

Unofficial Until Approved by the Board

## **SAU 21 Joint School Board (Thursday, March 26, 2020)**

Generated by Rhonda Evans on Monday, March 30, 2020

### **Members present**

Erin Stanton, Forrest Carter, Greg Marrow, Greg Parish, Gregg Duffy, Henry Marsh, 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, Martin Tavitian, Nermina Peterson, Tony Delano

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

### **Meeting called to order at 4:06 PM**

#### **1. Call to Order**

Procedural: A. **Roll Call** - The roll call was taken.

#### **2. Superintendent's Update**

##### **Information: A. Update on School Closures**

Dr. Lupini opened the board meeting by providing information from today's 3:00 p.m. announcement from Governor Chris Sununu that extends the remote learning at least until May 4, 2020.

We have started making a list of items that need to be addressed due to this such as grading and reporting, spring sports, high school graduation, April vacation, summer school and many others. The Governor has ordered the Commissioner to submit a waiver for the SATs as there will be no state testing being done. A brief conversation was held with John Croteau, President of the SEA (teachers union). Many discussions are ongoing regarding the extended remote learning schedules.

We have scheduled an online forum for parents, staff and community members for this Saturday morning, March 28th, via Zoom. We will provide an update as we know it and allow for questions and answers via the chat function in Zoom.

Dr. Hobbs reported that the Southeasters Curriculum Coordinators and Assistant Superintendents group will be meeting next week to start consolidating ideas on a vision for grading and reporting and a calendar. We have just finished the first full week of online instruction. We are looking at the amount of work being assigned, how often teachers are online, students participation rates, etc. Teacher re-certifications are also happening.

There are a lot of celebrations and positive emails circulating from the schools and are keeping everyone moving forward.

Dr. Arakelian reported on new updates being received from the Bureau of Student Support concerning what services are being provided, how they can be provided, communication with families and students among many other guidelines. New information continues to come out on how referrals are to be evaluated.

Meals are being provided out of Seabrook and Winnacunnet for all students within SAU 21 schools on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00-10:00 a.m. No application is needed. Families can just show up to receive the meals. A delivery option is also available. Two routes are currently scheduled (see SAU website for delivery locations).

We are also working to ensure all students have internet access so that equitable access to instruction is available for all students. A recent survey showed that 35 families do not have reliable access. The hot spots we ordered are currently on back order. We have learned that many companies have opened up lots of options such as Internet Essentials through Comcast is being offered free for two months and other cell phone companies are providing unlimited data for access. We are calling the families to make sure they are aware of these options.

Henry Marsh reported that he has learned that many in the community of North Hampton are happy with the teachers and the work being done.

Matt Ferreira reported that the health and safety of the students and staff is a main priority. Very limited access is available to necessary services such as the school nutrition workers that are providing the meals. We have worked with a remediation company to disinfect the buildings and it will be repeated 48-72 hours prior to the re-opening of the buildings. He reminded all Board members that they should have received an email and text message from him last night in regard to Docusign. This will be an electronic signature that each board member will need to use to sign accounts payable, payroll manifest, etc. Each board member has been assigned an individual code.

Dr. Lupini provided an update on school trips. The Governor issued a letter in March that canceled all school trips as of March 16th. We have provided a copy of this letter to all of our school principals to use with any vendors that were used for planned trips. We believe that there will be 100% reimbursement received due to the Governor's mandate. We have been advised to reach out to the Governor's office if any vendors are uncooperative.

Questions asked from Board Members included the following:

Greg Marrow - Why are cancellations being made so soon (i.e. proms, graduations, etc)?

A- We haven't done this. Most of the cancellations currently being reported are colleges and universities as their events happen sooner than ours. According to meetings and conversations we have been involved in with DHHS and Exeter Hospital, we do believe this will go far beyond May 4th.

Greg Parish - Are we continuing to paying our hourly employees?

A - Yes, we are currently maintaining to pay per each employees hourly work agreements. We feel it is important for retention and moral as these are valuable employees. The majority are still working in some capacity.

Greg Parish - Do we need to worry about sanitizing playground equipment?

A - Facilities Directors have been instructed to post signs recommending to NOT USE the playgrounds as it is not possible to

sanitize open public areas after each use.

Becky Burdick - What if school does not resume this year? How do we catch up? What about South Hampton students going to Amesbury HS next year?

A - These are all items on our list of questions that we don't know the answer yet. No one does. We know we will have these questions to address. All questions are on the table.

Gregg Duffy - What about stipends for coaching spring sports and other school activities? Should we consider still paying the stipends to those that would have received it as it was already budgeted in order to keep consistency and help with the economy?

A - Yes we continue to pay for activities such as year long activities. We are still discussing spring sports stipends. We will be meeting with the teachers union on several of these types of items.

Gregg Duffy -What does \*access\* to the building look like right now with daily activities?

A - Currently only a limited number of WHS and Seabrook school nutrition staff have very limited access. Otherwise, no access is occurring unless there is a specific issue. Mail delivery is either being dropped outside of building or left at the Post Office and picked up by employee. Each school has worked out an individual plan. Mail is being processed. It is being scanned and emailed. Should the closures extend into warmer weather, we do intend to have facilities staff doing exterior work such as landscaping and lawn care. Very minimal contact occurs with this type of work among employees.

Greg Parish - Are conversations taking place with WHS Seniors regarding transitioning to colleges?

A - Yes, we have learned that pass/fail grades are being accepted by colleges from here on out. A growing list of colleges are also waiving SAT for applicants.

Tom von Jess - Are these days considered School Closings or teaching remote? Is Professional Development still offered online for teachers? What about April vacation?

A - This is considered "Remote Learning" and these days do count per the Commissioner. We had our plan in place quicker than the recommendation, so we only lost one day.

There is a Professional Development day happening tomorrow. Teachers are collaborating through Zoom, Google Meets, shared folders etc. We are hoping to make connections and keep staff from feeling lonely and stuck on their own.

We are hoping to make a recommendation about April vacation by next week. We are planning to talk with the Principals, SEA, and other schools in the area before making a final decision.

Greg Marrow - What chemical(s) are being used for the sanitization?

A - Matt will send the MSDS sheets.

Sharon Gordon - How are teachers doing?

A - It's complicated. Last week was rough. This week has been more positive along with more collaboration, more consistency in sharing, and overall more upbeat.

Becky Burdick - Asked about the transition plan with the new Barnard Principal?

A - She is still at her current position in another district. Communication is ongoing with her transition. She and the Superintendent are meeting next week.

The hiring process is still going on in all districts where needed.

Gregg Duffy - Asked about online classrooms on a schedule?

A - This works better with K-8 versus high school. Some schools are able to do this but there are lots of variables to consider.

Greg Parish - How is student morale? Are resources available for parents also?

A - The parents probably know best. We are working to keeping students engaged and looking at the best ways to so that.

Dr. Lupini commented on how the extension of the school closure has affected everyone, staff, parents, students and community alike. The reality of it all has taken a toll on everyone.

Dr. Arakelian reported that this is what social workers do best but it is still difficult in creating the right balance. They are reaching out to students but everyone is different. Some require more contact while for others it's too much. There's a lot of support out there and a lot of reasons why students may or may not be keeping in contact. They are often in communication with parents as well. Social Emotional is extremely important for all of us in this very unpredictable and potentially isolating time. It is difficult to navigate.

Leslie Lafond - Asked about a recent article in the news citing that child abuse "reports" have gone down as we have no eyes on the students now.

A - We do have less access but school counselors are still watching and communicating and are still mandated reporters for reporting child abuse.

Nermina Peterson expressed her satisfaction with NHS teachers and the online instruction. She acknowledged this is a struggle for all but requested that we keep April vacation if possible.

Erin Stanton echoed the satisfaction with the great job the teachers are doing.

Heidi Taracena expressed her thoughts on keeping April vacation to give everyone a break.

Dr. Lupini agreed that people are exhausted and responded that there are a lot of different ideas on how to proceed with a calendar.

**3. Questions and Comments from those in Attendance** - no questions or comments were received.

#### **4. Future Meetings**

Information: A. **Joint Board Weekly Update**

Regular meeting scheduled next week on Tuesday, March 31st at 4:00 p.m. Weekly updates will start the week of April 6th.

**5. Adjourn**

Action: A. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Motion by Greg Parish, second by Michael Rabideau.

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Erin Stanton, Forrest Carter, Greg Marrow, Greg Parish, Gregg Duffy, Henry Marsh, 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, Martin Tavitian, Nermina Peterson, Tony Delano