

NEWINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit 50
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The regular monthly meeting of the Newington School Board took place on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 4:00 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
Mindy Green, Business Administrator
Sarah Reinhardt, Special Education Director
Brian Grattan, Director of Technology
Peter Latchaw, Principal
Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Visitors: Jaelyn Karabinas, Kim Lodge, Abigail Lundborn, Meredith Marconi,
Nels Tooker,

CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Joyce called the meeting to order at 4:00 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.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the public minutes of February 9, 2021 were approved. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Petralia shared a letter from Nels Tooker, ACT Representative, regarding the proposed 2021-2022 calendar.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the manifest for February 10, 2021 through March 9, 2021, was approved in the amount of \$94,129.32. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Dr. Joyce thanked Ms. Green for the additional notes on finances.

Ms. Green noted the fund balance is \$312,407.

RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDIAL VISITORS

Dr. Joyce welcomed the public visitors to the meeting. He thanked Mr. Tooker for the letter regarding the academic calendar for 2021-2022.

Mr. Tooker reiterated the intent of the letter was to share with the Board the thoughts from teachers. He added that during a recent NSS meeting parents seemed in agreement with the proposed calendar changes brought forth by the ACT.

REPORTS

Dr. Joyce highlighted several additions to the agenda to be discussed under New Business.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Petralia shared that the New Hampshire School Administrators Association and the New Hampshire School Board Association are closely monitoring House Bill 455, relative to the ability of a parent to enroll a child in the public school of their choice. Potentially, this Bill could have far reaching effects on school districts and funding.

Mr. Petralia referenced Governor Sununu's press conference last week regarding the beginning of Phase 2A for COVID-19 vaccinations. The Portsmouth Fire Chief has invited SAU 50 to participate in a closed pod clinic being offered with SAU 52 at Portsmouth High School on Saturday, March 13th. A survey was sent out to SAU 50 staff regarding participation in the vaccination and has received an 85% participation response rate so far. Mr. Petralia thanked the Portsmouth Fire Chief Todd Germain, and SAU 52 Superintendent Steve Zdravec for inviting SAU 50 staff to be part of the clinic.

Mr. Petralia reminded Board members that he will present staff nominations at the March 13th Board meeting following Annual District Meeting at Newington Town Hall.

Mr. Petralia highlighted a new professional Development opportunity for SAU 50 staff in collaboration with Southern New Hampshire University and other Seacoast SAU's. SNHU will begin a 2nd Onsite M.Ed/CAGS Leadership Cohort Program in the spring of 2021. The program is approved by the New Hampshire Department of Education as a program that leads to certification as a principal or curriculum administrator.

Mr. Petralia received an initial proposal from the First Student Inc. Area Manager. Mr. Petralia rejected the initial proposal from First Student Inc, as it was not acceptable. Negotiations are ongoing. Mr. Petralia added that the bus drivers have unionized which has caused an increase from their initial proposal. He will update the Board again at the April meeting.

Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Killen requested the Board adopt the STEM and Science Curriculum as presented.

Special Education – No formal report.

Technology

Mr. Grattan shared that the internet speed increases / Fiber Internet will be completed in advance of the initial 5/21/2021 date. The Comcast agreement to increase school bandwidth to 100Mbps down/25Mbps up has been submitted on 3/8/2021.

Principal Report

Mr. Latchaw noted there are seven weeks until April vacation. Parent – teacher conferences will be held the week prior to Memorial Day. He reported that there are no ne new updates from the Newington Public School COVID Task Force.

Mr. Latchaw provided an update on activities happening in classrooms. Grade 3 & 4 completed their Wax Museum Presentations and will be viewing comments from the school community. He invited Board members the opportunity to view the students Heros of the Planet Presentations using a link provided in the Principals report.

Mr. Latchaw highlighted the creative Egyptian Cardboard Museum projects completed by Grades 5 & 6.

Mr. Latchaw provide and update on projected enrollment indicated it may require a change in classroom configuration.

Mr. Latchaw noted that an internal candidate expressed interest in switching her current role as a SPED teacher to the general education position of intervention specialist. Mr. Latchaw endorses such a move indicating said teacher had completed the endorsements necessary for general education.

Mr. Latchaw updated the Board on upcoming opportunities for grade six students to explore the transition to Portsmouth Middle School.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Academic Calendar 2021-2022

Dr. Joyce thanked Mr. Tooker for the letter presented on behalf of the NPS staff. He noted that the recommendations from the staff and school supporters were in alignment.

Mr. Petralia noted for the record that he is a proponent of a traditional school calendar for 2021-2022 and objects to a notion of a continuation of remote Fridays. He asked the Board to make a motion to approve the altered calendar with the exception of remote Fridays. He reminded members they always have the option of adding remote days as needed.

Mr. Russo agreed with Mr. Petralia and asked if early release days would be added to the calendar. Ms. Killen shared that having discussed the topic with administrators it was determined that they would not be necessary for the coming academic year.

Ms. Roberston also agreed with the proposed calendar without the inclusion of remote Fridays.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board voted to approve the 2021-2022 academic calendar as proposed by the Newington Teachers Association with the exception of remote Fridays. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Mr. Russo noted that he feels it is easier for parents to accommodate a remote instruction day over a ½ day should staff find they need more professional development time.

Newington Diversity & Equity Committee

Mr. Latchaw shared that the group invited the Newington Town Librarian to join the committee. The next meeting will focus on establishing norms and understanding vocabulary. It is important for the committee to ensure they are all on the same page and developing a clear path moving forward.

Tuition Program

The non-resident tuition rate for the 2021-2022 academic year was discussed.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board increased the tuition rate for the 2021-2022 academic year by 2% for a rate of \$7,704.00. Discussion. Roll Call Vote 3-0

NEW BUSINESS

STEM & Science Curriculum Adoption

Ms. Killen noted all districts within SAU 50 would be following the same STEM & Science curriculum.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board adopted the SAU 50 STEM & Science curriculum for the 2020-2021 academic year. Discussion. Roll Call: 3-0

Safety Lane Project

The Town of Newington Safety Lane Project was discussed. Dr. Joyce requested that Mr. Petralia compose a letter of support on behalf of the Newington School Board.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board voted to allow Mr. Petralia to compose a letter in support of the Safety Lane Project. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Dr. Joyce requested that the letter reiterated that the vote of support was unanimous.

Tents

Mr. Latchaw shared proposals/quotes he had received regarding the purchase/lease of tents to provide outdoor learning spaces. He recommended the District rent a tent from Marshall Tents based on price and the fact that the Town of Newington also uses that company.

There was discussion regarding purchasing versus renting the tent, and liability obligations that go with each option.

Dr. Joyce recommended the District rent the tent for Spring 2021 then reevaluate the need to purchase a tent based on usage etc.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board voted to rent a tent for Spring 2021; based on usage and need they will re-evaluate purchasing a tent in the future. Discussion.

Roll Call Vote 3-0

Middle School Options Fall 2021

Mr. Russo reiterated to the Board the request from some Grade 6 parents to allow Newington Students the option to attend GCS or RJH should Portsmouth Middle School start the school year fully remote. The current tuition agreement with PMS expires in 2024. There was discussion regarding adding similar verbiage as the New Castle School District Agreement which supports a case-by-case option for students to choose PMS or Rye Junior High School.

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board granted permission for Mr. Petralia to engage in talks with Rye and Greenland School Boards regarding the potential acceptance of Newington students in grades 7 & 8. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

POLICY

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board approved as first reading the following required policy IJOC – Volunteers. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board approved as first reading the following recommended policies DGD – School District Credit Cards; DID – Fixed Capital Assets. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board adopted the following required policies; EBB – School Safety; GBCD – Background Investigation & Criminal History Records Check; and JCA – Change of Class or School Assignment Best Interest and Manifest Hardship and JLCJ – Concussions and Head Injuries. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board adopted the following recommended policies: BGAA – Policy Development, Adoption & Review; BHE -School Board Use of Email & Other Electronic Communications; EB – Workplace Safety Program & Joint Loss Management Committee; GBCE – Training and Information Relative to Child Sexual Abuse Prevention. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

FUTURE PLANNING DATES

- Newington Annual District Meeting – March 13, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at Newington Town Hall
- Newington School Board Meeting – March 13, 2021 at 10:15 a.m. at Newington Town Hall
- SAU 50 Joint Board Meeting – March 24, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Remote
- Newington School Board Meeting – April 13, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Remote

OTHER

NON-PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board adjourned their meeting at 5:13 p.m. Roll Call: 3-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Approved at the April 13, 2021 Newington School Board meeting. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Samara Robertson, School Board Secretary

Date