



Mt. Greylock Regional School District

School Committee Education Sub-Committee Minutes

Date: April 23, 2020

Start: 4:02 PM

Adjourn: 5:23 PM

Location:

Zoom

In Attendance:

Committee Members:	Also Present:
Steve Miller, Chair Christina Conry, Vice Chair (until 4:58 pm) Alison Carter, Secretary <u>Absent:</u>	Kimberley Grady, Superintendent Mary MacDonald, MGRHS Principal Nolan Pratt, LES Principal Joelle Brookner, WES Principal Elea Kaatz, WES Assistant Principal Patrick Priester, Acting Director of Pupil Services Eileen Belastock, Director of Academic Technology Maureen Anderson Annaly Babb-Guerra Julia Bowen Stephen Dravis Michelle Johnson Susan Langman Andrea Malone Rob Matthews Amy Perry Mercier Heather Ostrander Libbie Pike Mary Reilly Marie Russell Lori Sayers Judy Turgeon Marty Walter

Item	Comments	Motion	Second	Vote
Call to order	Meeting called to order by Steve at 4:02 PM (WES School Council and Mt Greylock School Council also called to order at 4:02 PM)			
Public comment	None requested			
Approval of minutes	February 12 meeting	Conry	Carter	3-0-0



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<p>A. How is the move to remote learning going, what is working well, what needs improvement, what resources would be valuable?</p>	<p><u>Update from Joelle/WES:</u> This is an adventure no one wanted to go on. It's difficult, but people are doing their best. Reached out to teachers. Some positives: Incredibly high level of collaboration among staff, within and across grade levels and departments. Some lessons are live, some recorded; trying to find balance of screen time. Hearing from some parents that they feel like they're failing. We have to go about this with grace, give each other a break. Nurturing strong partnerships.</p> <p><u>Update from Mary/MGRHS:</u> Going very smoothly where digital learning was in place already (e.g., Canvas). Others are adapting. Trying to find the right balance on lessons, communications. Next week will be a rebalancing of work that goes out.</p> <p>Steve: In past, had tutors from Williams; what resources do we have now?</p> <p>Mary: Williams program is not running. Can pull in volunteers via Zoom. Writing tutors have been available through the library. Assignments not substantial enough yet that tutors have been tapped, and haven't replicated what was in place previously. Privacy and management concerns about remote interactions with students. Ready to start assessing more thoughtfully.</p> <p><u>Update from Nolan/LES:</u> Meeting with teachers this week. Checking on their emotional health first. Teachers having a hard time separating work from home life and it's taking a toll on them mentally. Families are connected and supportive. Happy with the collaboration taking place. Main concerns are technology, students being able to stay connected. Already seeing teachers trying new things and implementing new strategies.</p>
<p>B. What will we do if we are able to return to the buildings, what we will do if we cannot?</p>	<p>Kim: Staff now focused on getting things from the buildings that students and teachers need – but need to keep staff safe first and foremost. Initial advisory of Commissioner was to deepen skills taught up to March 13, not introduce new material. This week was the first time we talked about introducing new material. Waiting for new guidance on power standards for grade levels to determine what is needed for fall. Will have regression - trying to prevent as much as possible and may need to rethink the first month of school across all levels.</p>
<p>C. What are our plans for the summer/next year? What content do we need to make sure students gain?</p>	<p>Kim: Hard to talk about guidance for summer until have advice from the Department of Ed. Will they open up for summer programming? Will buses be available? Admin team meets almost daily to talk about next steps.</p> <p>Joelle: WES and LES met with teachers just before the closure to determine a list of topics they won't be able to teach their kids. Updating it now. Will see how it aligns with power standards that the commissioner gives. They're prepared to do what they need to do to make sure they teach the things that students need to learn.</p> <p>Mary: Looking at curriculum maps. Will help indicate what isn't covered. Power standards that are skill based: Sometimes will have been touched upon but have missed some of the activities to review and deepen. For those more focused on content, will need to address gaps.</p>



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<p>D. How are students and families doing with remote access and at-home learning?</p>	<p><u>Technology availability:</u> Williamstown Library has wifi available from parking lot.</p> <p>Eileen: Getting devices into hands of teachers and students. Getting educational hotspots so people don't have to drive to the library parking lot. Working to train students and parents on technology and working with teachers. Have ethernet options to help free up bandwidth – unfortunately it doesn't work directly for Chromebooks but can work on other devices to free up bandwidth for Chromebooks.</p> <p>Kim: Can update FAQs and resources on how to improve bandwidth, how to get Chromebooks. Will put out in Friday blast.</p> <p><u>How is remote access working?</u> Kim: Depends on who you are talking with. Some having great success, some having challenges. Difficult for parents who are essential employees and have other family members helping who are having difficulty with remote access. Difficult for those with multiple children at home. Every household looks different and hearing from a lot of them. Trying to provide additional supports and comfort. A lot of stressors and don't want assignments from home to be an additional stressor.</p> <p>Joelle: At MG, paras have been doing breakout Zoom rooms with 7th-8th grades and looking forward to trying this at WES.</p> <p>Ali: Zoom is great for connecting with peers and teachers, but really difficult for small children. Are they getting the content? Good to be cognizant that what is being pushed out is not necessarily being received.</p> <p>Heather O: Suggested schedule from teachers very helpful for developing own schedules at home, setting goals to accomplish for the week.</p> <p>Michelle: Is a parent and teacher in another district for K-2 special ed. Primarily use Google Meet. Many not able to connect independently. It gets better as weeks go by and kids get familiar with the technology. Whole group meetings not as educational as we'd like them to be. Great social-emotionally but difficult to deliver academics. Can't do behavior modification over the computer. Different districts doing it independently. From parent perspective: 2.5 hours to one kid is not 2.5 hours to another kid. Concerned that parents aren't wanting to play the role of enforcer.</p> <p>Amy Perry Mercier: Have three elementary aged children. Zoom for first grader is good for connecting with peers.</p> <p>Kim: If running short on devices, contact the school.</p>
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Libbie: Each teacher seems to be on a different platform: email, Canvas, Google. Trying to acquire all assignments has been difficult – if all were streamlined it would be really helpful. A lot of time and frustration in searching for things.

Julia: Gratitude to Kim, Joelle, Mary, Nolan – probably hearing very disparate feedback from parents, appreciate how they are trying to be responsive. Really appreciate seeing teachers move from trying to replicate classrooms to opening up to possibilities that come from this situation. Starting to see more connection. Schedules that change at last minute are very difficult; more notice is better. For parents there is tremendous stress. Can the district communicate even the things from today about ‘lending grace’ to parents, ‘however it’s working is okay’? We need to normalize the challenge. Connection is the most important thing – maybe more important than the curriculum.

Rob: Reiterate the gratitude. Biggest stressor when classes are back to back to back.

Andrea: When the district moved from enrichment into teaching, kids were so happy. Remarkable examples of empathy. Some days heavier than others, unsure of how to structure time outside of Zoom meetings. Can we help develop time management skills for middle schoolers? Kids worried about what they’re going to achieve academically. Would love to hear what power standards are. Would this be a concept that would be helpful for parents to understand?

Kim: Power standards are grade-level-specific standards for what students should get through by the end of the year. Joelle: Haven’t heard yet from DESE what they are. Assuming they will put out a list of the most important things that they should teach by the end of the year. Will absolutely communicate this to parents as soon as we know what they are. Kim: We’re at DESE’s mercy; will push them out as soon as we receive.

Joelle: Speaking as a parent of a senior – having an older HS student is a challenge in itself. How are we going to keep seniors invested in school and connected to school and feel like this is worth doing? Thanks to the HS staff on this call. Seeing a high level of attendance on Zoom meetings. Sad to think about the things they won’t get to experience, but thankful that school is making the effort to keep kids connected in the best way they can.

Steve: Is it worth looking at more peer tutoring? Reading buddies? Can discuss at future meetings.

E. More coordination to ease the burdens on teachers?

Kim: Coordination in Berkshire County – teachers working in region to coordinate with one another. At community level, the Berkshire County Education Task Force brought out Canvas for HS level. Will be thinking about remote learning plans, preparation for future situations.

Steve: With other faculty members we sometimes split lectures, share best practices. Worthwhile to see what we can share about what’s working well and what the challenges are.



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Mary: There's already good sharing within grade levels and disciplines. Don't have the space right now to have conversations around cross-county sharing.

Maureen: Concerned about that thought – what and how I teach is directed to what I know about my students. So this sharing might require more work. While it's lovely to connect it's too much right now.

Kim: To be clear this is not something we're thinking about, but a school committee member wanted to explore it.

Steve: Just trying to facilitate conversations around sharing and possible solutions to problems. Video on content not the same as interactions with students, but useful to hear what other people are doing.

Michelle: Get what Steve is saying, but important to know that at the elementary level many of the things taught have an online learning component already. So to some degree the teaching community already does this. Also overwhelming to sort through everything that exists. Teachers are collaborating to a large degree already; what you want is probably already happening.

Steve: Great, anything we want to relieve burdens on teachers as we go through this.

F. Social-Emotional: How is everyone doing?

Kim: Early on we thought of ways to connect with people. Developed Google form for teachers to help identify students not being reached. Will knock on doors if needed to make sure people are getting what they need to. Commissioner stressing to keep track of kids that we're not hearing from – get them hooked back to the mothership. Have a process we are using for additional outreach. I can be reached on my cell around the clock. Translation services for non-English-speaking homes. If no engagement because too much going on in home, just need to document it. Some families just not in a place where they can manage everything right now; we want to be respectful of that.

Mary: Once we feel like we get our academic structures in place, also looking to develop social connections with students. Middle school looking to put on trivia night, will scale to HS. Seniors in the forefront of our minds, looking for ways to celebrate and create closure. Alternative non-academic connections will contribute to social-emotional health.

Joelle: Reviving 6th grade spirit committee. Recorded 6th grade spirit assembly. Yearbook for 6th graders. Trying to do Shakespeare performance for 4th grade. Encouraging teachers to let us know if concerned about parents – how students are doing is correlated to how parents are doing. Many things to be grateful for every day.



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	Steve: Thanks for stepping up above and beyond, providing wonderful resources, helping kids and community. Wishing everyone the best.			
Business not anticipated	None			
Adjourn	<u>MG School Council</u> : Mary moves to adjourn, Rob seconds. <u>WES School Council</u> : Joelle moves to adjourn, Libbie seconds. <u>School Committee</u> : MOTION to adjourn at 5:23 PM. All pass unanimously.	Miller	Carter	3-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Carter
Education Sub-Committee Secretary