

Unofficial Until Approved by the Board

## **SAU 21 Joint School Board - School Updates relative to the Coronavirus Pandemic (Tuesday, May 19, 2020)**

Generated by Rhonda Evans on Sunday, May 24, 2020

### **Members present**

Greg Parish, Gregg Duffy, Henry Marsh, Jim Kime, John Bailly, Leslie Lafond, Michael Rabideau, Rebecca Burdick, Thomas von Jess, Jason Farias, Martin Tavitian, Nermina Peterson, Tony Delano, Jill Swasey  
Greg Marrow joined the meeting at 5:13 p.m.

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

Absent: Erin Stanton, Jessica Brown, Jennifer Hubbard, Forrest Carter, Jr., Kellie Hueber, Sharon Gordon, and Heidi Taracena

### **Meeting called to order at 5:07 PM**

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

Procedural: A. **Roll Call**

Chair Jim Kime opened the meeting at 5:07 p.m. by reading the following statement:

As Chair of the SAU 21 Joint School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.1 All members of the SAU 21 Joint School Board, have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone# 646-876-9923, Webinar ID# 928 8057 8754 and Password 540129 or by clicking on the following website address: (listed on the agenda)

<https://zoom.us/j/92880578754?pwd=dEtFbGxuS0ZrUzI0citDNkZxZEE2UT09>

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the SAU 21 Office at [www.sau21.org](http://www.sau21.org).

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-926-8992 ext. 103 or email at [revans@sau21.org](mailto:revans@sau21.org)

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law

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

Information: A. **Update on End of Year School Events and Return to School Task Force**

Dr. Lupini reported on the conversations with Principals regarding plans for distribution of personal items and return of materials to school.

Greg Marrow joined at 5:13 p.m.

The Return to School Task Force held its second meeting. All working groups began their work last week. One principal stated the conversations, conditions and amount of work needed to return to school is "overwhelming". He again explained the three scenarios that each group is working on: returning to school on time, a delayed start with remote learning, and rolling closures. Items being considered included safety measures that need to be in place, budgetary implications, and numerous other factors.

Dr. Hobbs reported on the Return to Instruction working group. They started by breaking down different scenarios and created a Venn diagram showing the need to be prepared for remote learning in all three scenarios. They have learned that these are not mutually exclusive scenarios as they can all happen in unison. A large part of the discussion has been around augmenting instruction as a result of remote learning. Questions include how do we progress in the fall? What kinds of instructions can we put in place? What parameters will be in place to return to school? And how do we work within those boundaries? Parents are partners in the instruction of students and there is a need to work more collaboratively.

Dr. Arakelian reported on the Crisis Response working group. They have split into smaller groups to review four key areas as they pertain to mental health needs: 1) crisis response 2) communicating with parents about behavioral response to crisis 3) staff mental health and wellness, 4) student mental health and wellness. The current climate has the potential of increasing stress on everyone. We are hoping to find ways to help alleviate that.

The Board expressed interest in ensuring the districts have the necessary tools and funds to continue this work throughout the summer. Dr. Lupini reported that most Summer professional development will be re-purposed for this as this is the new professional development. We expect to have a better answer in a week or so.

The question was asked if there is a date as to when the decision has to be made whether we are returning to school or continuing remote learning in the fall. Dr. Lupini stated we don't know that yet. We anticipate some guidance around the end of June from the State. A lot depends on the Governors orders around gathering sizes, etc. We don't know when those changes are coming or what they will look like. Hopeful to have some type of answer in July for August expectations.

Dr. Hobbs added that are also looking at teacher communication at the end of this year. There are always days at the beginning of each school year set aside for teacher training days prior to the start of school. We want consistency for professional development throughout all districts. If not, that could be problematic.

We are not even sure that next year's calendar will work.

A question was asked about SAU funding for SAU-wide funding needs. Matt Ferreira reported that the SAU budget does not have any contingency trust funds like school districts do. The SAU does not have to return funds like schools do. The budget is ending with approximately \$100k. That balance is for unanticipated costs, (i.e. special education, retirements, etc.).

Matt Ferreira reported one the three scenarios the Task Force Working Groups are looking at. He reminded everyone that these plans are intended to provide a framework for whatever the reality becomes. The plans are not a factual answer. We are still waiting on guidelines that will not be available until late June and as crisis evolves the plans will have to evolve. There will be continual change and at some point there will be a definite date that we will have to move forward with but unknown as of now and when it will come.

The Operations working group broke up into 4 groups: facilities, athletics, transportation and food service. They are examining all scenarios and what the costs with each will involve. Questions such as: Are we providing PPE? Do we have to buy PPE? What type of PPE? What will it consist of? These questions apply to each and every aspect of returning to school, serving lunches, students in classrooms, athletics, transportation, etc. How does all of this work from a legal prospective? Final component is the financial aspect of each scenario being looked at by each of the other four working groups.

The Board asked if any anticipated expenses can be purchased from this year's budgets? It was explained that we are somewhat limited as any purchases done today would still be recognized out of next year's budget as it would clearly not be used before this year's fiscal closing date of June 30th. We have also taken the stand to return any unexpended funds to towns. The CARES Act will be providing \$370K across the SAU and FEMA funds allow for 75% reimbursement of expenses due to the pandemic.

Conversations were held today with Principals regarding costs. Technology infrastructure was built with a different assumption for what would be needed. It was not built for this type of instruction that we may need moving forward such as 'Room and Zoom'. Some scenarios may be more cost effective than others. Although there is a great level of uncertainty we are trying to create a plan for all 3 scenarios.

A question was asked if the SAU is working with other SAU's in the area. It was reported that the Southeasters, a co-hort of regional Superintendent's, are meeting twice as much as normal and working to create a plan together. They are pushing to do more than normal together. There has been a great level of cooperation among most districts. SAU 16 has decided to go their own way and not participate as much as others. This has caused a hardship and it makes it very difficult for families that may live in another district and work in ours. The rest of the Southeasters are committed to working and planning together.

The Technology upgrade at LAS was briefly discussed and whether it could be used towards this type of emergency. A legal opinion would be needed to determine if a Building Maintenance Trust items previously approved could qualify for Covid-19 expenses. It is not likely to qualify.

A suggestion was made to survey parents asking whether they are willing and comfortable letting students return to school in the fall.

It was noted that very daunting tasks are ahead of us.

### **3. Questions and Comments from those in Attendance**

Procedural: A. **Public Comment** - No public comments were received.

### **4. Future Meetings**

Information: A. **May 26, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. - SAU 21 Joint Board Meeting**

### **5. Adjourn**

Action: A. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

Motion by Michael Rabideau, second by Rebecca Burdick.

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Greg Marrow, Greg Parish, Gregg Duffy, Henry Marsh, Jim Kime, John Bailly, Leslie Lafond, Michael Rabideau, Rebecca Burdick, Thomas von Jess, Jason Farias, Martin Tavitian, Nermina Peterson, Tony Delano, Jill Swasey