

## Regular Session Meetings

July 22, 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. Suzanne Wright, Mr. Delano, Ms. Amy OConnor, Ms. Carin Marshall, Mr. John Giantis, School Committee members. Also, Present: Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Jean Bacon, Director of Teaching & Learning, and Martha Sybert, Business Administrator. Martha Raymond, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services was absent.

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:**

Tasia Vasiliou, a Stanley parent, spoke about the mixed direction from the state. She suggested outdoor learning, more handwashing facilities, screening process on entry, rubber gloves at recess, disposable fresh face masks every day and communication with parents if any students were sent home with symptoms.

Ms. Wright mentioned that there were questions from Kindergarten parents about not being included in the initial survey. Ms. Angelakis responded that the survey went out prior to having all the Grade K registration but they will be included on the next survey.

Keiko Zoll a Stanley parent brought up parents working full time at home and the challenge of trying to homeschool students. She discussed vulnerable and early age students needing more learning support, not one size fits all, remote learning not having the same engagement as in-person, staggered start dates with the priority being elementary level, the Harvard report regarding the study in South Korea, and that she voted against cuts in school budget at town meeting.

Joanna Marino, a FT working parent of Pre-K & K students, echoed challenging remote learning, felt younger kids are good at wearing masks, liked earlier suggestions, mental health impact of not seeing teachers and friends, one size does not fit all, and hopes there is a way to get kids in the classroom.

Alison Oxton, Clarke school parent and previous Hadley School nurse, mentioned air quality concerns at Hadley & Clarke, the level of carbon dioxide and lack of research on the impact of high exposure in children. She has concerns about poor air quality being quicker to spread any kind of germs. She asked what attention was being paid to the ventilation system with school opening and if there was money on the budget to address the issues.

Marissa Fava, a Hadley parent, echoed that younger students are well adapted to mask wearing. She mentioned pushing off the start of school to give time to prepare the building for safe in-person learning and teachers for potential remote learning, schools typically being older facilities, air quality, Harvard School Public Health and thank the district for committing to one on one Chromebooks.

Vanessa Carvalho asked if she decided not to send her student kindergarten this year if there will be an opportunity next year. Ms. Angelakis responded "yes".

Ms. Angelakis suggested moving up her presentation and holding comments until after her presentation as it would answer some of the questions. A motion was made by Ms. OConnor to move the order of items, and seconded by Mr. Delano. The motion passed by roll call 5 to 0.

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

**Director of Facilities Introduction:** Ms. Angelakis welcomed Max Kasper as the joint director of facilities. Mr. Kasper mentioned he is looking forward to working with everyone, the exciting opportunity, and the work he has been doing in the town. Ms. OConnor mentioned how thrilled she is to have Mr. Kasper in the role.

**Superintendent's Report:** Ms. Angelakis mentioned that they discussed having a unified approach at the N.Shore superintendent round table but that would be difficult as the district's facilities are all in different conditions.

Initially, it appeared that DESE would provide requirements which the majority of schools would follow. However, that has changed

and it is more of a local decision with DESE & the governor pushing to get kids back to school in-person. The #1 priority is the social emotional well-being of students.

The preliminary plans on the three models that districts are leaning toward along with rationale are due to the DESE by July 31. The district is still awaiting DESE guidance on transportation & facility safety guidance which was due out July 22.

Ms. Angelakis stated our goal for the fall is the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and maximize our students' holistic needs. She reviewed the key health & safety requirements such as physical distance, masks, and the medical literature on kids that are less susceptible to COVID-19.

The three Plans are: In-person, hybrid and remote learning. Ms. Angelakis noted that parents have the right to choose to keep their student home. She discussed the three teams: return to school district task force, reopening work group, and school based COVID.

Ms. Angelakis discussed the in-person model and mentioned the social distancing required for in-person. She is looking for SC input to whether we will require 6 feet as CDC recommends, or 3 feet as being acceptable. She reviewed the feasibility study which indicates the number of students that would be in a class based on room size for the options of 6 feet, 4.5 feet and 3 feet apart spacing. Ms. Angelakis discussed the CDC protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings.

Ms. Angelakis reviewed the hybrid model (remote & in-person). She discussed vulnerable learnings, those not engaging in remote learning, and that one size doesn't fit all three levels, remote in the fall and in person in winter, and options such as AM & PM sessions or groups A & B. She also discussed the remote learning model and lessons we have learned with remote learning.

There is a FAQ on the DESE website which she encouraged parents to read. There will be another survey going out once the social distance measure has been decided, and she provided the specific email for questions and comments.

#### **Public Comment continued:**

Ms. OConnor read a statement from Isabel Key requesting support for parents on remote learning and support for teachers. Ms. Angelakis discussed the open, collaborative and healthy relationship with the teachers.

Carl Forbes mentioned creating pods and having the teachers move room to room.

Tim mentioned at risk occupations, and inquired about the plan if there is an outbreak.

Heidi asked about a phase reopening of the schools the same as the state reopening. Ms. Angelakis discussed a push to reduce time on learning to 900 hours from 990 at HS. She stated if dispensation is given it provides leeway for a phase reopening. The commissioner has said all options are on the table.

HG asked not to pit grades against grades and provide in person help if we have remote learning.

Henry Scott asked about the data for 3 feet.

Melinda Walsh asked about kindergarten assignments and screening.

Sturgeon stated that a low infection rate for children does not mean zero.

Jillian Jacobs stated that herself and many of her HS friends struggled with remote learning and that getting good was more difficult.

Leeanne asked about the number of students not engaged. She mentioned Somerville was helping people without the internet.

Marianne Hartman mentioned that the South Korea study was only children with symptoms and many are asymptomatic.

Emily Cilley asked if specials and electives would continue, or if more time would be spent on core classes. Ms. OConnor stated that the HS students may not need gym class but 2nd graders may need it.

Jen Weisman, a Hadley parent, encouraged more direct instruction than spring, communication, achievement gaps, and how to address them going forward.

Jay asked if the school will give out Chromebooks. Yes, devices will be handed out.

Heather mentioned the 240 students considered unengaged and as a parent she thought she was doing the right things, generic grades, and training parents on remote learning.

Ms. Lytania Mackey Knowles, Director of Technology discussed training parents, Chromebooks, iPads, and internet hot spots.

Dan Bertram, a Hadley parent, asked about the implementation of the school level task force, links to different formats of documents being difficult for young students, plan when teachers or nurses get sick, students struggling without one-on-one, plans for a dynamic learning environment, grading being adjusted in remote environment and learning gaps, and work and family planning. Ms. Angelakis anticipates task force kickoffs within the next week or so. The district is aware of the student gaps.

Swati Kelkar asked about MCAS if school remains remote and the difficulty of links to so many sites' logins and passwords. She would like more structure and things in one place. Ms. Angelakis said the commissioner has not done away with MCAS at this time.

Enza Sheehan asked about good old fashion workbooks. Ms. OConnor has heard other parents say remote does mean all things need be electronic.

A parent asked about people not wearing masks due to health reasons. Ms. Angelakis said there was no directive currently.

Henry Scott mentioned student anxiety and mental health.

Lori discussed HS seniors and remote learning. She asked if classes could be streamed live.

Heidi discussed the challenges of remote learning.

Spalding Shepard suggested peer to peer learning even in a remote environment.

Katie Holt asked about mandatory quarantines and travel.

A parent asked about mask breaks.

Alice Stein mentioned air quality, mask length of time, and Comcast program.

Ms. Wright thanked everyone for their ideas and participation.

### **Community Announcements:**

Ms. Wright introduced Mr. John Giantis as the new member to the SC.

Mr. Giantis said he was excited to be here. He thanked everyone that supported him in the election.

### **Superintendent's Report continued:**

The MIAA task force recommends September 14th as the start date of sports. The district is waiting to hear on the Innovation Pathway Grants.

Distance in classroom discussion/Taskforce: Ms. Wright reached out to Rep. Lori Ehrlich on the supporting data for 3 feet distancing but had not heard back. Ms. Wright supports 6 feet. Ms. OConnor agrees with 6 feet. Mr. Delano agrees with 6 feet. He stated it is a huge responsibility and it is easier to start there and go down if needed. Ms. OConnor felt one of problems with DESE is that this is being left to the districts to make choices. She stated choosing other than 6 feet is different than science currently says. Ms. Angelakis noted that the CDC still recommends 6 feet. Ms. Angelakis does not want to be responsible for a spike or even 1 case. Ms. Marshall mentioned daycare centers. Mr. Giantis supports 6 feet and if the CDC changes guidelines then we can relook. The SC unanimously supported the distance of 6 feet. Ms. OConnor echoed a parent's suggestion to include the question on the survey,

Ms. Wright asked what was needed from the SC for the Task Force. Ms. Angelakis would like two SC members for a balance but leaves the decision to the SC. She hopes for a kickoff this Friday. Ms. OConnor asked about the time commitment. Ms. Angelakis anticipates 1-2 meetings per week. Mr. Delano Ted volunteered. Mr. Giantis threw his name in as well. Ms. Marshall suggested one permanent person and one rotating person. Ms. Angelakis said they may only need one that brings it back. Ms. OConnor agreed.

### **School Business Administrator:**

FY21 Budget Update: Ms. Sybert said that this is tabled until the next meeting.

Grants: Ms. Sybert discussed the different grants. She discussed the CARES grant, CARES grant-ESSER, Remote Learning Technology Essentials Grant, Corona Relief Fund (\$225 per pupil), and Summer Vacation Learning Grant (11K).

Ms. Sybert reviewed the CARES grant (498,517) breakdown which highlights 1:1 Chromebooks Gr 2-12, PPE, and staff training.

She reviewed the ESSER (149K) which provides resources to school districts to address the impact COVID-19 has had and continues to have on elementary and secondary schools. We applied for The Remote Learning Technology Essentials Grant to cover four months of hotspot expenses and 300 iPads for our K-1 student population. Ms. Sybert reviewed the Summer Vacation Learning Grant and the Corona Virus Relief Fund.

Ms. OConnor asked how the opportunities are found and if help is needed. Ms. Sybert stated that she is tapped into professional organizations and DESE notifies the districts when there is a grant opportunity. Ms. OConnor asked if they had the bandwidth. Ms. Angelakis feels they have a great team.

Ms. Wright asked about the three days of mandatory PD and whether the contract permitted us to ask the teachers to come in. Ms. Angelakis said that we would need to pay them if we asked them to come in. She stated that if the commissioner reduces the number of required days from 180 then we have leeway.

Mr. Delano did not feel one nurse per building was adequate and if any of the grants would provide funding for additional staff. Ms. Sybert stated that the ESSR and town grant could potentially support a FTE. However, she cautions against using grant money for staff if we have to pay MTRS which is 10%. Ms. Angelakis said they would be interested in hiring additional nursing staff.

Ms. Marshall asked about Chapter 70 funding. Ms. Sybert has not heard anything yet.

#### **Chair:**

2021 SY Election of Chair: Ms. Wright nominated Ms. OConnor as chair. It was seconded by Ms. Marshall. Ms. OConnor accepts the nomination. Mr. Delano made the motion for Ms. OConnor as Chair and Ms. Wright as Vice-Chair. The vote passed 5 to 0 by roll call. Nominations for the other roles were tabled.

#### **Sub Committee:**

School Building Committee (SBC) Updates: Ms. Wright discussed summer outreach. The committee would love to educate the town on the six options. She asked if any group or club in town would like someone from the building committee to come to please reach out. Ms. Wright has been at the farmers market each Sunday. By the end of August there needs to be one option for MSBA and for the vote next fall.

#### **Consent Agenda:**

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

- A. Regular Session Minutes – June 24, 2020
- B. Warrant W20-52 & 20-53

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

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0 via roll call vote. Mr. Giantis abstained since he was not at the June 24 meeting.

Next meeting to be held on August 5, 2020

#### **Adjournment:**

Motion: At 9:35 p.m. It was moved by Ms. OConnor 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

Date: August 6, 2020

/dmm

Approved: August 5, 2020

Supporting Documentation:

	07.22.2020 Grants, Grants, (1) 
	2020-0710fall-reopening-faq.pdf 
	Agenda July 22, 2020, School Committee Meeting.pdf 
	Approved June 24, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final 
	Classroom Spacing July 2020.pdf 
	Copy of 2020-2021 Committee & Subcommittees blank for reappointments 
	June 24, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final 
	Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios 7.17.2020 vF (1).pdf 
	SPS Reopening Schools 7.15.20 
	Superintendent's Report to SC 7.22.20 