

**NEWINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
School Administrative Unit 50  
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The regular monthly meeting of the Newington School Board took place on Tuesday, April 13, 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  
Sarah Reinhardt, Special Education Director  
Brian Grattan, Director of Technology  
Peter Latchaw, Principal  
Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Visitors: Jaclyn Karabinas, Kristen Poulin, Abby Hood, Meredith Marconi, Jessica Morgan, Laura Wilhelm-Stone, Jeff Semprini  
Nels Tooker

**CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. Petralia called the meeting to order at 4:01 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.

Mr. Petralia stated the first order of business to be the annual reorganization of the school board. The positions to be filled are Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary.

Mr. Petralia opened nominations for the reorganization of the school board.

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board nominated Dr. Joyce as Chair of the Newington School Board. Vote: 3-0*

Mr. Petralia turned the meeting over to Dr. Joyce.

*On a motion by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Dr. Joyce, the Board nominated Mr. Russo as Vice-Chair of the Newington School Board. Vote 3-0*

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Dr. Joyce, the Board nominated Ms. Robertson as Secretary of the Newington School Board. Vote 3-0*

**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

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

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the public minutes of March 13, 2021 were approved. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Petralia included with his report a recent letter he sent to NHDOE Commissioner Edelblut regarding the current Newington Public School schedule and how it compares to the recent Emergency Order #89 with regard to instructional hours required.

Mr. Petralia included a letter from a Newington Parent regarding kindergarten enrollment and the applicable board policy for age requirements.

Mr. Petralia noted a recent correspondence sent by the NH School Board Association regarding May webinars, specifically, the webinar regarding negotiations. He reminded board members that the 5-year agreement with the Association of Coastal Teachers is set to expire June 2022.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the manifest for March 10, 2021 through March 23, 2021, was approved in the amount of \$44,240.04. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the manifest for March 24, 2021 through April 9, 2021, was approved in the amount of \$50,496.07 Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

Mr. Petralia noted the total remaining fund balance is 13.84% of the budget (\$306,918.55).

## **RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDIAL VISITORS**

Jeff Semprini – Newington resident, NPS parent – voiced his opinion that in light of the Governor’s new order, NPS should adapt the current schedule of in-person learning four days a week, with Fridays remote to reflect the normal of in-person full time five days per week. He reiterated that even though there are only eight Friday’s left in the school year it would be helpful for those families with parents working full time to have their students back in school full time. It was his understanding that originally Friday’s were made remote so that a deep cleaning to disinfect could take place inside the school. He underscored his hope that the Board would consider allowing students to go back to in-person learning full time five days a week.

Dr. Joyce thanked Mr. Semprini for his comments and added that the topic would be discussed further under New Business.

## **REPORTS**

### **Superintendent’s Report**

Mr. Petralia discussed Governor Sununu’s recent press conference and Emergency Order #89 which states all school must reopen for full-time in-person learning five days a week by April 19<sup>th</sup>. Subsequent to the Governor’s Order Mr. Petralia received clarification from the NH Commissioner that schools may use instructional hours over the course of the year to determine if a districts requirement will be met. Given Newington’s current schedule NPS meets the required number of instructional hours and no waiver should be needed. It is Mr. Petralia’s recommendation that Newington School District maintain their current schedule, follow guidelines for instructional hours and not change the schedule for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school

year. He reiterated the plan is to reopen as full-time in-person learning in August 2021.

Mr. Petralia shared that at the March school board meeting, members asked him to reach out to the school board chairpersons in Greenland and Rye to investigate the possibility of sending Newington middle school students to either GCS or RJH for the 2021-2022 school year. The request was originally prompted by the uncertainty of Portsmouth Middle School's schedule for 2021-2022 and whether student would return full-time. Mr. Petralia has reached out to both Greenland and Rye Board Chairs; the topic will be discussed at their April board meetings. He will update the Newington Board members at the May meeting.

Mr. Petralia noted that the Facilities Manager and Finance Manager job descriptions were fully approved at the March Joint Board meeting and will be posted/advertised the week of April 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Newington Facilities Assessment prepared by Richard White, LLC is included for review in the shared drive

Mr. Petralia shared that he negotiations with First Student, Inc. are ongoing. He will provide the Board an update during no-public session.

Mr. Petralia highlighted that SAU 50 staff members will be receiving their second dose of the Moderna vaccine on Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at Portsmouth High School.

Dr. Joyce asked for clarification for members of the public, on the two SAU 50 job postings.

Mr. Petralia shared the SAU 50 Facilities Manager will be responsible for maintenance supervision of staff across the SAU. This person will also facilitate bids, utility assessments etc. The position of Finance Manager was recommended within a recent audit to assist the business office in providing key input of information in to reports in preparation for budgets, grants etc.

#### **Assistant Superintendent**

Ms. Killen provided her written report to the Board prior to the meeting. There were no further questions.

**Special Education** – No formal report.

**Technology** - No formal report.

#### **Principal Report**

Mr. Latchaw highlighted several parts of his written report. Beginning in April students in grades 3-6 will begin to get reacquainted with the NH Assessments which will be taken early May. There will be three weeks of assessments in total. Testing will be taken for Language Arts and Math, with grade 5 students taking the third test - Science).

Mr. Latchaw shared that grade 3 and 4 students participated in a recent field trip which took them to the York Center for Wildlife, Mount Agamenticus and Wagon Hill. Students learned about local wildlife and what they could do to help the local animal populations as wildlife ambassadors/conservation officers. While at Wagon Hill students walked the nature trails to get ideas of how best they could inform the Newington Community of the wildlife and plants on the Fox Point conservation land.

Mr. Latchaw thanked the Newington Fire Department for their assistance in the recent Egg Drop event.

Mr. Latchaw confirmed that the outdoor tent is in place and the Newington Fire Department has inspected the tent and approved it for classroom use.

Mr. Latchaw announce the Newington Select Board approved the NPS Earth Day Celebration to be held at Fox Point. Students and staff will have a picnic and then participate in a beach cleanup. They will use a debris tracker to log the waste collected into a national database.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> students will have the opportunity to participate in National Bike to School Day. Several police cruisers and firetrucks will be out to assist bikers on their way to and from school.

On June 9<sup>th</sup> the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Celebration will be held outdoors at NPS at 6:00 PM.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures Update**

Mr. Latchaw shared updates based on CDC guidelines, related to social distancing and travel quarantines. He and Nurse Erin Russo revised the most recent guidelines on the on the COVID Guidelines and Procedures document.

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board approved amendments to the NPS COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures to continue to align with current CDC guidelines. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

### **Transportation Agreement**

An update on the negotiations with First Student regarding the Transportation Agreement will be discussed in non-public.

### **Facilities Assessment Report**

Mr. Petralia reiterated the report completed by Richard White will provide as a blueprint for the new SAU 50 Facilities Manager and the buildings across the districts. The assessment reports provide recommendations that apply across the SAU 50 such as monitoring utilities, improving work order processes, building maintenance repair history, etc.

Dr. Joyce requested, if possible, that Mr. White provide a priority of the most important improvements recommended for NPS. He suggested that if there is unexpended fund balance remaining perhaps some of those recommendation could be completed safely and efficiently. Mr. Petralia will ask Mr. White for such a priority list specific to NPS and noted that perhaps can be accomplished as part of the original assessment contract.

### **Newington Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice Committee Update**

Mr. Latchaw stated the committee includes he, Abby Hood, Laura Croft-Berry and Jaqueline Kerabinas. The first meeting norms and terms were discussed. A related book was chosen for the group to read and discuss at the next meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Emergency Order #89 / NPS Schedule Change**

Mr. Petralia previously mentioned with in his report communications associated with Emergency Order #89 and the question-and-answer document. He specifically referenced #37 on the Q&A sheet; the question pertaining to a schedule consisting of in person 5 days a week with one of said days a hybrid day. The response indicates if the instructional hour's requirement using such a model is reached there is no waiver needed.

The Board discussed the benefits of keeping the schedule as it currently stands versus changing it to includes

the last eight Fridays of the school year as full in the building school days.

Dr. Joyce allowed for Public Comment on the topic of a change to the current Friday schedule.

Jaclyn Karabinas – Newington resident and NPS Parent – agreed that teachers need time for collaborative meeting and planning. She suggested a possibility of half day in school on Fridays.

No motion was made to change the current NPS schedule. The current schedule remains in place going forward.

### **Unexpended Fund Balance**

Mr. Latchaw provided the Board with a list of maintenance items needed and requested they be purchased with current unencumbered funds.

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board approved the expenditures to be purchased as listed by Mr. Latchaw. Discussion. Roll Call: 3-0*

### **POLICY**

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board adopted policy IJOC – Volunteers. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson the Board rescinded policies GBCDA – Background Investigation for Temporary or Contracted Service Providers and JICI-R – Modification of Weapons Expulsion. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

### **FUTURE PLANNING DATES**

- Secondary School Advisory Committee Meeting – Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Google Meet
- Newington School Board Meeting – May 11, 2021, 10:15 AM at Newington Town Hall
- SAU 50 Joint School Board Meeting – May 26, 2021, 6:30 PM Remote

### **OTHER**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Laura Wilhelm-Stone – Newington resident and NPS parent - shared her opinion regarding the Board's decision not to return to in-person Fridays for the remainder of the school year. She shared that even a half day on Fridays would have been a collaborative compromise. She noted feeling blindsided that a more in-depth discussion did not occur.

Dr. Joyce thanked Ms. Wilhelm-Stone for her comments. He reiterated his understanding that due to the fact that the school has been divided into cohorts, Monday – Thursday teachers utilize the time on Fridays to plan for the following week. The added fact that coming up will be several weeks of assessment the Board feels the current schedule does not need to be adapted.

Nels Tooker thanked the Board and administration for their continued support.

**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 II (c) at 5:03 p.m. Roll Call Vote: 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 return to regular session at 5:14 p.m. Roll Call 3-0*

*On a motion by Dr. Joyce seconded by Mr. Russo the Board voted to seal the non-public minutes. Roll Call: 2-0 (Ms. Robertson did not return to public session).*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*On a motion by Dr. Joyce, seconded by Mr. Russo, the Board adjourned their meeting at 5:15 p.m. Roll Call: 2-0*

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

*Approved at the Newington School Board meeting on May 11, 2021. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

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Samara Robertson, School Board Secretary

Date