

NEWINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit 50
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The regular monthly meeting of the Newington School Board took place on Tuesday, June 9, 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

Visitors: Jaclyn Karabinas

CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Joyce called the meeting to order at 3:04 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 Dr. Joyce, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the public minutes of May 12, 2020 were approved. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Petralia noted that the draft 2018-2019 audit had been uploaded into the shared drive for Board members to review prior to the evening's meeting. Ms. Ryan will address the audit in her report.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a motion by Dr. Joyce, seconded by Mr. Russo, the manifest for May 12, 2020 through June 8, 2020 was approved in the amount of \$116,969.02. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Dr. Joyce noted that while the budget looks in good shape there was still a need to set aside money for end of fiscal year capital funds for any emergency repairs.

RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS

Dr. Joyce thanked community member Jaclyn Karabinas for attending the meeting.

Ms. Karabinas asked to read the attached statement.

Ms. Roberston thanked Ms. Karabinas for her statement and the leadership she exemplifies within the community. Ms. Robertson reiterated she echoed Ms. Karabinas's statement and would like to work with her further in this important work.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Petralia thanked the school board members for their attendance and participation at the SAU 50 Joint School Board Meeting held on May 27th.

Mr. Petralia noted that the SAU 50 Joint Board had approved a district-wide survey, which was disseminated last week to parents in each of the districts (a reminder email was sent to parents this afternoon). The survey results will be useful for fall planning and reopening of school.

Mr. Petralia stated that the Memorandum of Agreement with the Association of Coastal Teachers had been fully signed. He asked the Board to make a formal motion to accept the MOA has presented.

Mr. Petralia added that he and Ms. Killen met with Mr. Latchaw on Monday to begin the initial draft process for reopening school in the fall. A draft will be finalized prior to the July Newington School Board Meeting/Retreat.

Mr. Petralia requested the Board consider dates for the July Newington School Board Retreat/Public Meeting.

Mr. Joyce reiterated that the retreat was an opportunity for the Board to review the recently completed academic year goals (set at the previous retreat), and set new goals for the new academic year. It is a time the Board can further address concerns or priorities of the school district.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Ms. Killen discussed information related to the Continuity of Learning and Operations Plan: Phase III Summer and Phase IV Reopening of School. She noted that mission of all SAU 50 districts going forward will be to “meet the physical, mental, and emotional safety and well-being of students so meaningful learning can continue.” Programs will be flexible as scenarios change.

Ms. Killen relayed the many moving parts in gathering information regarding instruction for the upcoming school year. Curriculum standards will be focused on essential standards in each subject area. Social and Emotional learning will be a prominent focus of teaching and learning. Planning is also underway for instruction in trauma and strategies to use with students to support them in the fall.

Ms. Killen emphasized that end of year assessments ascertained that there was in fact student growth in learning during the months of remote learning.

Ms. Killen reviewed the various fall scenarios being considered as follows: Scenario A: School begins on campus and remains open; Scenario B: School begins on campus and closes due to another outbreak; Scenario C: School cannot begin and must be done remotely.

Ms. Killen discussed the decision-making needs for each of the three possible scenarios. She reiterated that she and Superintendent Petralia would be meeting with each of the Principals in SAU 50 beginning the second week of June. Once initial outlines are complete, then feedback/input will be sought from the other groups: school boards, leadership teams, crisis teams and public health officials.

In regard to Professional Development there will be three major areas of focus including virtual learning and how to utilize platforms. Ms. Karabinas will assist in providing expertise in that area. The second area of focus will include focus on best practices going forward; Ms. Robertson will provide expertise in that area. This will include guidance on Trauma and the tools to recognize how trauma may reveal itself in children and classrooms. Teachers will be provided practical strategies to use going forward. The third area of focus will include curriculum. Administrators are working with a social emotional curriculum that will be presented to the Board for adoption this summer. This curriculum will dovetail with the established guidance curriculum.

Ms. Robertson thanked Ms. Killen for taking the social/emotional piece of curriculum planning and placing it in the forefront. She reiterated that some families are enduring additional trauma beyond just the pandemic and thought must be given to what a return to school will look/feel like for those families.

Business Administrator Report

Ms. Ryan gave an update summary of the draft 2019 Audit Report that she previously provided to

the Board for review. She highlighted various findings within the report. She reiterated that the retained fund balance from the previous year was not used and would therefore remain the same. Ms. Ryan will contact Plodzick and Sanderson regarding a formatting error on page two of the draft document.

The Board will make a motion under New Business for the 2019-2020 retainage.

Special Education Report

Ms. Reinhardt reiterated that she previously shared all updates regarding Special Education during the recent SAU 50 Joint School Board meeting. She continues to plan for ESY.

Technology Report

Mr. Grattan shared that he is currently in the process of sanitizing and refreshing student devices for staff to use over the summer months. He is also working on updating various staff devices.

Principal Report

Mr. Latchaw thanked the community for their support throughout the remote learning experience and participation in the June 4th teacher parade. NPS teachers traveled to all NPS student homes to deliver snow cones and say goodbye for the school year.

Mr. Latchaw noted that all NPS students had complete the spring STAR assessment which gave a good baseline of where students are at now at the end of this remote learning segment. He highlighted areas of growth in both math and reading.

Mr. Latchaw shared that Chef Tom continues to prepare lunches for families until the last day of school. He has begun the process of stripping and waxing classroom floors.

All eighty student devices returned with no damage and are in the cleaning process.

Mr. Latchaw thanked Mr. Tooker for the great work he did compiling a video to honor sixth grade graduates. It was filled with wonderful interviews and a great memento to celebrate their achievements.

Mr. Latchaw continues to work with Mr. Davis at PMS to prepare incoming NPS seventh graders for the transition to middle school.

The projected enrollment for the 2020-2021 academic year is currently at fifty-three students. Administration is beginning the review process for tuition-in students.

NPS continues to seek a twenty percent Spanish teacher. Mr. Latchaw will reach out to the Principal at Greenland Central School (also in need of a Spanish teacher) to see if their efforts can be combined.

Mr. Latchaw reiterated that he had a productive meeting with Mr. Petralia and Ms. Killen yesterday regarding the reentry plans for the opening of school in the fall. He also shared the plan with various town officials who also supported the initial plan.

Dr. Joyce asked Mr. Latachw to provide a brief statement about the process for the evaluation/acceptance of tuition-in students.

Mr. Latchaw shared that an application packet is provided to parents. He will receive from the student a letter indicating their request to attend NPS and questionnaire. Mr. Latchaw then meets with classroom teachers and collectively decides to recommend to move forward with the student.

Dr. Joyce asked Mr. Latchaw to reaffirm the stipulation that if there is an extraordinary special education circumstance the cost will be paid by the District of the town the student resides. Mr. Latchaw confirmed that stipulation adding that Sarah Reinhardt, the Special Education Director, has worked extensively with attorneys and the verbiage within in the tuition application documents and agreements is very clear regarding special education.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Motion for 2.5% Retention

A motion was made by Dr. Joyce seconded by Ms. Robertson, to retain an amount not to exceed \$48,667 of the 2019-2020 Unassigned General Fund Balance which represents 2.5% of the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year's net assessment pursuant to RSA198:5 for the purpose of having funds on hand to use as a revenue source for emergency expenditures and over expenditures under RSA 32:11, or to be used as a revenue source to reduce the tax rate. Roll Call Vote: 3-0

Motion to Approve MOA

On a motion by Dr. Joyce, seconded by Mr. Russo, the Board approved the Memorandum of Agreement with the Association of Coastal Teachers/Newington . Roll Call Vote: 3-0

PERSONNEL – None

NON PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Russo, seconded by Ms. Robertson, the Board adjourned their meeting at 3:54 p.m. Roll Call: 3-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha Fuller, Secretary to the Superintendent

Approved by the School Board 7/14/20 Virtual Meeting - Approval

Samara Robertson, School Board Secretary

Date

PUBLIC COMMENT STATEMENT:

June 9, 2020
NPS SchoolBoard
Public Comment

Thank you for space to comment in a time where there are so many front-burner issues. My goal today is to ask the school board to prioritize anti-bias training, resources, and study of anti-racist curriculum with staff so that our incredible teachers can be exemplary and for the children of NPS to participate not just a great education, but one that allows them to grow up anti-racist.

I'm going to take a big risk and publicly share an excerpt of my life timeline as a white educator that is not unique. It paints the picture of how much time was lost for just a single teacher until committing to unlearning, relearning, and listening. I taught around 300 students over my classroom career—primarily white—and did not regularly center the goal of accurate representation in literature, accurate history, or perspectives and contributions of people of color, their successes as well as their pain. I didn't know and I didn't have the resources. Now we do and we can all do better.

Planes hit the first tower as I gave a reading assessment to a first grader the year I began teaching. I had just entered a profession at a pivotal time where neither my training, education about American history, nor life experiences gave me any truths about racism or what it meant to be a person of color in America.

My second year of teaching I found myself in a low socio-economic, primarily white area. I had 24 students, two of whom were vibrant girls whose life realities overshadowed their smiles, joy, and certainly their needs as young black girls. I now know they were screaming to be seen.

As I had ZERO knowledge of anti-bias teaching and anti-racist curriculum; my white students went through the year likely growing more biases and the 2 girls had a school experience of rarely seeing themselves in a book that wasn't Ruby Bridges, learning accurate history, and being seen as "other". Raised in an area where I had no black friends and only a few friends of color, I had no life reference for this.

In 2009, when President Obama was sworn into office, I received 2 notes from families in my all-white 4th grade class excusing their children from watching the inauguration because they "felt uncomfortable". Other teachers got notes as well. The principal got phone calls. I was appalled. We did nothing.

In 2011, I could not anymore ignore the injustice I was doing to all of my students, regardless of race or ethnicity, by not discussing race and whiteness in America. I

taught in a K-8 school in an affluent community and we could count on one hand the number of children of color we had in our student population. Schools like these skate under the radar of having to address such uncomfortable topics because it isn't as visible.

I tried. We read books, had some awkward conversations, did a paint activity.... But I look back on that and realize how I might have harmed my few students of color in my approach, perhaps centering the comfort and view of my white students over my black and brown students. It wasn't good enough. I kept trying with the knowledge and skim resources I had at the time. Sure, there were some moments. Some conversations. But, just enough to do exactly what I know now exacerbates the issue: "othering" the topic.

When my daughter was born in 2013, I was faced with the reality that I did not have the skills or language to raise an anti-racist child, despite the fact that this was in my heart. The thing is, it doesn't matter what is in our hearts if we have not un-learned and re-learned history, examined ourselves closely, and spent time listening to stories of people who do not look like us. I've been working hard at this for the last 5 years and have just scratched the surface. I would have never had the language to make a statement like this then.

I was, like so many others, raised to believe that we weren't supposed to "see color". I'm mortified that it took me so long to discover that I received a whitewashed interpretation of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that "judging people by the content of their character and not the color of their skin" didn't mean we don't SEE color. That interpretation is for white comfort. My colleagues of color have taught me that aiming to not see color assumes that color is a bad thing when in fact, it is an element of identity for them to celebrate, as well as one that cannot be taken off when confronted with direct or systemic racism in society. How powerful this knowledge would have been in my classrooms.

Newington, NH is exactly the kind of place that has a lot of power when it comes to education. We want for nothing. I've worked in Manchester schools and directly observed the inequities and to be honest, malpractice, when it comes to providing equitable and culturally sustaining education to children in communities of color. I can't fix that. But I can call us in as a community to do better. It's not enough to be kind, be inclusive, celebrate diversity, and all the other things that, though important, we use as what [Paul Gorski calls "racial equity detours"](#). People will say this is "an agenda" and they would be right. If the goal is equality, raising anti-racist kids the only path. If it wasn't, we would be there already. Having this as part of the active mission of our school would impact communities in great ways.

We have so much on our plate in education right now with remote learning and politics and reading wars and unknowns. Yet, the time is still now to prioritize teacher training, curriculum and materials that paint the true picture of the world our children inhabit so they don't lose the time I did. This is not a one-day training, a single book club, or a special unit. It is hard, messy work and there are so many race scholars and people of color we can learn from on this topic. I am not one of them, but I can be a leader and throw the first pitch. Below are just a few resources that have guided⁷ my learning to hopefully get us started. I

hope that we can all accept this call-in to set some goals and an action plan, making use of the wealth of now readily-available virtual resources to work together and ignite change.

Jaclyn Karabinas
31 Little Bay Road

- Avoiding Racial Equity Detours by Paul Gorski [PDF](#)
- How Inclusive is your Literacy Classroom Really? By Tricia Ebarvia [PDF](#)
[Accompanying blog](#)
- Engaging in Community Literacy in Racially Divergent Times by Kass and Cornelius Minor [LINK](#) (Guide linked within)
- Scene on Radio Podcast: Seeing White [LINK](#)
- (podcast) Teaching While White: Where Whiteness Intersects with Antiracist Teaching and Learning [LINK](#)
- Teaching Tolerance at tolerance.org