

**NEWINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
School Administrative Unit 50  
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The regular monthly meeting and annual retreat of the Newington School Board took place on Tuesday, July 14, 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  
Brian Grattan, Director of Technology  
Peter Latchaw, Principal  
Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Other Staff Present: Beth Brown, Teacher; Kim Lodge, Teacher; Nels Tooker, Teacher

Visitors: Lori Arsenault, Jaimie Bastille, Kristen Poulin, Jaclyn Karabinas

**CALL TO ORDER** – Dr. Joyce called the meeting to order at 2:00 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 Governors 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 June 9, 2020 were approved. Roll Call Vote: 3-0*

Dr. Joyce deferred the non-public minutes of May 12, 2020.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Petralia updated the Board on an offline communication with the ACT Association President, Andrea Papoutsy. He was informed the NEA and local associations will be generating a new MOA that will be presented to boards in the next week. The emphasis of the revised MOA will be on the re-opening of schools and health and safety concerns.

Mr. Petralia shared the ACT Association sent out a SAU wide staff survey. The questions asked by the Association were relevant and meaningful. As of Friday, sixty-two staff members

responded. He will share the results with Board members offline and reiterated that the information gathered will be helpful in discussions around re-entry planning.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

*On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the manifest for June 9, 2020 through June 29, 2020 was approved in the amount of \$395,543.80. Roll Call: 3-0*

Ms. Ryan provided a brief update on the remaining budget balance as of June 30, 2020 which currently shows a General Fund balance of \$125,800. The final number will be reported to the Board after the DOE reporting

Dr. Joyce noted that the Selectmen were requesting to know what money will be returned as tax relief; the current economic environment may mean residents have difficulty paying their taxes.

### **RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS**

Dr. Joyce welcomed staff and public member to the meeting. He invited them to address any concerns or issues to the Board.

Nels Tooker, a teacher at NPS, asked to respond on behalf of the NPS teachers to the draft reopening plan and survey. Overall the NPS teachers feel comfortable with class size and appropriate distancing. Most teachers remain hesitant on the idea of live streaming classrooms and prefer to record lessons for remote learning students. The teachers support the four day in class one day remote schedule. He echoed teachers concern for setup for remote learning with google certifications, planning for the K-2 early readers. It will be imperative to find a way to make it work for young readers. Teachers feel they are in a good place with the social/emotional aspect and will continue the regular morning meetings with students. Teachers were wondering how the plan for substitutes would work with the small numbers out there. Mr. Tooker reiterated that all the staff are working hard as a group, however there are concerns about re-entering the building. There are some staff that do fall into the at-risk category for various reasons. The NPS staff appreciate that Principal Latchaw invited their input when creating the re-entry plan. Mr. Tooker thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the NPS staff.

Dr. Joyce noted that Mr. Tooker shared very good points. He reiterated that the afternoon's meeting would be an initial discussion on the re-entry plan with a final discussion taking place at the August meeting.

There were no other public comments.

Mr. Petralia informed the Board that the Governor had planned to hold a news briefing this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. to unveil the state-wide task force school re-opening plan. To his knowledge the plan itself would be approximately 32 pages and would allow additional insight that could form the Newington School Boards thinking going forward with their own District re-opening plan.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Parent Survey Results**

Mr. Petralia thanked the Parent Community for their participation in the parent survey on the remote learning experience and re-entering the school in the fall. Responses were telling and provided helpful in establishing key components of the draft re-entry plan.

Mr. Latchaw reiterated that remote learning was challenging especially for elementary school students.

Mr. Petralia suggested sending an abbreviated survey to parents in August addressing their willingness to send their child to school in the fall. Mr. Petralia remains optimistic for in person instruction. He strongly feels the draft re-entry plan ensures quality of instruction and safety of staff and students.

The Board discussed several ideas an August survey could address.

### **Draft Re-Entry Plan**

Mr. Latchaw shared that staff are willing to do whatever is needed to safely open and allow students back into the building. In addition, the Newington School Supporters have generously contributed \$5,000 in supplies to ensure teachers can hold classes outside, etc. There has been overwhelming support from parents and teachers to make concessions to get children back to school.

Mr. Latchaw provided highlights from the draft re-opening document. There will be extended time at the beginning of the day to allow for staggered starts. Children will then stay in their classroom cohort for lunch, recess and unified arts. Families are encouraged to walk or drop off/pickup their student(s). In person instruction will take place Monday-Thursday. Friday will be a day of remote instruction. This also allows for a deep cleaning of the building, teacher professional development and lesson preparation time. Additionally, visitors inside the building will be minimized unless determined absolutely necessary. Mr. Latchaw referenced several additional cleaning sanitization ideas he was researching.

Mr. Latchaw is working with the guidance counselor to support the social emotional curriculum; how best to support children and the impact remote learning has on them.

Mr. Latchaw noted they are making efforts to streamline online platforms in order to ensure parents nowhere to go to find instructional information. Ms. Karabinas has volunteered to host a training session for parents to coach them through the Google platforms.

Currently administration is waiting on further direction from the state and board on how best to support school nurses through policies and systematic ways of dealing with potential cases of Covid -19.

Dr. Joyce inquired about additional budgetary resources and support that may be needed in order

and is developing a list of items that may be required once more guidance is received from the state.

Dr. Joyce reiterated that for the sake of items being ordered in time he would support a special meeting if special appropriations were need to purchase additional protective supplies.

Ms. Ryan reiterated that Newington did not receive funds from the CARES Act, so she will work with Mr. Latchaw to where in the budget board approved transfers could be made if needed. She added that she will reach out to the auditor to inquire about using expendable trust funds for such items.

Dr. Joyce asked that Mr. Latchaw create a target list of items by the end of July so that if a special meeting is needed there is time for a public meeting vote.

### **Curriculum**

Ms. Killen reiterated that the curriculum plan works in conjunction with the re-entry plan. The document outlines curriculum, instructions and assessment goals for the 2020-21 school year. The goals are a product of the collaboration of the SAU 50 Administrative Team. The document provides an umbrella of common goals for every school in the SAU 50. The Re-Entry plan is more detailed and specific to the needs of each particular school district. Additional feedback was taken from the parent and staff survey done in the Spring of 2020. The intent of the plan is “to provide for robust, rigorous learning whether the setting be in the classroom or remotely. The design and goals of the plan will support educators, students, and families whatever the scenario for the reopening of schools might be.”

Ms. Killen emphasized that the document information remains fluid, and revisions may be necessary in real time due to the changing nature of the pandemic situation and relevant data. Ms. Killen has incorporated best practices of teaching and learning into the document.

Ms. Killen reminded the Board that the curriculum plan supports the re-entry plan; it is focused on curriculum not safety.

Ms. Killen noted the social emotional curriculum will be ready by August.

The curriculum plan takes into account how instruction will be provided taking into account parental needs, staff needs, and student needs. School based instruction will take place Monday through Thursday with Friday a remote learning day. While Friday will continue as a learning day for students, it will provide teachers for a time for planning and staff development.

Ms. Killen noted that she met with Ms. Robertson and Ms. Karabinas who provided great additional insight in to what virtual learning entails should the district move into remote learning for an extended period of time.

