

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
APRIL 13, 2020 @ 6:00 P.M.  
REMOTE MEETING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson, Jane Giuliani, Gretchen Newsome, Liz Porter, Rita Volkmann, Jay Weitlauf,

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rosemary Robertson, Lee White

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mike Graner, Susan Austin, Sam Kilpatrick, Ken Knight, Denise Doolittle, Addie Clark, Xavion Quito

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Kim Watson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PRESENTATION RE: TRANSITION KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Susan Austin gave an overview of how the Transition Kindergarten Program came to be. The Transition Kindergarten Program is housed at Claude Chester School. The need for the program was due to the number of young learners in Kindergarten classes with little Pre-Kindergarten experience. Ms. Austin stated that the Transition Kindergarten has been a success.

Meg Walker, the Transition Kindergarten teacher, shared how the program has progressed this year. She also shared how “Zooming” in with her students has progressed during distance learning,

Carrie Federico-Baker and Corey Mott, Kindergarten teachers at NEA and MM respectively, shared their experiences in their classes and both noted that some of their students could have benefitted from being in a Transitional Kindergarten class.

Ms. Austin recommended the continuation of the Transition Kindergarten Program.

Gretchen Newsome asked how students are selected for the Transition Kindergarten program. Ms. Austin outlined the process.

III. UPDATE RE: DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

- Regular Education Instruction

Susan Austin noted that the Distance Learning Program is a 3-phase plan with the motto “Go Slow and Grow.” She shared that teachers are surveying parents on a regular basis for their feedback on the distance learning program. Teachers have been able to launch the online learning program via Google Classrooms; and they will continue to monitor it.

Rita Volkmann made a referral regarding the use of virtual learning on snow days.

- Special Education Services

Denise Doolittle shared that her department is doing a lot of modifications in their classrooms. They are providing support, looking at ways to share and document their learning, and they are starting to focus on a growth component. Denise found a link for the Speech and Language Pathologists, and she gave an overview of SLP Telecon Registration for free Webinars that are available to SLP teachers. She also noted NAS Zoom Conferences and the assistance from Teachers College.

IV. UPDATE FROM CSDE

- Recommendations re: Grading Procedures – Dr. Graner stated that the Commissioner and the State Board of Education recommended pass/fail as grading during this pandemic.
- Graduation Requirements – Dr. Graner noted that the Commissioner and the State Board of Education has given local Boards a lot of latitude.

Dr. Graner noted that today he received notice that non-tenured teachers can have their contracts extended for another year even if they are being considered for non-renewal.

Dr. Graner stated that he will give a virtual tour of the new Middle School to middle school teachers and he will provide information regarding packing materials and equipment to be moved to the new middle school via a videoconference.

Dr. Graner noted the Governor will make a decision jointly with several states.

Dr. Graner noted that the CIAC has not cancelled the spring sports season yet.

- V. REVIEW OF CURRICULUM COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION – Dr. Graner stated that he, Laurie LePine, Ted Keleher, and Peter Bass drafted a job description for the Curriculum Coordinator position. Dr. Graner reviewed some of the responsibilities of the position and noted that the position still has to be negotiated with the GEA.

- VI. UPDATE RE: MILONE AND MACBROOM STUDY – Dr. Graner reported the Milone and MacBroom had not gotten back to him.

- VII. FINANCIAL UPDATE RE: UNANTICIPATED EXPENSES – Ken Knight stated that bus drivers have driven 121 out of the 181 school days. Dr. Graner noted that Mr. Knight had done a financial analysis of the remainder of the bus contract that was shared with STA officials. He noted that he sent the Board's proposal to STA's financial officer and that they are very close to an agreement.

VIII. SUGGESTED FUTURE TOPICS

A referral was made to the Curriculum Committee and the Finance Committee to fund the equipment needed to continue distance learning on snow days in the future.

Jay Weitlauf asked for an update on the new construction at the high school (Green House).

Rita Volkmann made a referral for discussion of possible alternative graduation dates.

- IX. ADJOURNMENT – Ackerman, Porter:

To adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**