board voted to come out of non-public session and seal the non-public minutes at 3:04 p.m. Roll Call: 3-0

RETREAT

The 2019-2020 district goals were reviewed, as well as the parent survey responses regarding remote learning.

Mr. Latchaw reiterated his learning goals for students adding that he hopes to broaden the ways academic growth is measured. Dr. Joyce noted there will now be a social emotional component which will become part of the portfolio of assessments for students. There was further discussion on the SEL curriculum and how it will be incorporated into a student’s day. The third goal around use of technology to enhance the work for staff was also discussed.

Board meeting efficiency was discussed. It was noted that there has been increased efficiency around Google Meet sessions. Public attendance also increased with the onset of the virtual meetings. Mr. Petralia thanked the Board members for the meeting efficiency and for holding the virtual meeting in the work day when possible so as not to extend into evening hours for SAU Administration. It was decided that the September 8th School Board meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. It was requested that going forward school board agendas also be sent to the parent/guardian community and staff.

Mr. Latchaw shared a maintenance report highlighting the following: Air duct cleaning has been addressed, Hart Plumbing provide a quote of \$6,800, the storage unit for classroom furniture will be \$175 per month.

Mr. Latchaw requested the Board consider the sprinkler system and servicing of the fire plane due to continued issues with Impact Fire. Ms. Ryan will review the current contracts and the item will be placed on the agenda for September.

Ms. Robertson noted that Abby Hood has offered free or reduced storage to the school district. She will provide Mr. Latchaw with Ms. Hood’s contact information.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board adjourned their meeting at 3:48 p.m. Roll Call: 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