

Regular Session Meetings

August 5, 2020

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in virtually in Swampscott, MA commencing at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Amy OConnor, SC Chair, Ms. Suzanne Wright, Mr. Delano, Ms. Carin Marshall, Mr. John Giantis, School Committee members. Also, Present: Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Jean Bacon, Director of Teaching & Learning, Martha Sybert, Business Administrator, and Martha Raymond, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services.

The School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via teleconferencing, practicing social distancing, and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on the local cable station.

Public Comment:

Ms. OConnor noted that there were 45 questions submitted in advance. Public comment questions to be held after the Superintendent report.

Mr. Tom Reid, teacher and executive board member of the Swampscott Education Assoc (SEA) thanked Ms. Angelakis and the SC for letting them speak as well as the collaboration that has taken place. Mr. Reid stated that they all want to teach. They were hoping that a hybrid model would be safe. Mr. Reid spoke about the lingering effects of COVID-19, children passing on the virus, and discussed examples of schools and camps with cases. He mentioned a Hybrid learning study and the increasing numbers of new cases. Mr. Reid on behalf of the SEA respectfully asked that the SC make a decision to open fully remote to have time to prepare for more effective Remote Learning.

Ms. OConnor thanked Mr. Reid and the teachers on the call.

Community Announcements

Mr. Delano has full faith in the team's decision making and knows they have the student's best interest in mind.

Mr. Giantis stated that the questions were very good. The common theme he is hearing is that wherever we land it be clear and consistent.

Superintendent's Report: Ms. Angelakis' report will be posted on the Superintendent's Page under the Swampscott Public School's web page.

Ms. Angelakis mentioned that regular business continues; the District Strategy and Action plans are in development. The School Improvement Plans will be presented at the September 9th SC meeting.

Reopening of Schools: Ms. Angelakis mentioned the Article in Commonwealth Magazine and the call with the Commissioner on Monday 8.3.20. Federal dollars may have ties to hybrid or in-person learning. She said that if districts choose full remote then athletics are in jeopardy, and the DESE Board will be auditing for accountability.

The Comprehensive Plan Submission was due August 10th but the commissioner was open to districts requesting an extension for submission until August 14th. SPS was approved for the extension.

Ms. Angelakis discussed the revisions to Time on Learning for the SY 2020-2021 which lowers the number of days and hours of learning required for the SY. The change in time permits time for training and preparation. Districts must begin instruction to students no later than September 16 or apply for a waiver.

Updated 20-21SY School Calendar/Early Release Days -vote requested. Ms. Angelakis reviewed the changes in the calendar highlighting September 16th as the first day of school (Kindergarten first day September 21st). She reviewed the change in parent conference dates, and the addition of Juneteenth Independence Day Observed (Sunday, June 20th).

There was discussion on Indigenous Peoples' Day/Columbus Day (Mon., Oct 12th). Ms. OConnor mentioned that the calendar was released as Indigenous People's day a couple years ago keeping with the curriculum but last year we had the date labeled as Columbus day. Ms. OConnor felt Indigenous People's day was keeping with the curriculum while Columbus day was more traditional.

Ms. Wright suggested calling it both for tonight as the topic warrants more robust discussion. Ms. Marshall it is fine as both. Mr. Giantis agreed to leave as both names for now.

Ms. Wright asked why we were observing Juneteenth on Sunday when it falls on Saturday.

Ms. OConnor asked if Kindergarten school assignments would be held until after screening. The schools will be assigned prior though the actual classroom will not be assigned until a later time.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to approve the calendar as presented & seconded by Ms. Marshall.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Substitute Data/Building Protocols: Ms. Angelakis reviewed the Substitute Data for the Fall. Ms. OConnor asked if they had been trained. Ms. Angelakis responded that more positions will be offered but these people were existing employees and have been trained.

She reviewed the Updated Building Protocols which include Self-Certification Forms, Swampscott Employee Log, and Swampscott Guest Log. The School Department Safety Plan is being completed.

Ms. OConnor asked about the guest log. Ms. Angelakis noted that all entering the building are required to sign-in/out. Mr. Delano asked if the substitutes could get waivers for fingerprinting costs. Ms. Angelakis stated that the hardship waivers apply to licensing, and all fingerprint and CORI requirements remain the same. Mr. Delano stated that he would like to see some veterans as substitutes.

Reopening Plan 2021 (vote requested): Ms. Angelakis said she has received some nice emails from families. She stated that districts were asked by the commissioner to hold the release of plans until 8/10.

Ms. Angelakis reviewed the Reopening District Task Force, Reopening District Working Group, and the School-Based Reopening Teams, the Technology plan including the issuing of Chromebooks, SPS Ipads, use of Seesaw and Parent technology training, She discussed ASPEN for paperless back to school. She mentioned the Web filters on 1:1 devices.

The district is proposing COVID testing for all faculty and staff. Ms. Angelakis reviewed the assessment of school building facilities. Lavallee Brensinger Architects (LBA) has been hired to work with our team on the assessment of our buildings' HVAC systems. The assessment will begin on Monday, August 10th. We expect a preliminary report with recommendations the week of August 19th. The team will assess spaces where students may meet safely. She discussed tents and transportation.

Ms. Angelakis reviewed the DESE preliminary submission and found the In-Person Learning as a result of the Feasibility Study. She reviewed the AM/PM hybrid model, cleaning, grab and go lunches, and mask breaks. Ms. Angelakis reviewed a potential schedule and teacher office hours. The Remote Learning model was reviewed including curriculum, assessment, social-emotional learning, and sample schedule.

Ms. Angelakis presented her Recommended Plan and the rationale. She is recommending Remote Learning from September 16th - October 23rd then moving to a Hybrid Learning model beginning Oct 26th if the data and guidelines remain.

Ms. OConnor expressed kudos to Ms. Angelakis and her team for the extraordinary amount of work and analysis.

Mr. Delano stated that he doesn't agree with how information has been distributed from the commissioner. He feels it has been unfair to the school leadership team and community. He thanked Ms. Angelakis for getting the information out to the community today. Mr. Delano asked about one day of testing. Ms. Angelakis there may be the possibility of bringing testing onsite. He asked if start and release would be staggered. Mr. Delano thought 240 unengaged students was high until explained. Dr. Bacon reviewed how the 240 was calculated (1 or more primary core not engaged). Mr. Delano stated that communication should be repetitive, frequent, consistent, and structured.

Ms. OConnor asked when Kindergarten parents would hear their assignments. Ms. Raymond responded by the end of next week they would be emailed out to parents.

Ms. Angelakis stated that regardless of the plan, all families have the right to continue Remote Learning for the school year. Ms. Wright wanted parents to understand there is a difference between Remote Learning versus Homeschool. Ms. OConnor wondered if there would be an issue with funding if more students were Homeschooled. Ms. Sybert stated that Chapter 70 wouldn't necessarily be impacted next year. Dr. Bacon spoke about the Homeschool process.

Ms. Wright asked about electives and credits needed to graduate. Dr. Bacon stated that MS/ HS students will enroll in the same courses as if they were there. Ms. Marshall asked about the 3-hours a day in school and the HS waterfall schedule. Ms. Angelakis noted that the 3-hours per day 4 -days a week in person with follow-up was close to “normal”.

Mr. Giantis felt Hybrid Learning starting October 26th created a long Remote Learning. He asked what would prevent Hybrid Learning. Ms. Angelakis explained her rationale and that virus data and guidelines from the state would drive Hybrid Learning and full in-person. Ms. Raymond stated that student needs would be handled on an individual basis as a team

Ms. Wright asked about auxiliary staff helping out with the curriculum if students remain Remote Learning. Dr. Bacon stated there will not be a separate curriculum if we remain Remote Learning.

Ms. Wright asked if there will be an opportunity between now and October 26th to bring small groups in. Ms. Angelakis has been speaking with the union regarding connecting with families individually or in smaller groups. She felt it would make sense to start bringing in students to make connections in person.

Mr. Giantis asked about live streaming versus recorded lessons. Dr. Bacon stated best practices for the delivery of instruction are recorded so students can go back and pause. She said that Remote Learning will be different than it was in the spring with more face to face zoom interaction between teachers and students.

Ms. OConnor asked about the AM/PM learning plan. Dr. Bacon stated that an AM in-person student would watch a video in the afternoon. Ms. OConnor said some parents felt that the asynchronous learning was too unstructured. Dr. Bacon stated that a student will be on live with their teacher 3 or 4 times a day for 20-30 minutes rather than all at once.

Mr. Giantis stated that if we have the tents now why hold use until October. Ms. Angelakis stated that they may delay installation or start to bring back small groups outside in tents.

Ms. Wright asked about families with multiple students. Ms. Angelakis stated that they are talking about siblings.

Ms. Marshall asked how they were placing students into A & B cohorts. Ms. Angelakis said they haven't gotten that far. Ms. OConnor said that some people may be happy to be in a morning cohort while others may not. She suggested alternating the sessions.

Mr. Giantis asked if there would be letter grading. Yes, there will be.

Ms. OConnor asked if there was any change in mask-wearing and if anyone could be maskless. Ms. Angelakis said some students may need lessons on wearing them but it was required of all students PK-12.

Ms. Sybert said we are running two METCO buses right now. NRT should be able to have students safely on the bus.

Mr. Delano asked about extra nurses, specials, chorus, band, and ESPs. Ms. Angelakis said they are working out details and talking to union leadership as they may need to repurpose some roles.

Ms. OConnor asked about testing students, students from high-risk homes, Cares Act, and if all students are entitled to come back to school. Ms. Angelakis will get back to the group but everyone is entitled to return as long as they are following guidelines.

Dr. Bacon shared that the results from the parent survey showed a preference for AM/PM sessions.

Ms. Wright asked if we have plans for packets Gr K/1. Ms. Raymond noted that the PreK is dividing learning materials for students to have their own packets.

Ms. OConnor said there is a lot to work out. She suggested the SC approve the plan for Remote Learning until October 23rd with a transition to Hybrid Learning October 26. Ms. OConnor said this is an agreement that this plan is the right path pending all details being worked out. Ms. Wright agrees that we still need all the safety protocols to make the plan work on the ground.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright for approval to move forward to accept the recommendation for Remote Learning to phased in Hybrid Learning planning & seconded by Ms. Marshall.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Ms. OConnor acknowledges the 84 questions for public comment as well as raised hands. They will do some screen captures for the

questions/comments. Ms. OConnor asked about a separate Q&A for parents. Ms. Wright noted that questions are much better after Ms. Angelakis presents. Ms. Wright suggested they put together a FAQ for people to go to first.

District Student Handbook (review/adopt): Ms. Wright asked if there will be a separate handbook of COVID/Remote Policies to sign. Ms. Angelakis will circle back with leadership and one will be done.

Ms. Angelakis reviewed the changes to the handbook such as racism and anti-racism statements being added on page 6. Mr. Delano asked if we were collecting data. Ms. Angelakis talked about a tool for students and families to report. We record incidents as part of the School Bullying & Prevention Plan.

Other Highlights were the Harassment policy (pg 7) to add “in accordance with our policy” and a new Special Education section (pg 37). This has always been happening just being added to explicitly state. It was suggested to retile the section Special Education Policy Law to Special Education Equal Opportunity. Ms. Wright suggested moving the section up.

Mr. Gianti wanted to make sure when adding sections we were not opening up to any legal action. Ms. OConnor asked if Darren had reviewed. Ms. Angelakis said we update annually and it is then approved by legal counsel.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Delano to adopt the 20-21 Student district handbook & seconded by Ms. Marshall.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

School Business Administrator: FY21 Budget Update: Ms. Angelakis suggested moving this to August 12th.

Chair:

School Committee Protocols 20-21: Ms. OConnor read the purpose of the protocols and highlighted the sections. This is standard and the same document as the two previous years.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to adopt the 2021 Protocols & seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

School Building Committee (SBC) Updates: Ms. Wright stated that they are narrowing down the final six options. They would like as much community input as possible. Mailers will be going to all residences. The SBC is seeking community outreach events. If anyone would like to host a communication event they may contact the SBC via the link on the website. August 18th there will be a community forum

Consent Agenda

Ms. OConnor read the purpose of the consent agenda and the items on the agenda.

- A. Emergency Executive Session Minutes - July 27, 2020
- B. Regular Session Minutes – July 22, 2020
- C. Warrant W21-02 & 21-04

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to accept the agenda & seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Next meeting to be held on August 12, 2020

Adjournment

Motion: At 9:54 p.m. It was moved by Ms. Marshall to accept the motion to adjourn & seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.

Superintendent of Schools

/dmm

Date: August 13, 2020

Supporting Documentation:



Superintendent's Report to SC 8.5.20.pdf 



Revisions to 20-21SY Calendar Memo 5-Aug-2020.doc 



Self Certification Form Final.docx 



Commonwealth 8.4.20.pdf 



08.05.2020 FY21 Revised Budget.pptx 



Copy of 2020-2021 Committee & Subcommittees blank for reappointments 



July 28, 2020 School Committee Emergency Executive Minutes DRAFT 



Copy of 2020-2021 District Student Handbook 



School Committee Protocols 20-21.docx 



July 22, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final 