

PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL OFFICE
27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS AND CENTRAL STAFF ONLY
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

VIRTUAL MEETING

JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <http://zoom.us/j/5698829070>

PUBLIC PLEASE CALL: +1 929 205 6099 US
MEETING ID: 569 882 9070
PASSCODE: 443360

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Johnson
Mr. Foote, Mr. Elsaghir, Mrs. Kremmel

Absent: Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

Others Present: Dr. Semmel, Superintendent, Mr. Hendrickson, Business Manager,
Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology, Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil
Personnel and Special Education Services and Mrs. Mozak-Pezza, Director
of Curriculum & Instruction

1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mr. Seaman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

2020 AUG 31 PM 12:38

Erica Colajoy
TOWN CLERK

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the Agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 10, 2020. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions motion passes.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meetings of June 23, 2020, August 3, 2020, August 6, 2020. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mr. Showers any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, any opposed, motion passes.

4. **Superintendent's Update**

Summary of Opening of Schools

1. On the Plymouth Public Schools Webpage there is a place called reopening schools, click there and you will find a great deal of information.
2. Schools will be opening under Plan B – Hybrid.
 - a) students returning on September 3 - Cohort A Students (½ day)
 - b) students returning on September 4 – Cohort B Students (½ day)
 - c) remote learners – September 3 & 4 limited participation
3. The Plan is to remain in the Hybrid model until September 18 to make certain students and teachers receive a chance to practice using the socially distance process, i.e. making certain they wear a mask, only 50% of students in a room at a time.
4. The District will continue to use the advice of medical professionals and the health data it receives on a weekly basis to decide if the district can move to Plan A (bringing every student back), if it should remain in Plan B, or if the district needs to go into Plan C which is the full distance learning plan.
5. On the district website and the State's re-opening page, there is information on how many cases per 100,000 puts districts in various modes. These are the leading indicators and the district will be using these. These will be placed on the website so parent, staff and community can see these numbers.
6. Currently, the health data indicates we can return in full. We can bring 100% of our students back. But, we have chosen Plan B due to the high anxiety, i.e. making sure we practice these procedures. However, if the data remains the same as it is, Dr. Semmel indicated he would advocate the district go to Plan A.
7. The district will be following all of the mitigation strategies that are suggested by the CDC, i.e. hand sanitizers in every class, social distancing to the maximum feasible distance, masks will be required to be worn by all students and staff. If students and staff are insubordinate to these requirements, there are going to have to be consequences which will be a progressively disciplinary process, which includes suspensions. All cleaning and disinfectant protocols will be followed per the CDC which is also on the website. Ventilation process is being followed up by

Jim Mazon, Director of Facilities. All staff and all students will be asked to do a daily health check. Daily temperature checks will not be done at the buildings. The check list is on the webpage, i.e. temperature above 100.4°, sore throat. Do not give your child a fever reducer and send them to school. We are waiting for guidelines from the Department of Public Health regarding quarantining and isolating strategies.

8. We are in the process of finalizing our bus schedules. Currently, they are not ready to be produced.

Question: What is the process for an individual that has a health need or special needs that would not be able to wear a mask. What is the process?

Response: Recently, the state came out with executive orders 7NN requiring that there be medical documentation for someone who needs a mask. If an individual has medical documentation, but are not identified as special education, we will likely bring them to a 504 process because they are looking for an accommodation.

Additional Response: If a student is unable to wear a mask because it's a skill deficit. We are going to teach it just like we teach it to any student that has a skill deficit. There is also a place on our website that is dedicated to increasing mask tolerance for any student who is having difficulty with it that does not have a mask exemption. Please visit our reopening section of our website and there is a big section called "mask toleration".

Mrs. Mozak-Pezza –Director of Curriculum & Instruction

The State Board of Education voted to decrease the number of days in a school year this year from 180 days to 177 days which provides us with 3 additional days of professional development. The first day will be August 27, 2020 which will be spent on health and safety. There will not be a traditional Convocation this year. Speakers have video taped themselves. August 28, social and emotional learning and drama. August 31, curriculum work. September 1, technology. September 2, focus online.

ESSER Grant - \$158,000 obtained from the federal grant, Cares Act. All of the funds are being used on staffing which will help staff the buildings in a way that will allow us to maintain smaller class sizes and also to have smaller lunch groups and facilitate social distancing throughout the buildings. Some hires will include, i.e. District-Wide Building Substitutes, Lunch & Recess Monitors, Student Monitor at the high school, increase of band teacher at the middle school to .57, increases the 2 coaches at the middle school to full time and a long term substitute for Plymouth Center School.

Question: Are those temporary positions for just this year?

Response: Yes. The funds need to be spent by September 30 of 2021.

Question: And those positions all fall within the \$158,000.

Response: Yes. We are not fully funding the District-Wide Building Subs through the ESSER Grant some of it is being funded internally but the ESSER Grant is taking a little more than half of the cost.

Dr. Semmel - The District has a substitute line item in its budget so it will be paid for through that budget. Concerned about getting the 6 District-Wide Building Substitutes. Expecting another round of grants. No amount is known at this time. The Cares Act gave the state a certain amount of money and they had their discretion about what they were going to do with the funds and they decided to put approximately \$160 million back to the districts.

Comment: Students who are education majors and have not found a job yet, this is another great opportunity for them to get into a school district, get recommendation letters, and actually work with principals and teachers. Maybe they may be called upon in the future if a district has an opening. It's the best way to get a job.

Mr. Hendrickson – Business Manager

Update of Facilities Work -- Summer

Plymouth Center School – redoing cafeteria ceiling, lights have already been replaced with high efficiency lighting; fans replaced with reversible fans; finished replacing all of the ceiling tiles by the end of this week due to damage from previous water leakage; replacing stair treads in the stairwells to be completed tomorrow; bushes cut by the kindergarten area; new fence installed around the playground.

Harry F. Fisher Elementary School – half of the roof was replaced on the right as you look at the entrance and also gutters were repaired; leaf areas were cleaned out; chimney was wrapped, doors painted. The total project was well over \$300,000. It came in at \$25,000 - \$30,000 under budget because the solar panel removal reinstallation took fewer people and fewer days.

Eli Terry Jr. Middle School – bars on the main entrance doors are being replaced, entry door hardware for the gym ordered, gate put back to restrict traffic.

Terryville High School – track resurfaced and restriped tomorrow and Friday, lane numbers will be put in as well as markings for hurdles and passing zone for relays; scoreboard to be delivered by the end of this week and will be installed next week; all permits received from the town; sidewalk agreement reached with Tobacco and five spots should be repaired next week.

5. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

6. **New Business**

(a) First Read of Policy P4000.1/P5145.44 – Personnel – Certified & Non-Certified (Students/Title IX)

(b) First Read of Regulation R4000.1/R5145.44 – Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified/Students/Title IX: Grievance Procedure/Complaint Process

Each Board Member was provided copies of the above in their packet.

7. **Board Member/Committee Reports**

A. Finance/Operations - Mr. Hendrickson, Business Manager

1. The Finance/Operations Accounts-by-Facilities Report

Year-end balances - \$157,040.00; \$900,000 encumbered; now down to \$408,000.00. July statement new format due to Infinite Vision. Layout is roughly the same. 5.2% of the budget spent year to date vs 3.6% last year which is largely due to the fact that we paid the August 1st health insurance bill in July which was approximately \$340,000.00 and the difference between this year is approximately \$360,000.00 – the difference is only about \$20,000.00 which at this stage of the year is relatively insignificant. All expenditures to date have been largely administration, clerical salary, purchases for PEE and custodial materials.

Comment – Dr. Semmel – There is a motion to put the \$150,740.00 – to make a request to the Board of Finance to put that money into the Board’s sinking fund. For the past two years, we’ve paid attention to our other encumbered funds that never get spent and we’ve gone back to the Board of Finance to request that that money gets put into the sinking fund. So, we actually go twice to ask that, now that we’ve paid all our bills and that could be October/November that that money also goes to our sinking fund. This year there are a couple of ways the Board could go. (1) Either let the rest of that money just go back to the Town; but, I’m saying this now because I won’t be here in October/November; or (2) The Board could also be looking at how the budget is going and it could change its mind and say it knows that it needed to spend more money on PPE than expected. So rather than just have it go back to the Town, where the Board may need to go ask for it, it could also make the decision to make a request to put it into the sinking fund and then work to try and get money back that way. This is something to think and talk about if the Board has extra money from 2020 and this year ends up costing us. It’s all one pocketbook the Board of Education and the Town. Suggest having that conversation with the town’s people and ask what do you want the Board to do with this because we’re going to need it or we’re not going to need it. Just want to make sure and the Board was clear when October/November arrives and they are talking about how much extra money is still available for the 2020 budget. It is a pool of money that the Town could use to try and fill whatever void might exist.

- * The Final Accounts-by-Facilities Report for fiscal year end June 30, 2020 and the Accounts-by-Facilities Report for the month of July 2020. These reports will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance.

The Accounts-by-Facilities report will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance.

2. Year-End Surplus and Sinking Fund Contribution

MOTION: To entertain a motion that the year-end surplus of \$150,740.82 be transferred to the Sinking Fund which would increase the balance of the Sinking Fund to approximately \$340,000.00.

Motion Mrs. Johnson, second Mr. Showers, any discussion.

ROLL VOTE: Mr. Showers - yes Mrs. Johnson - yes Mr. Foote - yes
Mr. Elsaghir - yes Mrs. Kremmel - yes Mrs. Lucian - yes
Mrs. Kulesa - yes

Vote: Yes 7 No 0 Motion passes.

B. Personnel Report – Dr. Semmel, Superintendent

Dr. Semmel reviewed the new hires, resignations and open positions with the Board of Education Members.

Some positions posted are grant positions funded by the ESSER Grant. Coaching Positions – unsure as this time what is happening with athletics. The Spanish Teacher at the middle school is a one-year position, no applicants at this time. To the Public – the district is seeking a long term substitute nurse; tutor, general music teacher, recess monitors, lunch aide positions. Visit the district website for open positions.

8. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

9. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mr. Seaman -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

No Report

Mr. Elsaghir -- Plymouth Center School

No Report

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

Absent

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Booster Club

Absent

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School

No Report

Mr. Foote -- SEPTA

No Report

Mrs. Kremmel -- CABE

CABE has a wealth of information on COVID and opening of schools on their website and they have been hosting all of the updates from the State Department of Education. If anyone has any questions their website is a great resource.

Mrs. Johnson -- EdAdvance

EdAdvance – Meeting on July 21, 2020. Headstart and FRC has been removed from Plymouth Center School, however, they will now be at the old Main Street School which is owned by EdAdvance. EdAdvance received a \$131,000 from the federal government so the building will now be completely revamped.

Mr. Showers --- District Safety Committee

No Report

10. **Board Comments**

Mrs. Johnson – Announced that after 17 years she and Mrs. Kremmel have resigned from SEPTA. However, they are working with a group of parents to take over their spot.

Mr. Foote - Best Wishes to Dr. Semmel and Mr. Hendrickson. Pleasure working with the both of them. Both have been very professional through the years. Good Luck

Mrs. Kulesa -- Welcome Back to a new school year. The district definitely has the safety and well-being of the students in mind whether they are coming back to the buildings or choose on-line learning. Hopes everyone can find the same excitement for the new school year.

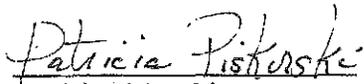
Mr. Seaman – Echoed Mrs. Kulesa comments and added, this is not a traditional opening but he is looking forward to the new school year and hopes we can return to full-time when the time is right. He is appreciative of all the work put forth by the teachers, administration, nurses, etc. Information changes not only daily but sometimes hourly. But to all, thank you for all of your hard work in getting the schools open this year.

11. **Next Board Meeting** –The next Regular Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education is on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Terryville High School.

12. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second, Mr. Foote all in favor, motion passes.

Respectfully Submitted



Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education