

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
JULY 12, 2021 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson, Liz Porter, Rosemary Robertson, Lee White

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dean Antipas, Jane Giuliani, Rita Volkmann, Jay Weitlauf

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Philip Piazza, Sam Kilpatrick, Laurie LePine, Thomas Lonsdale

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

MOTION: Watson, Porter: To add an item to the agenda regarding discussion of the upcoming Retreat on July 19, 2021.

II. BOE REGULAR BUSINESS

MOTION: Robertson, White: To approve the COW minutes of June 14, 2021.
PASSED -UNANIMOUSLY

III. ADDED ITEM

Mrs. Watson explained that the purpose of the meeting on July 19, 2021 will be to discuss the Board evaluation. She asked that Board members fill out the evaluation form and return it to Joyce Medling.

IV. UPDATE RE: TRANSFINDER (Attachment #1)

Mr. Lonsdale gave an overview of the Transfinder data.

V. UPDATE RE: SUMMER HIRES

Mrs. LePine noted:

- Three Job Fairs have been done virtually;
- All teaching positions due to retirements have been filled;
- Administrative vacancies:
 - IT position is continuing to be worked on; there is a finalist candidate
 - Athletic Director position – interviews will be taking place this week
- Non-Certified positions will be wrapping up with Principals determining their needs.

VI. UPDATE RE SUMMER LEARNING

Dr. Piazza noted his thanks to Mrs. Post and Mrs. Doolittle for their work and the staff's work on summer learning. He stated that we are off to a wonderful start in our Summer Stars camps this summer. We have had an overwhelming response and the children are having a lot of fun. Survey responses from both the parents as well as the staff have been positive and have demonstrated the desire for more of these camps in the future.

STEM – We had 326 students register for our STEM camp. The teachers did an amazing job of finding creative and engaging activities for the students to participate in. Through the utilization of the STEM grant we were able to utilize Engineering is Elementary materials from the Boston Museum of Science.

The activities ranged from animal habitats and nature in Kindergarten to building rockets and rovers in Grade 5. Students utilized the Engineering design process at all levels to determine problems, construct solutions, test and retest their projects.

Literacy – We had 238 students register for our Literacy week. Again we saw the creativity of the staff shine through with the amazing activities and projects the students were able to create throughout the week. This camp was supported by the summer Teachers College materials we had available. Many teachers utilized these materials to develop more skill based activities. We were able to spend time on the writing process, phonics, word work, and a lot of reading! Kindergarten even was able to spend some quality time each day on social emotional learning by tying their daily read aloud to art and yoga.

Math – We are looking forward to math next week. We currently have 252 students registered to attend. Our collaboration with Cathy Fosnot and her team will be the focal point to the week. We are thrilled to have Janan Hamm joining us to spend time in the classrooms teaching new math games as well as talking to teachers about the Learning landscape. She will also be available for time after the students leave for teachers looking for a more conversation and the opportunity to explore new units that have been developed. We are hoping this will be a wonderful lead into our work with Cathy and her team in the fall.

Extended School Year Program - The Extended School Year Program for students with disabilities is currently in session at Northeast Academy. The enrollment is 130 + students who are all participating in person. This is our largest group to date and is expanding daily as new students register. The best question from the first day came from an incoming kindergarten student who had never been to NEA before and only wanted to know if the school had a playground. Students are focusing on language arts and math instruction in addition to socializing on the playground and during mask and breakfast/snack breaks. Each student's case manager from last year has also sent assignments and activities to NEA that are individualized to meet each student's learning needs. Our instructional staff is supported with a part-time school psychologist, a social worker who is co-teaching, 2 speech and language pathologists and 1 speech intern, an OT, a certified OT assistant, 2 part time PTs and 2 part time BCBAs. We also have a school nurse and a health aide on site to assist with safety and medical issues. A small group of students and staff will continue attending the program from August 2 – 12.

VII. UPDATE RE: FACILITIES

Mr. Kilpatrick noted:

- Elementary projects continue to move forward and should be ready to open in September;
- There have been supply chain issues due to the pandemic;
- Middle School is still wrapping up;
- Projects:
 - Asbestos removal at FHS
 - New Fire Alarm installed at CB
 - Closing of 2 schools (CC/SBB); at MM we are saving a lot of material to make room for Robotics
- Food Services – 1200 meals have been provided at the 3 sites (Library), Branford Manor, Mary Morrisson School).

VIII. REVIEW OF REFERRAL LIST

The Board reviewed the Referral List.

Mrs. White made a referral to the COW for discussion of “One Card, One Community.”

XI. SUGGESTED FUTURE TOPICS

Mrs. Watson requested an update on the ESSA Grant, DEI Committee, and Magnet Themes.

Dr. Ackerman requested an update on the gaps in learning as a result of the pandemic.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Robertson: To adjourn at 7:33 p.m.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

GPS BOE Transfinder

Update 7/12/2021

Project Goals:

- Goal 1: Combine GMS/FHS routes to increase route efficiency and gain more time between bus runs.
- Goal 2: Transport all elementary students safely and efficiently to school in one hour or less.

Project Results:

Goal 1: Combine GMS/FHS routes to increase route efficiency and gain more time between bus runs.

Result: Bus utilization increased from an average of 32.9% to 59.1%.

Goal 2: Transport all elementary students safely and efficiently to school in one hour or less.

Result: Average trip duration of 44 minutes. All runs can be completed in one hour or less.

GMS/FHS Combined Routes

Average Trip Duration: 46 minutes

Average Distance Traveled: 13.8 miles

Average Number of Riders: 45.5 students

Average Number of Stops: 12 stops

Range of Stop: 5-23 stops

Elementary Magnet Routes

Average Trip Duration: 44 minutes

Average Distance Traveled: 17.1 miles

Average Number of Riders: 27.9 students

Average Number of Stops: 16 stops

Range of Stop: 5-30 stops

Proposed Bell Times

SY 2020 - 2021

Fitch High School

Bus Arrival Time	Bell Start Time	Bell End Time	Bus Departure Time
7:15:00 AM	7:25:00 AM	2:07:00 PM	2:17:00 PM

Groton Middle School

Bus Arrival Time	Bell Start Time	Bell End Time	Bus Departure Time
7:55:00 AM	8:05:00 AM	2:45:00 PM	2:55:00 PM

Elementary Schools

Bus Arrival Time	Bell Start Time	Bell End Time	Bus Departure Time
8:45:00 AM	8:55:00 AM	3:30:00 PM	3:40:00 PM

SY 2021 - 2022

Fitch High School

Bus Arrival Time	Bell Start Time	Bell End Time	Bus Departure Time
7:35:00 AM	7:45:00 AM	2:27:00 PM	2:37:00 PM

Groton Middle School

Bus Arrival Time	Bell Start Time	Bell End Time	Bus Departure Time
7:45:00 AM	7:55:00 AM	2:35:00 PM	2:45:00 PM

Elementary Schools

Bus Arrival Time	Bell Start Time	Bell End Time	Bus Departure Time
8:50:00 AM	9:00:00 AM	3:35:00 PM	3:45:00 PM

Next Steps:

- BOE approval of the proposed bell times.
- GPS is working to ensure arrival and dismissal procedure are as safe and efficient as possible between Groton Middle School and Fitch High School.
- GPS is working with the special education department to ensure that all transportation accommodations are met.
- GPS will continue to work with Transfinder to adjust routing as necessary throughout the summer due to enrollment changes.
- GPS staff will complete training with Transfinder to ensure continued efficient routing in the future.