

## MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

May 18, 2020

- 1. Call to Order** Chair Ayer called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. She stated that the meeting was being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Attendees were advised that the meeting and all communications during the meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. Any participant who wished to record the meeting was asked to notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording. Lenny Rowe, a member of the press from WATD in Marshfield, identified himself and stated he was recording the meeting.

Members Present: Michelle Ayer, Carlos AF DaSilva, Kerry Ni, Ed Schreier, Liza O'Reilly, Libby Lewiecki and Nes Correnti.

Central Office Present: Paul Austin, James LaBillois, Suzanne Vinnos, and John Ferris.

Visitors Present: No sign in as this was a remote meeting.

## **2. Minutes**

2.1 On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Liza O'Reilly,

It was

**Voted:** To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on April 27, 2020.

Nes Correnti – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Ed Schreier – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

Carlos Da Silva – aye

Michelle Ayer – aye

- 3. Questions and Comments:** Sean Galvin asked about the dates for the senior activities. HHS Principal Rick Swanson stated that graduation will be on August 1. He is working on plans for other events. Dr. Austin noted that HPS is still awaiting guidance from the Governor and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

## **4. Superintendent's Report**

Dr Austin noted that the first meeting of the Recovery Response Advisory Committee (RRAC) will happen on Thursday. Several parents have expressed an interest in participating. The administrators will choose three parents for the RRAC to represent students at all levels. He will announce those names tomorrow and will invite them to the Thursday meeting. The RRAC

will act in an advisory role to the Superintendent for all matters related to opening schools in the fall. There will be four subcommittees: Education and Social-Emotional, Operations, Special Education, and Communications/Public Relations. Michelle Ayer volunteered to sit on the Steering Committee and other Committee members are invited to sit on the subcommittees. Parents who are not selected for the Steering Committee may be asked to participate on the subcommittees. The RRAC will include all stakeholders. Dr. Austin reiterated that his focus is on reopening schools in the fall and that the RRAC will need to plan for many possible scenarios.

Jen Benham asked about communication and whether families would receive resources in the summer. Dr Austin replied that the Communications Subcommittee will be charged with the timeline and drafting communications. The Education and Social Emotional Subcommittee will discuss the transitions for Summer and Fall.

## **5. Communications**

5.1 Communications Received by the Superintendent: Dr. Austin has received many emails from parents regarding remote learning and the reopening of school.

The South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC) Update provided in the packet shows their budget projection and program enrollment for May 1, 2020. Their financial balance is in good shape. The Whitman-Hanson regional district is now a member of SSEC. The Board approved the request, which will take effect on July 1, 2020.

5.2 Student Communications. None

5.3 Other Communications. Michelle Ayer has received many emails with thoughts, concerns and compliments. She noted many people are involved and all are working to make sure everyone is being thought of as we plan for remote learning.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

6.1 The Committee received an update on the district's Remote Learning Plan, Version 2.0. Dr. Austin noted that full implementation of the remote learning plan began today. The major change is that all teachers are providing 90 minutes a week of synchronous learning with their students. This change resulted in response to feedback from the families. He noted that HPS teachers have always been a partner in the development and implementation of the Remote Learning Plan. Much of the work that teachers do is subject to collective bargaining and all parties worked collaboratively to work out details in a few days, and are continuing to work together. He thanked teachers for their great work. He also thanked all the parents at home who are adjusting to the remote plan while trying to get their own work done at the same time. Dr. LaBillois then spoke in detail about the plan. Remote Learning Plan 2.0 incorporates feedback around two main themes. First, parent feedback reflected a need for increased opportunities for engagement and synchronous learning. The second theme addressed the question about why there was no mandatory, graded work. Dr. LaBillois noted that this was in recognition of the challenges of remote learning for some students because of technology, social/emotional and physical health issues. Asynchronous content is

available for all students. The team's approach for RLP 2.0 was research based, but there is not much research about remote learning in public schools. The HPS team chose a blended model of instruction, with asynchronous learning coupled with live for connections to address the social-emotional health of the students. The next guiding principle was an awareness that the closure disproportionately impacts our most at-risk students so the plan must provide them with the most synchronous, live connections first. The plan mirrors the recommendation of the DESE. Elementary families will receive schedules for live opportunities soon. Dr. LaBillois encouraged all to read through the plan carefully. Michele Ayer thanked them. Kerry Ni thanked Dr. LaBillois and the team for developing a very thoughtful plan. She asked for clarification on credit/no credit noting that families are getting inconsistent messages and asked whether the decision to grant credit lies with the teacher. Dr. LaBillois replied that teachers have autonomy to determine whether a student merits credit or not. Teachers will reach out to families if there is a concern. There are 4 criteria for credit: extent of progress in learning standards, engagement with class activities, academic integrity (secondary only), and ongoing efforts to complete assignments in a satisfactory manner. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their teachers with questions or concerns. Libby Lewiecki asked about parental consent for Zoom IEP meetings and whether that applies to students over 18. Dr. Vinnes responded that the consent form was no longer being used. Liza O'Reilly asked whether some kids are not participating in remote learning. Rick Swanson explained that they have implemented a process of monitoring and tracking any student not engaged in any subject. If a pattern develops, the teacher, assistant principal, counselor reaches out. The number of students not participating has decreased. Derek Smith reported similar findings at HMS. He noted that the level of student engagement has improved but will never replicate live learning. Mary Eastwood spoke for the Elementary Principals and stated that student engagement is very high. The schools made sure the students have technology and other needs fulfilled and are helping with family issues. If there is a concern with a particular student, the teacher reaches out first, then counselors. Liza O'Reilly encouraged students to participate and engage, and also encouraged the district to experiment and be creative to get kids to connect. Ray Estes asked whether the schools could provide more recorded lessons. Katie Roberts shared that HPS is providing professional development to teachers to help them develop skills to make recordings. Many techniques and tools teachers are learning are new to them, but they will emerge from this period with new skills and a bank of videos which will serve students well into the future. Mary Andrews noted that there are a number of videos but parents might not see Loom videos embedded in plans embedded in Google Classroom. Dr. Austin added that since the school closure began, two HPS educators have provided 250 hours of professional development to our teachers to get them up to speed on a very different mode of instruction. Libby Lewiecki asked about secondary teacher schedules for live learning and how much time seniors should be spending online. Dr. LaBillois stated that synchronous connections could be with guidance counselors, teachers and auxiliary service providers. These are opportunities to engage, not requirements. Rick Swanson said that seniors last day would have been tomorrow, so it is legitimate for them to feel like they're done. Katie Roberts also replied that the object is social-emotional first, so if you see your child is not engaged, have them reach out to their counselor. If they have an academic question, reach out to their teachers. Liza O'Reilly opined that all children

must be encouraged to connect and that HPS should ensure that the rest of the school year is put to good use. Dr. Austin stated that HPS expects to engage every student, but cannot always know what students have going on at home. Michelle Ayer acknowledged the amount of hard work that everyone is doing.

6.2 The Committee reviewed proposed Section B of the Hingham Public Schools Policy Manual. Kerry Ni stated that this is a second read and covers School Committee Operations and Goals, as well as Disseminations of Policy. The goal of the Subcommittee is to ensure that HPS has all policies required by law and that the district is aligned with best practices.

On a motion by Kerry Ni and seconded by Liza O'Reilly,

It was

**Voted:** To approve Section B of the new Hingham Public Schools Policy Manual in form, to be adopted once the Committee approves all sections of the manual.

Nes Correnti – aye  
Libby Lewiecki – aye  
Liza O'Reilly – aye  
Ed Schreier – aye  
Kerry Ni – aye  
Carlos Da Silva – aye  
Michelle Ayer – aye

6.3 The Committee reviewed proposed Section C of the Hingham Public Schools Policy Manual. Kerry Ni noted that this is a second read and this section covers General School Administration. The Policy Subcommittee worked with Dr. Austin, Pam King and Jim Hardy to develop this section that would make sure that we have all policies required by law and that reflect best practices.

On a motion by Kerry Ni and seconded by Liza O'Reilly,

It was

**Voted:** To approve Section C of the new Hingham Public Schools Policy Manual in form, to be adopted once the Committee approves all sections of the manual.

Nes Correnti – aye  
Libby Lewiecki – aye  
Liza O'Reilly – aye  
Ed Schreier – aye  
Kerry Ni – aye  
Carlos Da Silva – aye  
Michelle Ayer – aye

Dr. Austin thanked the policy Subcommittee for their very hard work, noting that they have

reviewed hundreds of policies.

- 6.4 The Committee received an update on the school calendar for 2020-2021. The proposed calendar reflects a start date of August 31 with a Kindergarten start date of September 2. Sept 14 is a tentative holiday. The August 31 start date is a one year change only; HEA Unit A signed a side letter to allow it. Teachers will start the Wednesday before Labor Day per their contract. Liza O'Reilly asked whether athletics would start the week of August 24<sup>th</sup>. Rick Swanson replied that the start of Fall sports will be determined by the MIAA.

On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Liza O'Reilly,

It was

**Voted:** To approve the updated school calendar for 2020-2021 as recommended by the Superintendent calling for the start of the school year as August 31, 2020.

Nes Correnti – aye  
Libby Lewiecki – aye  
Liza O'Reilly – aye  
Ed Schreier – aye  
Kerry Ni – aye  
Carlos Da Silva – aye  
Michelle Ayer – aye

## **7. New Business**

7.1 The Committee discussed scheduling the Superintendent Evaluation. The HPS Policy does not have a deadline for the Superintendent's evaluation but Dr. Austin's contract specifies that it must be done by June 30<sup>th</sup>. MASC sent out new guidance on superintendent evaluations during COVID-19. School Committees have flexibility. Issues to consider are whether Dr. Austin should be evaluated on his goals given that some of them were halted mid-March, the timing, and who should participate in the evaluation with the change in election dates. The Executive Board will meet with Dr. Austin, develop a plan for his evaluation, and report back to the full Committee on June 1, 2020.

7.2 The Committee discussed dates for summer meetings. Meetings are scheduled for June 1, June 15 and June 22. In the past, one meeting was held in July and one in August. Members discussed preferences. July 8 (Wednesday), July 27, and August 10, 2020 were chosen dates. On August 10, 2020, the Committee will schedule meetings for the rest of the year.

8. **Other items as may not reasonably be known 48 hours in advance of the meeting.** John Ferris informed the Committee that the composition of the Foster school building committee was approved by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The next steps are creating an educational profile and enrollment projections. The project is proceeding on schedule.

## **9. Subcommittee and Project Reports**

Nes Correnti reported that the first Finance Subcommittee meeting will be this Thursday at 10AM.

Libby Lewiecki reported that the Community Outreach Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday to review the application for Fusion Academy, a new private school in Hingham.

Liza O'Reilly reported that the Foster School Council will meet on Wednesday. Additionally, the Hingham Master Plan Committee will meet May 20 and May 24.

Kerry Ni reported that the Policy subcommittee will meet tomorrow and on May 26 with Jim Hardy of the MASC.

Carlos Da Silva reported that the HHS School Council met last month and will meet again next week to discuss School Council goals. Additionally, the Long Range Planning Subcommittee met and approved all outstanding minutes and reviewed capital improvements during last year. John Ferris will provide a report detailing capital budget expenditures.

Michelle Ayer reported that there will be a Special Education Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday at Noon. Dr. Vinnes will update the Subcommittee about Remote Learning 2.0 as it relates to special education and will discuss any budget issues.

**10. Adjournment**

On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Kerry Ni,

It was

**Voted:** To adjourn to Executive Session at 8:44PM, not to return to Open Session, for the purposes of:

- a. Approval of minutes of the Executive Session on May 4, 2020
- b. Discussing matters related to the HEA Unit A collective bargaining contract;
- c. Discussing matters related to the HEA Unit A collective bargaining negotiations;

the public discussion of which may be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position, and act as appropriate.

Nes Correnti – aye  
Libby Lewiecki – aye  
Liza O'Reilly – aye  
Ed Schreier – aye  
Kerry Ni – aye  
Carlos Da Silva – aye  
Michelle Ayer – aye

Respectfully Submitted By:  
Kerry Ni

## Documents Included:

 [5-18-20 Agenda.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 2.1 4-27-20 Minutes.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 5.1 SSEC.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 6.1 HPS Remote Learning Plan 2.0 \(Community\).p](#)

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 [Item 6.1 HPS Remote Learning Plan 2.0 \(Faculty\).pdf](#) 

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 [Item 6.2 Section B Index.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 6.2 Section B.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 6.3 Section C Index.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 6.3 Section C.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 6.4 School Calendar 2020-2021.pdf](#) 

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