

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 7:00 PM remotely.

Board members present: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor

Board members absent: Mr. Yamartino

Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools, and Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as amended: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Next Board Meeting - October 14, 2020 at 7:00 PM

Textbook Adoption

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that she would like the board to adopt a Century 21 Accounting General Journal textbook for the accounting class at the high school. This item has been budgeted and is \$92.25 per book and includes an online version.

Mrs. Petrella made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to adopt the Century 21 Accounting General Journal textbook.

In favor of adopting the Century 21 Accounting General Journal textbook: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.

Full in-person model plan

Dr. Serino explained that she wanted to review the plan to move from hybrid to a full in-person opening and the decisions that were made. She did state that the district has had their first identified positive case of COVID at Brewster School late this afternoon. Given the timing of this, Dr. Serino wondered whether it continues to be appropriate to follow the schedule for fully reopening on Monday. She noted that she

will continue to work with the administrative team and the health director tonight and spend more time tomorrow on contact tracing.

Dr. Serino reviewed that school districts received information from the State Department of Education during the summer with the expectation that all schools were to open fully as long as the public health data continued to support that. At that time, Dr. Serino was not entirely comfortable with that and understood the fear and hesitancy from families, students and staff. That resulted in the decision to open in the hybrid model to ease the district back in, with the understanding that the model would be revisited after 3 weeks.

The decision process involved information from the Department of Public Health, the local health director, the district's medical advisor, the State Department of Education, area superintendents, the Planning and Response team, school-based teams and staff, student and parent feedback.

There was a presentation on August 17th from DPH and Yale School of Public Health to help districts make a decision about which model to open in, looking at public health first. Dr. Serino reviewed that the health metrics continue to be in the low risk range for the county and state. A process is in place for identification of cases and isolation. Cleaning and disinfecting continues to be an area of strength as is ventilation. Hand hygiene is followed and cohorting is in place. Social distancing is maintained to the extent possible, but that will be affected with a full in-person model. Mask protocols are being followed and Dr. Serino is extraordinarily proud of all staff and students.

Dr. Serino reviewed the data for leading and secondary indicators by county and explained that Middlesex County remains in the low range for all indicators though there was a slight up-tick in the percent of COVID-like illnesses and hospital visits. She went on to review the chart on COVID-19 scenarios in schools and explained that a group of administrators are making phone calls to anyone who was considered in close contact with the student who is positive.

Dr. Serino explained that school districts around the state have responded to positive cases in different ways and noted that DPH has not seen the spread of the virus in schools so far. Closure of schools, in many cases, has to do with the scope of contact tracing. In the district's case, there are many variables that they need to look at to be certain that the scope and identification of individuals who should quarantine are contacted. Brewster School will be closed tomorrow due to the availability of staff and subs as well as the ability to contact trace. She anticipates that the work will be finished in the morning, but parents will be notified by noon tomorrow if more time is necessary.

Dr. Serino suggested that the district delay the start of the in-person model for a week until the Tuesday after Columbus Day. She added that that time line can be adjusted as information becomes available.

Mrs. DiMaggio stressed that going full in-person is the best model for students. Teachers have been collaborating across the district and compacting the curriculum to ensure that students are getting the education that they both deserve and need. As far as cohort C students are concerned, there is a remote team of teachers at the elementary level, including coaches, the science specialist and the enrichment teacher. Cohort C includes a total of 188 students and is working beautifully. The elementary students start at 9:00 AM and work through a daily schedule until 3:00 PM, including synchronous and asynchronous learning. At the middle school level, cohort C has a similar schedule and team and is working beautifully as well.

At the high school, the cohort C students will be required to link in to classes, either at the beginning or the end of each class. Currently, the cohort C students link in for the last 15 minutes of each lesson but that will change once the district moves to full in-person.

Dr. Serino stated that they reviewed the district's long- and short-term goals when making the decision to return to in-person teaching. They are working to maintain a safe school environment, health of students and staff, follow the protocols, keep paying attention and keep informed. Students and parents have communicated about the lack of connection that they are feeling. They also want the students to begin to see themselves as students again and increase their academic stamina. Another goal is to get a better understanding of where the students are and what modifications need to be done. Mrs. DiMaggio noted that the trajectory had been so positive and the district needs to continue that.

Dr. Serino stated that the district's advice to parents and students if they are in close contact with someone who has tested positive is that they contact their healthcare provider. The district will not tell people to get tested, but experience so far has been that healthcare providers recommend a PCR test. People getting the rapid test have also been requested to get the PCR test done. Payment for those tests is dependent upon the family's health insurance. Dr. Serino noted that ConnectiCare fully covers any COVID tests.

Mrs. Booth stated that anyone can be tested for free at community health centers around Connecticut. Dr. Serino added that she had received a list of testing centers and will likely send that information out to parents later tonight or tomorrow.

Dr. Serino reviewed that faculty rooms and kitchen areas have been closed and there is no use of shared microwaves, coffee pots and refrigerators. Students eat in the classrooms, but the teachers feel the need for a place to go. The district is working closely with the union to support the process.

Dr. Serino reviewed that anyone who has had close contact with an individual who has tested positive is required to quarantine for 14 days from the date of contact. That may change based on different scenarios. She reminded everyone that this is a first for the district.

Possible vote on full in-person model plan

Dr. Serino explained that they put this vote on the agenda as a way for the board to endorse the plan.

Mr. Moore stated that he had listened to the questions of parents and most of them were related to mechanics of how everything will work, not if it should work. He felt that the response was overall positive. He does agree that it will be wise to delay the reopening until everything is sorted out. There had also been a lot of questions about Wednesdays.

Dr. Serino then reviewed the cohort C numbers and any changes that have happened. At Brewster and Lyman, there are three students coming back into the building and one leaving. At Memorial, three are coming back and two leaving. Strong School has one coming back and four leaving. The high school has three students coming back in and eight students leaving. At this point, there are 187 total students in cohort C. Mrs. DiMaggio later explained that the students in cohort D are actually students at Strong School who are in school for four days a week.

Dr. Serino explained that they have decided to move a professional development day from March to next Wednesday. Following that, they have decided to do early release on Wednesdays until Thanksgiving,

based on parent feedback and the impact on teachers to do both in-person and remote teaching. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that teachers will use that time to continue planning and curriculum compacting. The remote teachers need that additional time to put together recordings and all the lessons.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Booth, to endorse the in-person reopening plan suggested by Dr. Serino to start on October 13, 2020.

In favor of endorsing the in-person reopening plan suggested by Dr. Serino to start on October 13, 2020: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, and Mr. Roraback. Opposed: Dr. Taylor. Motion carried.

Vote to amend school calendar

Dr. Serino explained that the change in the schedule would be to have a full professional development day on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, to eliminate the early release on October 9, 2020 and to add early release days on October 14, October 28, November 4, November 11 and November 18, 2020.

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to amend the school calendar as presented by Dr. Serino.

In favor of amending the school calendar as presented by Dr. Serino: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Serino also noted that the teachers had worked an additional two days and the calendar will need to be modified to reflect that. She will get back to the board with those changes. Dr. Serino also mentioned snow days and noted that the State Department of Education has not sanctioned virtual learning on a snow day as of now.

Mr. Moore explained that communications was not included on the agenda, but mentioned that he has gotten some questions about fans attending athletic events. Dr. Serino explained that the Shoreline superintendents met yesterday and have decided that no outside fans will be allowed. Beginning next week, a couple of family members of seniors will be allowed to attend and that will be expanded to all athletes later. Right now, 100 people are allowed at outside gatherings and that should increase to 150 in the next phase of the Governor's plan. Parents will have to register and provide an email so that contact tracing can be completed, if necessary. All fans will be required to wear masks and remain distanced. In terms of volleyball, the indoor maximum is 25 and no fans will be allowed. The district does hope to be able to live stream the games for parents. Home games will also be recorded to allow visitors to watch.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Education.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanella, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First