

SAU 21 Joint School Board - Emergency Meeting (Tuesday, March 17, 2020)

Generated by Rhonda Evans on Friday, March 20, 2020

Approved by the Board - March 31, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held online via ZOOM. All attendees logged in remotely.

Members attending:

Erin Stanton, Forrest Carter, Gregg Duffy, Jessica Brown, Jim Kime, John Bailly, Leslie Lafond, Mark Lane, Michael Rabideau, Rebecca Burdick, Sharon Gordon, Thomas von Jess, Heidi Taracena, Jason Farias, Jennifer Hubbard, Kelli Hueber, Martin Tavitian, Nermina Peterson, Tony Delano

Greg Parish and Greg Marrow joined the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Henry Marsh joined the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

Superintendent Bill Lupini, Assistant Superintendent Dave Hobbs, Executive Director of Special Services Caroline Arakelian and Business Administrator Matt Ferreira

1. Call to OrderProcedural: A. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM by Joint Board Chair Mike Rabideau when he read the following statement:

"I, Mike Rabideau, Chairman of the SAU 21 Joint School Board, am invoking an emergency meeting of the SAU 21 Joint School Board. I have determined that immediate action is imperative and the physical presence of a quorum is not reasonably practical with the period of time requiring action due to the current nature of the coronavirus. I will now turn the meeting over to the Superintendent of Schools, William Lupini."

2. Review of Governor Sununu's Announcement

Information: A. **School Closures and Remote Learning (Minimum Requirements)** - The Governor held a press conference on Sunday, March 15th closing all New Hampshire public schools through April 3rd and for remote learning to begin on March 23rd.

Information: B. **SAU 21 Plan (Overview)** - SAU 21 administrators had already begun to put a plan in place for remote learning prior to Dr. Lupini's 2-week closure of all SAU 21 schools effective at the end of school last Friday, March 13th. The Governor's announcement extends the closure. Various items have been under consideration including the school day/year requirement of 180 days or 990 hours of educational instruction as well as the Collective Bargaining Agreement for certified staff requiring 187 days of instruction and how to fulfill appropriately with students still receiving a quality education. The main topics will be covered below as listed on the agenda.

3. SAU 21 Specific PlansInformation: A. **Providing Meals (Breakfast/Lunch) for Students**

Dr. Arakelian updated the Board on steps that have been taken to ensure all students receive the meals that are needed. A Survey was sent out over the weekend asking about meal needs as well as wifi access needs. Food delivery will begin on March 18th. Two days worth of meals will be provided on Monday and Wednesdays with 3 days worth of meals being provided on Fridays. Food prep will take place at Seabrook School (includes South Hampton and Hampton Falls Schools) and Winnacunnet High School (includes North Hampton School). Pick-up and delivery options (by bus) will be available. Currently, there are 110 students needing meals but that number is expected to go up.

Leslie Lafond asked how people can help. Contact Cr. Arakelian and yes donations are accepted, monetary donations are preferred. Gather is also providing meals on Thursdays at Seabrook Rec Center and Centre School in Hampton.

Information: B. **Professional Development and Student Learning**

Dr. Hobbs reviewed the comprehensive plan put in place and included in the agenda as a pdf. The presentation was previously distributed to all teachers in the couple of past days.

The teachers spent today as a PD day getting ready for the online learning, making sure all teachers are on same page of plan, and know how to deliver content to students through Google apps.

Tutorials have been set up for teachers on how to use Google classroom, Google meet, as well as other resources in order to give teachers time to plan and be successful.

Tomorrow begins the first day of online learning.

Teachers will begin reaching out to parents and students establish contact and set up expectations moving forward.

Resources have been made available for parents and students. Parents are encouraged to use the Guardian feature so that they can get periodic emails to keep them updated. Teachers are to have office hours in which they are reachable sometime between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Henry Marsh and Greg Parish joined the meeting at 4:20p.m.

Assignments are expected to be give throughout the closure. Will look different than normal. Grading will also be given based on normal expectations that teachers have.

Attendance and teacher accountability. Weekly attendance for k-8 and daily attendance for 9-12 all will be taken. This will be updated on Fridays and will be reflected back to teachers and parents.

Greg Marrow joined the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

Accountability - On Fridays teachers will need to complete their lesson plan in Google form reflecting what has been done with their students during the past week. The intention is to make sure we are in good position with the DOE for days to count and for parents to see it's working.

Administrators will see the forms and be able to see where assistance is needed to be able to provide it.

Support personnel, technology, nurses, are all still assisting as appropriate. Hourly employees will continue to receive their hourly rate. Guidance staff is also still available remotely.

Device pick-up is being organized at all locations.

Dr. Lupini reported that a great deal of discussion has been occurring as to what if this goes beyond 3 weeks in regard to state wide testing. AP exams have already been pushed off.

Tom von Jess asked if this plan was already in place or just recently built? He expressed that the depth of the responses have been remarkable. Dr. Hobbs responded that the answer is both. He pulled heavily from the Blizzard Bag model but needed to expand on a modular system that considered an undetermined amount of time. Teachers have been involved, union member have been involved. Many people have come together to work in this.

Dr. Lupini expressed that Dr. Hobbs and Dr. Arakelian along with the administrators and teachers have done amazing amount of work over the last 4-5 days. There are a lot of opportunities that we have learned to move forward with as far as opportunities for blended courses, etc. We can continue to keep building on this.

Tom thanked the administration and noted what they have done has been remarkable.

Heidi Taracena spoke to how teachers and Educational Associates have pulled together creating other ways for learning and how they are overcoming obstacles in the lower grades that normally requires paper understanding that not every one has the capability of printing from their device. Dr. Hobbs noted that creative assignments and visual learning is key at with the younger age groups.

Information: C. **Special Education and Student Services**

Dr. Arakelian addressed special education and student supports. All staff including special education teachers, related services, paraprofessionals, speech therapists, and others are pulling together to continue providing specialized instruction for students. Google meets have already been set up for students for Math assistance, reading assistance, etc. IEP meetings still happening where possible and appropriate. It is understood that some meetings may need to be pushed off but attempts are still being done where feasible. Work was done to set guidelines to make sure the meetings and rescheduling are done as needed. The DOE has some waivers in place regarding eligibility.

Commissioner offered specialized support for student learning such as remote learning, for educators to go into students homes and/or to bring small cohorts of students into the buildings. We don't want to bring students into the buildings and risk exposure. We want to create learning environment appropriately and similar learning to other students.

Information: D. **WiFi Access**

Dr. Arakelian reported on a survey done over the weekend regarding the need for wifi as so much instruction is being delivered this way. We've learned from the survey that approximately 35 families do not have reliable wifi in home. That number may go up.

Comcast offers Internet Essentials for families that qualify for free/reduced lunches. We will be loaning out mobile hot spots. We have already placed an order and delivery is expected by Monday. This will be coordinated with the Wednesday food pick-up for parents. Parents will need to sign a waiver and our electronic acceptable use agreement.

Tom von Jess are the mobile hotspots being provided to all 35 families? Or will Comcast be providing the wifi?

A letter is being sent out to the families to try the Comcast option will be first before receiving the mobile hotspot. Although some families do not qualify for free/reduced meals but still need wifi.

We need to make sure we are made aware of students without the access. Homeless students may not have the information necessary for the Comcast access.

Tom von Jess then asked if Comcast will have the hook-ups in time for the students not to fall behind.

Nermina Peterson asked if it is up to the families to ask and obtain this themselves from Comcast?

Families may already have a mobile device that will create the access. We provide the directions on how to do this and if that doesn't work they need to let us know. Our IT staff are also available to assist the families with hook-up when applicable.

Erin Stanton reported that Spectrum is offering all free internet access for students. Is in our area?

Gregg - Is the school general IT support available to all students due to the large number of students using this? Who do we call for support?

We do not have new people, but we will provide contact numbers of our IT staff as well as the contact numbers for Comcast and other digital support providers.

Dr. Lupini reported that yes, we have digital support available and also the staff are maintaining office hours to assist with Google apps and other items we are utilizing.

Information: E. **Cleaning**

Matt Ferreira reported that cleaning is a top priority. The Facilities staff is doing an amazing job with disinfecting and the normal ramped up cleaning due to the regular flu season cleaning. We have contracted with a professional remediation company to conduct fogging in the buildings. EPA approved fogging will begin on in the buildings on Thursday and will also be done again 48-72 hours prior to school opening.

Gregg Duffy asked about further clarification on the fogging?

It is an EPA registered disinfectant. It gets all on all surface areas through a mist. All lockers, doors, etc. will be opened to get at all surfaces. Our facilities crews do a similar practice, but felt this would be a more in-depth, due to quality and in everyone's best interest. The administration feels it is best to err on the side of caution. MSDS sheets for the fogging are available.

Information: F. Hourly Employees

Matt Ferreira reported a large number of employees throughout the districts are hourly and all employees are still being utilized throughout the closure. They may not be working their exact hours, but they will still be paid their scheduled hourly amount per their work agreements. We believe this creates continuity, moral, and overall health to our employees.

Information: G. Paychecks

Matt Ferreira reported that we have been working towards a completely paperless system and a majority are of paychecks are Direct Deposit. Last year we went to electronic pay stubs. Some physical checks still being done. Those checks will all be mailed. We may also encounter situations where need to mail out payments before manifests are signed by the boards.

Information: H. Building Access (Current and Future Plans)

Matt Ferreira expressed importance keeping people out of the buildings and limit the number of interactions in buildings. We've taken strict measures such as locking out all visitors, vendors have been rescheduled, teacher access keys/cards are being disabled after today.

Going forward we may have remainder of employees work remotely from home including the SAU staff.

Dr. Lupini reported that we will have appropriate contact information posted on websites, building doors, etc.

He also reported that there have been discussions at the federal and state level concerning funding to cover items such as the cleaning.

Information: I. Board Meetings

Dr. Lupini reported that this has been an evolving issue in NH and other states. The NHSBA just issued information on holding meetings remotely, emergency and regular meetings. We have three meetings that were supposed to happen this week. We will be in contact with those Board chairs regarding rescheduling the meetings and making them a 'bare bones' meeting to get only minimum information taken care of such as reorganizations, nominations, hiring etc. The meetings will be very similar to this meeting.

4. Questions and Comments from those in Attendance**Discussion: A. Board Member Questions and Comments -**

Kelli Hueber reported that the Seabrook PTO is willing to help as necessary. Dr. Lupini advised that they contact Dr. Arakelian. John Bailly wanted to echo Tom von Jess' earlier comments and add that he was impressed with the speed and totality of the administration's response and plan that has been executed so far.

Mike Rabideau, Joint Board Chair, wanted to address the board letting them know that Dr. Lupini has been in contact with him daily, sometimes several times, to run items by him keeping him informed of progress being made. Mike stated things have been moving quickly and he appreciates everything the SAU staff has done to keep him informed as the JB Chair.

Jim Kime asked about the upcoming March 24th Joint Board meeting. - The SAU will be in touch with a rescheduled date.

Gregg Duffy question April vacation and summer school. - All communication being received at state level and CDC suggests a date beyond April 3rd. No answers available yet. Not likely to have school over April vacation.

Dr. Lupini expressed his hope that this type of meeting worked well for everyone. We will work to schedule future meetings like this and hope to keep everyone updated through emails. Be sure to check emails often as we will be rescheduling the March meetings and the setting the meetings for the beginning of April.

Discussion: B. Public Comment

Dr. Lupini apologized for not introducing and welcoming the new Board members at the beginning of the meeting. All new members have emails and have activated them.

5. Adjourn

Action: A. **Adjourn** - Meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.