

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Monday, September 14, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Adam Emerson, Mike Mucci, Bethany DeMarco, Nannette Reid, Regina Hill, Mike Henault, Marty Bush

REMOTE:

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Superintendent Aaron Dean,

103701 Call to Order

Chairman Mike Mucci called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

103702 Public Comment or questions - None

103703 Approval of Minutes - August 10, 2020

MOTION: On Motion of Bethany DeMarco and second Adam Emerson:

VOTED: To approve the August 10, 2020 minutes. The vote was unanimous.

103704 Report of Treasurer/Business Manager - Sally Bigelow gave \$9,000 to start a scholarship in her late husband's name. Not sure how many or the dollar amount given out each year. We need the school committee to acknowledge and accept that to be awarded for next year. Not sure what the criteria is.

Motion: On Motion of Regina Hill and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: to accept \$9,000 to start up a scholarship fund in Jim Bigelow's name. The vote was unanimous.

103705 Report of Sub-Committees -

A. Policy - Mike Henault: talked about the COVID related health policies - a mask policy at all schools, standard personal hygiene, how that would be implemented and promoted; screening and self monitoring, self checking for COVID symptoms and how that would be communicated. In line with CDC and state guidance. The District will require students at all grade levels to wear masks. Breaks will occur when students can be six feet apart. Once an hour. Exceptions to face covering requirements will be made for those who cannot wear masks/face coverings due to a documented medical condition or disability. Students will be removed from class and educated as to why masks are required for safety reasons and a parent phone call will be made. If a student refuses, then a one day suspension may be a consequence for creating an unsafe situation in the building and refusing to follow an administrative directive. Put the transportation piece to see what that is going to look like as well. All students regardless of grade and age will be required to wear a face mask during transportation on the school bus. Students will be spaced at least 3 feet apart during transportation using the recommended pattern for assigned seats. Students will need to have their face mask on properly covering the nose and mouth and the face mask must remain on through the transport to school. There is an opt out for hand sanitizing if a student is allergic, etc. Enrollment policies if students are coming from out of the area. We are looking to vote this as an addendum to our policies during the COVID crisis. Typically would be 2 readings but looking for 1 reading to get this in place. See attached addendum.

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Regina Hill

VOTED: to waive the second reading. The vote was unanimous.

MOTION: On Motion of Regina Hill and second by Marty Bush:

VOTED: to approve the addendum to the handbook. Addendum will be recanted once COVID is over and does not become a permanent part of the policy. The vote was unanimous.

103706 Communications - None

103707 Report of Superintendent -

A. Reopening Plan - Remote opening - the other night we held a technology parent session, an online orientation. We are relying on technology to be our platform for education. We changed our domain over to Hoosac Valley.org. We are implementing 4 platforms that work together - powerschool, gmail, clever to house all of our resources which includes schoology. We looked at some different platforms over the summer, looking at schoology the ease of use is why we ended up with that. Putting out information weekly to families, a lot of information for people to take in and a lot of anxiety. The first week is orientation to work through these pieces, they will not be penalized if they can't get online. We distributed over 600 devices and we are still receiving calls. They need to communicate with us so we can work through it. The first couple of weeks are going to be bumpy, we are in this together and we will get there. Once we get there, the platforms we have chosen will work well.

We have created remote learning centers one at the Youth Center and one at the First Congregational Church in Adams. Will be up and running with the centers starting tomorrow. We have provided hot spots for the site in Adams.

The high school is going to run the Wednesday schedule. We have been able to get more common planning than the other buildings. Wednesday will be check in days for teachers and students at the high school- a 20 minute session 3 x a day.

Hybrid Phase: still negotiating with ACTA; Ecogeniss performing HVAC analysis. We had a positive visit and felt good about where we are with that - we have a state of the art system at the high school, and will be getting a report on that shortly. Cohorts and Transportation is done. Special education and kindergarten will have bussing starting tomorrow. One of the biggest struggles is that we have large numbers in grade 6 and 7 and a lot more to manage. We are looking at shifting resources. We sent clear communication about this, we had to move full remote students to edgenuity. It's a very good quality platform. What we decided for high school. MOA goal- prior to the first hybrid phase. Meeting tomorrow with the bargaining unit.

We have a public health nurse that will notify our school nurses about any cases. Everything starts with contact tracing with a positive case. When you get multiple cases in a school, we have a rapid response team from DESE. If we get a confirmed case, we have to report it to DESE as well. We need to have a confirmed positive, before we react to prevent panic. We do have a contact tracing in place.

Marty Bush: problems that I see is that the families don't own any responsibilities, educating them about protocol. The biggest piece is the CDC guidance we put in our policy. If the child is sick, they don't send them. It's more likely that someone is going to get it on the outside. The mask, 6 feet and hand hygiene is the key for us to be successful and maintain the hybrid throughout the school year.

B. Athletics: Some districts have voted to have sports, like golf and x country others have voted to cancel all fall sports. For us, the fact that we are not in school and without our 9 - 12 students until October 25th, the guidelines of no sharing of materials, discussions with Forest Park Country Club is concerning, uptick in cases, the use of transportation - commingling the coop programs, has made going forward with a sports program concerning. Principal Colleen Byrd and Aaron Dean have decided to cancel fall sports. Had discussions with the A.D. of having something for kids. We did conditioning for kids over the summer and have done it responsibility. Would like to put out a plan for conditioning for the committee.

Aaron stated that someone just logged on and asked Mike Mucci to allow public comment regarding this topic:

Mike Mucci opened it up to public comment:

Brittney Cappiello introduced herself to the committee. She is a concerned parent and a 20 year health care provider. Concerned about not offering the low risk sports. Did submit an email to committee & principals. Her son is on the spectrum, having anxiety, isolated from his friends, thrives on structure and had a hard time at the beginning of the pandemic. Saw a change in him when the golf course opened, the stress relief it has provided him. Speaking for him and all kids. Berkshire County has low numbers and we need to consider the mental health benefits that sports can offer. Strongly asking the S.C. to think about the mental benefits, so much has been taken from our kids. All other districts, except 3 have been able to figure it out. Transportation for most parents, at least golf, most parents have transported them. Please reconsider this decision for the well being of the students. Appreciate the committee for taking the time.

Aaron agrees in wanting to provide something for the kids. This decision was not easy, Social Emotional piece, we are working on a plan. Where there is room that we can do something, looking at the conditioning getting kids involved, we are maintaining the separation from other schools.

Nannette Reid: house league, travel leagues are still playing in these leagues. I know that you want to stop the risk, but they are doing outside league.

Aaron reported that he did put together the following proposal: All fall sports play a non-competitive season where they will practice at least 2 times a week and follow all DESE, EEA and MIAA guidelines. This will start September 18th - November 6th. All practices will begin after 4 p.m. All athletes will have to register on Family ID and take an impact test remotely. Coaches will receive half of their stipend for the season and the other half if they are able to play in the Fall 2 season. User fees will be waived. No locker rooms will be allowed. No benches will be used, no contact or sharing of equipment. Teams will only use their specific fields. All participants will be sent guidelines and families must sign the permission slip/waiver. Masks will be worn from the car to the field. Temperature check and questions relating to COVID symptoms before participating; temperature over 100.4 and an answer of "yes" to any questions means the athlete cannot participate; All MIAA rules still apply - code of conduct/attendance. All coaches must attend training from the A.D. about how to implement the sport specific guidelines. EEA guidelines and how it applies to each sport. Wahconah policies and expectations for conditioning and practices. Training will be scheduled and run by A.D. Training will include: Arrival and dismissal protocol, planning socially distance activities, contact tracing and pre-screening/attendance documentation and sanitizing requirements.

This does not mean we are not reconsidering things throughout the year. I am recommending these as it is in line with what we are trying to do.

Mike Henault: I understand about the equity and canceling it for everyone, if we can provide a safe environment for one sport, let those students have the experience - golf and x country won't be able to make it up Aaron: there are a lot of moving pieces to all of this, while I understand concerns, there are a lot of things stacked against us. Drury, Greylock and Lee are having golf and x country.

Adam Emerson: Coach training: what are the Wahconah policies? - Aaron: they put together a set of rules for running the training sessions.

If we can offer something in terms of conditioning - a survey went out to families and they were enthusiastic to have something.

MCcan and Pittsfield have cancelled all their fall sports.

Marty Bush asked why this wasn't voted on prior to tonight? Aaron stated we didn't have a meeting prior to tonight. The decision that the principal and Aaron made was based on safety of kids.

Aaron brought forward a recommendation to provide something for the students.

Aaron Dean reported that Jay Sniezek is on the phone and hopes he can provide some information. Jay reported that he talked to a few people including the superintendent of grounds at Forest Park Country Club. If there are no other sports, how many students will come out to play golf and their concern is managing the amount of students on the course. They didn't say we couldn't do it, but would have to put guidelines in place and limit the amount of students. Regina Hill asked that for the non competitive season, would your golfers feel satisfied doing the practices? Jay hasn't spoken to most since August, it's almost a month into the season. Would hope most would be interested in doing the non competitive season. Jay is interested in keeping the kids active and getting them out there. He would be willing to get out there and practice. If there were a large amount of kids, we would have to put a cap on it. His average is usually 8 - 10 kids.

Mike Henault stated that as someone who values sports, and everything that comes along with it, we have to remember that our number 1 priority is to keep kids healthy and to recommend a path that keeps our students safe, that coupled with the logistics will take a few weeks to overcome, then most of the season would be over. Getting it off the ground and to err on the side of safety, he doesn't think we can do it.

MOTION: On Motion of Marty Bush and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: to accept the proposal outlined above. The vote was 6-0-1.

B. Superintendent Evaluation - Aaron reported on the Superintendent's Evaluation progress report.

Objective #1 - was to analyze student performance and growth data and use this data to improve instruction. High School: had 2 walkthroughs and 2 more scheduled for January and early February; All high school teachers working on maps during bi monthly meetings/PD opportunities during the 18/19 school year; Data team meets monthly; Progress Motivatory Benchmark meetings/ ILT meetings; Middle School - all teachers working on maps during PD opportunities; data team meets monthly; progress monitoring/benchmark meetings; fastbridge regrouping of students; Marcia Estelle (momenta) math data meeting; Elementary School: Two walkthroughs by ILT completed; February: 2nd round of learning walks occurred on 1/4/20 with staff participating. Going to talk about setting a benchmark to determine when we are ready to move on. Two rounds of data meetings occurred.

Updated for September 14, 2020- District wide work: High Impact Teams Training August 10-15; Formative Assessments for Results Process; Set Assessment Calendar; Introduced Schoology; Planned professional development

Objective #2 - to promote growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations and create a safe and effective classroom environment. High School - teachers work on educational impact videos/assignments 2 x per month and during PD; ILT meets bi-monthly and runs bi-monthly department meetings with faculty; All HS teachers working on maps during bi-monthly meetings/PD; Middle School - UDI Academy; SAC presented to faculty on Mindfulness; Staff participate in online Trauma Informed Training; Outside Agency presents on Trauma Informed Schools; Polly Bath - behavioral supports. Elementary School - Polly Bath faculty meeting held on 9-30-19; Polly worked all day on 9/30 & 10/1/19 with teachers and in the SSC; Next visit from Polly will be on 2/10/20; February Polly was here on 2/10 and 2/1 Met with teachers SSC, the SA, Dean and Nicole Dunham to discuss ow data from Fastbridge screening can be used most effectively; UDO overview and PD options provided for faculty.

Updated for September 14, 2020 - District wide work - Created SEL plan; implementing Character Strong curriculum district wide; Draft MTSS Plan; PBIS Academy set to start at HS; Math instruction Academy at Elementary and Middle; Wilson Reading Training.

Objective #3 - to promote the learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, community members and organizations. Student Leadership Opportunities (world of difference, NH Teen Institute, Links. MTSS Grant; Pride rallies climate and culture surveys, weekly support meetings in every building; facebook daily/weekly posts; morning show produced bi-monthly at the high school; weekly family quick notes; monthly superintendent newsletter; regular collaboration with DCF and local law enforcement to support students and families.

Updated for September 14, 2020- Parent Advisory group met 2 times last school year; 2 student focus groups to gather information on experiences; Superintendent notes and building; Weekly building notes

Objective #4 - Professional growth and reflecting on practice. SIP being reviewed with teachers to review benchmarks; Walkthrough data shared at faculty meetings; monthly cabinet reports; Data being utilized for FY21 PD planning and next round of improvement plans - early summer summit with leadership teams; MTSS plan; Superintendent Entry Plan.

Updated for September 14, 2020 - District wide work: Reopening Committees provided feedback on reopening plan areas; ILT's will implement protocols and processes for assessing practice; Teachpoint being implemented - October PD day

See MTSS Year 1 Planning Document (attached)

Mike Henault: the next step would be to compile ratings based on the state rubric based on your evidence. Mike is willing to collect ratings and present at the next meeting. There is a state rubric, Aaron gave back in August and Mike will reshare with the committee. If everyone rates and gives comments, he will put together the rating and summarize the comments. If they can get to Mike in 2 weeks, he will put it together and present at the next committee meeting.

- 103708 **Chairman's Report - None**
- 103709 **Unfinished Business - None**
- 103710 **New Business - None**
- 103711 **Action Items - None**
- 103712 **For the Good of the Order -**

Bethany DeMarco: wished everyone the best of luck starting off the new school year.

Regina Hill: the administrative teams have done a great job, great resources, wishing everyone good luck, hang in there we will get through it.

Adam Emerson: good luck to students and families, be patient and trust in the people we have in the schools

Marty Bush: thanked Aaron for his hard work and the task that you had to accomplish with this COVID and thanked everyone and hope they appreciate it. You did a fantastic job.

Nannette Reid: The 8th grade orientation was great and went very well.

Mike Henault: thanks to administrative staff. We are doing the best we can in a tough situation. Appreciate Aaron's hard work, there will be hiccups and we will get through it.

Mike Mucci: Son did the 8th grade orientation. He was happy to see his peers, and the staff was great. Wishing everyone good luck

MOTION: On Motion of Nannette Reid and second by Bethany DeMarco:

VOTED: To adjourn the regular meeting at 8:15 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary

Place: Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting G.L. c. 30a, Sec. 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee Meeting. Members of the public can access this meeting via live stream by calling 1-401-650

The listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Chairman which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.