

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
KINGSWOOD ARTS CENTER
OCTOBER 5, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Governor Wentworth Regional School Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Krista Abear, Julianne Cardinal, Timothy Eldridge, Dr. James Manning, James Pittman, Charlene Seibel, Dana Streeter, John Widmer **Excused:** Wendi Fenderson
Middleton Representative: Kelly Tivnan

Also present: Superintendent Kathleen Cuddy-Egbert, Assistant Superintendent Heather Cummings, Business Administrator Kathy O'Blenes, community members and WCTV.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

No changes

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the meeting minutes from the September 10, 2020 School Board meeting.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: Roll call vote with Mr. Eldridge abstaining and all other members voting in the affirmative.

Motion: To approved the manifest totaling \$3,233,952.22.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

- Mr. Widmer said he received a public input email from a parent supporting the continuation of Bass Fishing as a funded team sport.
- Sarah Bird, parent, thanked the administration and teachers and said based on public health data the Districts is in a favorable place. Ms. Bird said she supports athletics, but she would like the Board to consider getting the students back to school full time with a remote option for families who are uncomfortable with in person learning. She said students are enrolling in other activities and the environments may not be as controlled or safe as the school environment. She said she would like to see a list of reasons as to why students are not in school and what needs to be changed to make this happen. Mr. Widmer said the Board will be discussing this tonight.
- Mr. Widmer read a text message which said hybrid seems to be difficult and they would like to see the kids back in school.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

School Opening Update

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said the reopening of school went very well. Students are appreciative and happy to be back at school. It was like they have been wearing masks all along. Staff members are also happy to have students back. The demands on all staff right now are high, particularly the building and maintenance staff, transportation office, the nurses, and, of course, the teachers and our administrators. The classrooms look great and all the mitigation factors are currently in place. The virtual classrooms are underway with a more rigorous schedule and expectations than in the past. Everyone is learning. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert shared pictures from the school opening taken at various schools.

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Bass Fishing: Continue as a Funded Team Sport

A request was submitted to recognize bass fishing as a funded sport.

Motion: To recognize Bass Fishing as a funded sport.

Moved: Ms. Cardinal – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Discussion: Ms. Abear asked for clarification of a non CBA coaching contract. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said when a sport is first recognized it is not listed in the CBA. Ms. Abear asked if it would be added during negotiations and Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said it could be. Mr. Widmer said the stipend is in line with NHIAA.

Vote: Motion passed 7-1 with Mr. Pittman abstaining during a roll call vote.

School Athletics Update

Aaron House, Director of Athletics, thanked the Board for supporting Bass Fishing and gave an update on athletics. He informed the Board that the NHIAA sent Athletic Directors (ADs) a survey to see how many schools would like to participate in the open tournament. Mr. House recommends participation. He said with the open tournament there is the likelihood that football, field hockey, volleyball and soccer could get a draw with a team outside of the Lakes Region bubble who they have been playing their shortened season with. Ms. Seibel asked if all athletes previously required to use mouth guards are wearing them now. Mr. House said NHIAA only requires football and field hockey to wear them; soccer is optional.

Motion: To require all student athletes to wear mouth guards if they were required to wear them pre COVID; including soccer for the balance of the season.

Moved: Ms. Seibel – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

There was more discussion on the open tournament and the possibility of expansion outside of the Lakes Region bubble. ADs will be communicating and sharing their expectations and guidelines. Mr. House said the District may decline if they get a draw and feel the assessments are high.

Motion: To approve participation in the fall sports open tournament.

Moved: Ms. Cardinal – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: Motion passed 7-1. Ms. Seibel voted against the motion.

After School Activities

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said the administrators are looking forward to providing after school activities. Activity leaders want to continue to provide the activities with safety protocols we have put into place. Transportation was a potential concern but transportation is ready to provide additional bus runs if needed. Ms. Abear asked if activities would be offered to both cohort groups and Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said yes. She said the schedules will need to be drafted based on interest.

Motion: To support the start-up of school activities and clubs.

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

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School Enrollment

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said Total School Enrollment is 2,268 with approximately 150 students being homeschooled.

Budget Timeline for 2021-2022

Superintendent Cuddy-Egbert provided the Board with 2021-2022 budget preparation dates and deadlines. Mr. Widmer wants to make sure we can meet the social distance guidelines if we hold the November finance meetings at Crescent Lake School.

LRTC Teacher Ed Program

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said she received an anonymous letter addressed to the superintendent and chair of the school board and the author of the letter heard that some children were allowed to be in school 4 days a week either because their parents requested it, because they did not do well with remote learning or because parents work at the school. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said there are some students who are coming in 4 days a week who are special education students based on their individual education plans or students with learning difficulties. It is not based on parent request but the criteria was established using a rubric. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said it is difficult to respond to an anonymous letter and encouraged the person or group of people to be in touch with her. Also, the Magic Moments Preschool could not operate this year which left a big hole for the students who work in our childcare program at the Tech Center. Without the preschool children to work with there is no practical teaching component and students could not fulfilled their program. A program was developed by Principal Farr for elementary aged students of staff members so the high school students can get the teaching component and staff pay as they would for childcare.

Metric

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said she has reviewed DHHS and CDC guidelines. She also consulted with both Dr. Bournazian and Dr. Noble and both feel now is not the time to reduce mitigation strategies especially with flu season approaching. The three factors that provide the most mitigation for our students and staff are masks, social distancing and air recirculation. She said we would need to reduce our social distancing from 6ft to 3ft and in a couple of places even less than 3ft. She is concerned about reducing one of our most important protections with cases trending upward. Transportation would need to develop new bus routes, which may need to be staggered, and schools may need to start and end at different times based on the staggered bus runs depending on the distancing. On a zoom meeting with the Commissioner and other superintendents it was confirmed that DHHS is overwhelmed and is having difficulty conducting contact tracing. In discussions with Huggins Hospital it is likely that there will be the capacity to do wider spread rapid testing in a short while. We have had at least 10 staff members who have taken the test and the majority of those have needed to quarantine. The quarantine period lasts between 14 and 24 days depending on the situation. She said some districts are discussing going entirely remote during the holiday period due to anticipated travel of community members and faculty (she is not recommending this). There may be an increased risk during this time because some families will ignore the travel guidelines. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said her recommendation is to stay in the hybrid model through December and discuss where things are at our December meeting.

Motion: To continue with the hybrid learning model through December 2020.

Moved: Ms. Seibel – **Seconded:** Mr. Pittman

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Discussion: Ms. Cardinal said she advocates for kids to return full time. What needs to happen in December to allow this? Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said by December we will know how flu season is going and how the transition from being outdoors to being indoors goes. The hospital is also hoping to have rapid testing in the near future. Mr. Eldridge asked when the trimester ends. Dr. Manning said we would not be able to maintain social distancing if students return. Ms. Abear said she would feel better having 6 weeks versus only 3 weeks to make a decision. She also said we need to allow time for the schools to be put back together.

Vote: Motion passed 5-3. Ms. Cardinal, Mr. Eldridge and Mr. Streeter voted against the motion.

Ms. Cardinal asked for a reopening plan outline for the November school board meeting.

Winter Weather

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert read a letter to parents notifying them of the winter weather procedures used to decide if school should be delayed, released early or cancelled. The letter will be published on the district and school web pages.

NH School Boards Association

Mr. Widmer said the NHSBA is looking for resolutions for the coming year. The Delegate Assembly will be a remote meeting. He said the Board is almost at full capacity with the appointment of four new members.

Ms. Abear asked if the construction on Route 16 is impacting transportation.

VII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Widmer said expressions of sympathy were sent to Ms. McCabe, Ms. Finethy and Ms. Russo. Get well wishes were sent to Ms. Armstrong.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Ms. Abear said the Academic Affairs committee is presenting several policies for a first read (AC: Nondiscrimination Opportunity, ACAA: Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students, ACAA-R: Student Discrimination/Harassment and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, ACAB: Harassment and Sexual Harassment of School Employees, ACAB-R: Employee Discrimination/Harassment and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, JHBB: Attendance Policy on Days Designated as Remote Learning Days). All but one of the POLICY revisions are a result of changes in Federal Regulations.
- Ms. Cardinal reported on behalf of the Buildings & Maintenance Committee announcing that Eversource is going to be at Effingham Elementary School on October 14 and we should be online with solar panels soon thereafter.
- Mr. Widmer said the finance committee meetings are scheduled for November 17, 18 and 19.

IX. CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Advanced Planning

Upcoming events were read from the bottom of the agenda.

Public Input

- Rob, parent of a fourth grader expressed his desire to have students back in school full time. He said he is in favor of athletics but they are contradictory compared to academics.
- Dr. Copenhaver spoke in opposition on the Board's earlier vote to require mouth guards for athletic teams.

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Closing Comments by Board Members

None

X. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Motion: At 9:13 pm a motion was made to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II to discuss a student matter and personnel.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: It was a unanimous vote.

Motion: To allow student to continue as a tuition student paid for by sending district or by the family.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the Governor Wentworth Regional School Board and the Governor Wentworth Support Staff Association regarding terms and conditions of employment under the reopening plan due to COVID-19.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Ms. Cardinal

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: 9:47 pm a motion was made to end non-public session.

Moved: Ms. Seibel – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

There was no further business.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 9:48 pm a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board 11.09.2020