

Regular Session Meetings

November 4, 2020

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

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 Forum: NA

Community Announcements:

All SC members passed due to the interest of time.

Ms. Diaz asked about safety and precautions regarding the political protest planned for Thursday.

Ms. Angelakis restated out of an abundance of caution that Hadley will be on a Remote schedule Thursday.

Ms. OConnor said she has had many conversations with Sean Fitzgerald, Peter Spellios & Chief Madigan expressing the school's concerns. The SC is limited but will continue to push for students' rights. Ms. Wright said that we need to be cognizant of how unpredictable protesters are that come into town.

Ms. Randall thanked the Diversifying our Narrative group for all their hard work on changing the curriculum and addressing racial justice.

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

Ms. Angelakis stated that it was just decided that Hadley will flip to their Remote schedule due to an abundance of caution due to uncertainty around election protests. Communication will be going this evening by Ms. Bebachick.

Ms. Sheehan spoke as a teacher, parent, and community member. She made a public request for teamwork. Ms. Sheehan spoke about comments and suggestions on social media. She reinforced that they have only been teaching in the Hybrid model for five days. She discussed how teachers are all working harder than they ever have to pivot, adjust, improve, schedule Zooms, communicate with parents, and teach. Ms. Sheehan stressed the need to collectively breathe. Teachers have not followed the same routine for more than two weeks. She stated that we would not measure student success on one week of work so we should not measure the education plans on one week. Ms. Sheehan stated that the elementary student in-person learning is not subpar instruction and is more intense than it has ever been. She stated that everyone has faced challenges during a difficult time and has their own personal situation but their task is to leave it all behind when they step into the classroom. They are working 10-12 hours a day and on weekends which is not sustainable. She stated that positive talk and flexible thinking was essential for our children.

Ms. OConnor thanked Ms. Sheehan for her poignant words.

Ms. Angelakis provided an update on the SeeSaw Family training, and the November 3rd Professional Learning Workshops.

She discussed updates from the Commissioner's call. Ms. Angelakis spoke about the asynchronous time on the 2-1-2 Hybrid model. There has been extensive data collection that must be submitted by this Friday. We are looking at moving to a 3:2 Hybrid model the week after Thanksgiving.

SPS has had their first positive COVID case in the school. Ms. Angelakis spoke about one case having an impact far and wide. Every legal and medical step was taken in the appropriate order and time. She said they can't share private information.

Ms. Angelakis reviewed Enrollment data including data from 6/22/20 (2,224 students) and 10/1/20 (2,133). She showed an enrollment comparison by grade and where the numbers were most impacted. She stated that the Pre-K was reduced by 27 students due to the pandemic and Kindergarten had 32 less students than the previous year. She spoke about the change for 4th and 9th grade which could be charters and those going to HS legacy schools.

Ms. Angelakis reviewed the enrollment summary of survey statistics from the MA Association of School Superintendents (MASS). There were 176 districts that reported data. The trend was similar to PreK and K representing a decrease in student enrollment of 42.8%.

Ms. Marshall asked if the grade K parents who held sending their kids this year would go to grade K or 1 next year. Ms. Angelakis said that some may have gone to private K or waited so it remains to be seen.

Ms. Wright asked about the impact losing students would have on Chapter 77 funding and other allocations. Ms. Angelakis said the MASS is having those conversations at the state level. Ms. Wright mentioned the concern if we have an influx again and the numbers are not in the budget.

Mr. Delano asked for the homeschool students by grades. Ms. Angelakis stated that we have the information and will provide the information.

Director of Teaching & Learning:

Assessment Presentation and Plan for Intervention: Dr. Bacon presented the Aimsweb Math Performance (K-4) percentage of students at High or Moderate risk for not meeting grade-level benchmark by June. She displayed the comparison from Fall 19/20 to Fall 20/21 (Gr 1,3,4) which shows an increase in the percentage at risk.

She reviewed the iReady Reading Assessment (K-4) overall results and by grade level. She spoke about the concerns and challenges especially at Grade 1.

Dr. Bacon discussed the HS disengaged students. The increased percentage of students with an “F” grade for the same period last year. The MS is also seeing the same type of trend.

She spoke about the SPS Remediation Plans by Tiers (1-Low risk, 2-Moderate risk, 3-High risk). Dr. Bacon reviewed opportunities such as the ESSER grant for Tutors, Title I & Title II funds. She mentioned a Saturday intervention program for Tier 3 students.

Ms. OConnor asked if the delays would be a long-term trend, particularly for the first graders. Dr. Bacon said that is the big national question. They are seeing the same issue across the U.S. due to COVID education interruptions. She said it remains to be seen what it will take to get the kids back on track. Ms. Angelakis stated that we did anticipate this concern. She said we planned ahead for closing the gap with grant money.

Mr. Delano asked if we could have building administration and guidance be involved in the solution for 1st and 2nd grade regardless of the tier. He asked why we wouldn't provide more assistance for our younger kids. Dr. Bacon said that is what we are doing with the math and reading tutors. Ms. Angelakis said we highlighted the academic math and reading deficiencies. She noted there are social-emotional issues that would involve all the appropriate staff as needed.

Mr. Delano asked if the Saturday intervention was district-wide or only HS. Dr. Bacon said it was put in the grant as K-12 which provides flexibility. The focus right now is getting the HS up and running and then seeing if they can support it similarly at other levels. Mr. Delano said if it was at all possible he would like to see a vacation or Saturday intervention at the elementary level.

Ms. OConnor said funding had not come up at Tri-chair though Ms. Sybert is constantly talking and working with town hall on understanding the budget needs and unknowns. Mr. Delano wants to advocate for vacation or Saturday intervention money. Dr. Bacon said they have the flexibility and significant money to fund tutoring. She said they need to determine the best model and time whether it be when students are in the building, on afternoons, or weekends. They will work closely with colleagues and families to determine the best model to catch students up.

Ms. Marshall asked if the Cares Act money can go toward the intervention. Dr. Bacon said they are using the ESSER grant funding which is Cares Act money. The ESSER grant has been spent on tech software, \$21,000 for tutors, and designing staff PD. The money is spent on improving the quality of instruction.

Ms. Marshall said she envisioned going to the 3-2 model would be helpful. Dr. Bacon said the more in-person the better. Ms. Marshall asked if families are going to start hearing information soon. Dr. Bacon gave updates on when tutoring and the HS Saturday intervention is starting.

Mr. Giantis appreciated all the work that has been done. He asked if we had reached out to other districts for peer comparison or remediation plans. Dr. Bacon has had no discussions but will follow up with colleagues at the next meeting.

Ms. Raymond mentioned the percentages typically found in each of the tiers, allocation of resources, and the challenges with closing gaps (i.e. less time and more to learn).

Ms. Wright asked about the way we look at cohorts and making them more homogenous based on tiers to help work together on deficits. Dr. Bacon said that principals tried to group kids with similar needs together in original class assignments. Ms. Wright mentioned maximizing learning in a shorter period of time. Dr. Bacon said the intervention groups are working remotely and pull students with similar needs from several classes together.

Ms. Sybert said they have been strategic on how the ESSER funds are being used (i.e. Software licenses) as the funds carry until June 30, 2021, while Cares Act funds are until the end of December. She will audit and move around items if warranted.

Mr. Delano asked if there would be more money. Ms. Sybert does not know.

Mr. Delano asked if there was any improvement in the number of Metco students attending in-person. Ms. Angelakis will make a note to bring numbers back to the committee.

Chair:

Presentation-Diversifying Our Narrative: Students presenting: Elsa Ramdas, Alexander Ruse, Elizabeth Delia, Mahder Teferra, Mary Alice Brennan, Meggie Jensen. Their advisor Ms. Katelyn Thomas was present.

The students shared a presentation about being anti-racists, Swampscott & social justice, and the importance of connecting education and social justice.

They provided their mission statement, the petition, and community feedback. They shared stories of macro-aggressions and physical and verbal attacks. The students spoke about racial stereotypes and told a story where a MS administrator told a student of color that they were too aggressive and disrespectful when they were trying to report incidents.

They discussed concrete pieces of evidence such as a teacher asking students to write on the positive and negative of slavery. The students stated that students of color do not have the support needed. The students discussed teacher bias training, teachers of color as role models, zero tolerance, changes needed in the school environment, and curriculum changes.

Ms. OConnor thanked the group and said how proud she was of the students.

Ms. Angelakis thanked them for coming forward and sharing information. She mentioned the staff summer PD reading on race /racism and student impact. Ms. Angelakis mentioned that she volunteered to be part of a racial equity working group with Metco Boston.

Ms. Thomas mentioned that this group is totally student-led. She stated how impressed she was with the students who have been meeting for months. Ms. Thomas spoke about the suggestions and some changes.

Ms. OConnor thanked the group.

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

- A. Executive Session Minutes-October 26, 2020
- B. Regular Session Minutes-October 28, 2020
- C. Donation-Paul Goldstein-SHS Photography Classes
- D. Warrant # 20-17 & 21-18

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

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0 via roll call vote (Mr. Delano had to leave for a work call).

Next meeting to be held on November 18, 2020

Adjournment

Motion: At 9:06 p.m. It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the motion to adjourn & seconded by Ms. Marshall.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0 via roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



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

Date: November 19, 2020

Superintendent of Schools

/dmm

Supporting documentation:

 Superintendent's Report to SC 11.4.20.pdf 

 Enrollment Comparison by Grade.pdf 


 Enrollment II -Summary stats (MASS email).pdf 

 10-1-20 Enrollment Data.pdf 

 6.22.20 Enrollment Data.pdf 

 Diversify Our Narrative: School Committee Presentation 

 October 28, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final 

 Donation-Paul Goldstein-SHS Photography Classes.pdf 

 Agenda November 4, 2020, School Committee Meeting 

 Copy of October 26, 2020 School Committee Executive Session Meeting Minutes.docx 

 Assessment Results Update Fall 2020 