

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

SPECIAL Board of Education Meeting

Approved Minutes of July 16, 2020

Remote/Electronic Meeting

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman

William Oros, Vice Chairman

Eugene Marchand, Secretary

Mary Kortmann

Barbara Paré

Christina Williams

Board Members Absent:

Robert Williams

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools

Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the Salute to the Flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

J. Beausoleil read the two emails received (one from Heather Kinsley and the other was submitted without a name) for Audience of Citizens [both are attached to these minutes].

IV. Report of Chairman

J. Beausoleil noted that, at least, the daily changes to the Governor's Executive Orders have seemed to stop. She added that, now, the district is required to come up with three distinct reopening plans to be submitted to the State by July 24. She thanked the dedicated staff who are committed to this task. She noted her appreciation that other stakeholders, such as teacher representatives, are being included in the process.

J. Beausoleil said the Diversity, Inclusion, and Racism agenda item will be rescheduled to the August 13 meeting, due to the work that needs to be done in developing the reopening plan.

J. Beausoleil added that the Joint Town Finance and BOE Fiscal Committee meeting will be held on July 30.

J. Beausoleil informed the Board that she is working with the Superintendent with guidance from the local health department to see when the Board can meet again in person.

V. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Minutes of June 25, 2020

MOTION: To approve the minutes of June 25, 2020

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VI. Old Business

A. COVID-19 Update

B. Planning for 2020-2021 School Year

Dr. Petrone updated the Board on the development of Coventry's Reopening Plan. He said the State has given guidance, which has been very strict in some areas and more flexible in other areas. He said there are approximately 30 staff members involved in the development, which includes EAC leadership, administrators, nurses, and teachers.

Dr. Petrone added that the district is tracking the COVID-19 expenses, including materials and staff hours. He reviewed some items that have been purchased, from web cams to ultraviolet light sanitizers.

C. Williams asked why the UV light was chosen over ozone. Dr. Petrone said it has been indicated this is cheaper and more effective. Mr. Carroll added that the ozone process is not recommended.

E. Marchand asked how many UV lights were purchased. Dr. Petrone said there are two in each building, they are operated by custodians, and the total cost for eight was \$23,000.

B. Paré asked if this was purchased out of equipment. Dr. Petrone said it was purchased under facilities and it is being tracked as a COVID-19 expense. He reviewed how the Board would be able to see this tracking monthly on the Management Report.

C. Williams asked if manual cleaning would still happen, or would it be all by light. Dr. Petrone said both would happen. He added that the concern over transferring the virus through surfaces has declined.

Dr. Petrone said we are moving to one-to-one devices for every student; we have dismantled carts.

C. Williams asked what happens when someone gets sick and you have to go to distance learning and all of the devices are at school. Dr. Petrone said they are working on those details and we may have 6-12 students take them home each day. He added that the guidance from the SDE is, currently, not good and they are saying we may not have to close all schools if there is a case. He said he will be consulting with the local health officials on all of those decisions.

Dr. Petrone reviewed other aspects of the plan and changes that will take place with the opening. He added that the State has reduced the mandate of the 2020-21 school year to

177 days for students. He said Coventry's calendar would be brought back to the Board for further review, but he added that this will save the district a considerable amount of money in regard to unexpected staff development that has to be scheduled.

The Board continued to discuss various areas of the challenges of opening school. Dr. Petrone focused on the different plans; fully return to school in-person; hybrid of remote and in-person learning; and full remote learning. Regarding the full return to school in-person, he mentioned that it looks as if a state poll indicated 20% of staff are saying they cannot return to their schools.

C. Williams asked about the full return to school in-person and what transportation will look like. Dr. Petrone reviewed various transportation points, including the parent option to drive their children to school, masks on buses, and cleaning of the buses between runs. His comments included that the district cannot force parents to drive their children to school; that masks will be provided on buses if students don't have them; and if it would be necessary to provide cleaning supplies to M&J.

C. Williams asked what drop-off and pick-up time would look like. Dr. Petrone said at GHR and grades above, parents mostly just drop-off and go. He said, currently, they are considering not allowing visitors at the schools, so drop-off and pick-up will need to be addressed at CGS. He added, they are looking at using the wing doors in conjunction with classroom or cohorts coming and going at the same time.

C. Williams asked about face shields vs masks. Dr. Petrone said face shields would be for those students with special needs, but otherwise it will be masks. He added, if the teacher is behind the plexiglass giving instruction, they can take off their masks. Dr. Petrone said, based on state guidelines, at this point, students will be wearing masks inside at all times and are only able to remove them if they are outside. The Board talked about students refusing to wear masks and that students would not be allowed to stay if they refuse, unless there is a health issue.

C. Williams asked about the cohorting of students and the current guidelines. Dr. Petrone said the State has said the cohorting should be just one small factor in the plan and it is not a huge major driver.

C. Williams asked what happens when someone tests positive. Dr. Petrone said there are concerns regarding privacy for students and staff. He added that we are waiting for guidance from the state on this.

C. Williams asked if there is a possibility of using contract tracing wearables. Dr. Petrone said this has not been discussed.

C. Williams asked if parents can opt out sending children to school if we are in the full return to school in-person mode. Dr. Petrone said they are waiting for further guidance from the state, as the district cannot run two programs full time.

C. Williams asked about facilities and the space we will need and what areas will we be utilizing. Dr. Petrone said that we are running short on space and finding storage is a real issue. He said he has been working with Mr. Trudelle to address all available spaces such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, and outside spaces when possible. The Board talked about

recess and what that would look like – possibly in squares by classrooms with no co-mingling.

The Board continued to discuss various items, such as supplies, restroom fixtures, and student pick up.

The discussion turned to the hybrid plan.

Dr. Petrone reviewed the thought process in developing this plan. He talked about the proposed schedules: A-B Days where students go to school on alternate days and one day of distance learning for all students when teachers would hold “office hours” in the morning and have professional development in the afternoon; and AA-BB Days where students would go to school two days in a row with one day of distance learning. He said they are leaning toward A- B Day weeks. C. Williams voiced her concern regarding the amount of computer work and would like to see less screen time in learning and more options for learning with paper and books. Dr. Petrone said they are looking at this as well with the hybrid model. He said it will be more difficult with full remote learning, but they are working on it and they do not want everything revolving around devices.

C. Williams asked about extracurricular activities and athletics. Dr. Petrone said at this point, there will not be extracurricular activities. He added that sports is being discussed; we will wait for the CIAC and other districts' decisions too.

Other items discussed included, the challenges district will face having to follow FMLA regulations, in regard to staff working.

C. Williams talked about the challenges associated with full remote learning. Dr. Petrone said we will face many of the same challenges; however, we learned a lot and we will attempt to offer even more social/emotional support. He added, our hope is we will get better at the technology part and that we will have more personal interaction for students as well.

C. Williams asked what happens to the transportation contract if we go to full remote learning again. Dr. Petrone said, nothing at this time, as we have the same protections.

Dr. Petrone noted that the goal is to keep HEEC open and it is at full capacity at this moment and there is a lot of interest. He added that if we go to full remote learning this year, we would not be able to offer it at no charge to parents.

VII. Report of Board Members

A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of July 16, 2020

W. Oros said a lot of the information from the meeting was covered by Dr. Petrone in relation to the opening of school. He added that opening school will be expensive.

W. Oros noted that the E-Rate award was received and we will receive 60% of our internet costs; this has been budgeted for accordingly.

W. Oros added that the CHS Walls work was approved.

W. Oros continued and said the ESSER grant application is on hold. He added that part of the hold-up is determining how the funds will be distributed.

1. VOTE: Request use of 1% account to cover CGS Parking Lot Change Order

Dr. Petrone reviewed the change, which was related to the dumpster area.

MOTION: To authorize the superintendent to send a letter of request to access the 1% non lapsing account to cover the cost of the CGS parking lot project change order

By: E. Marchand Seconded: M. Kortmann
Result: Motion passes unanimously

2. VOTE: Approve Budget Transfer

W. Oros noted that this transfer was to move \$40,000 from account 300-500 Purchased Services to account 700 property.

Dr. Petrone said the network core switch was purchased, due to the CIP being eliminated.

MOTION: To approve a budget transfer of \$40,000 from account 300-500 Purchased Services to account 700 property to cover technology infrastructure needs

By: M. Kortmann Seconded: C. Williams
Result: Motion passes unanimously

VIII. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (Bargaining Unit Negotiations Update)

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions related to Bargaining Unit Negotiations with the Superintendent present

By: C. Williams Seconded: W. Oros
Result: Motion passes unanimously

IX. Open Session

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 9:39 p.m.

X. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

By: W. Oros Seconded: B. Paré
Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: July 30, 2020

From: [Heather Kinsley](#)
To: [audienceBOE](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School Opening Meeting
Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:20:08 PM

I currently have a child that will be entering Coventry Public School system in the Fall depending on the policies and procedures that will be put in place.

Could just wearing a mask on buses and when moving to appropriate classes be a compromise?

There is no way young children will not touch their mask/re adjust it/take it off/pull it down at least 20 times in a school day. Once a mask is touched without sanitizing or cleaning your hands, it is considered contaminated and should be changed. Who will be policing the contaminated masks? Will additional masks be provided to parents? Could there be different policies in place for the younger children? I believe some counties in MA have decided to require masks from 2nd grade and up.

That being said, if masks are required for younger grades, (more specifically Kindergarten) I will be un-registering my child for the Fall 2020 year.

From: [loisbf31](#)
To: [audienceBOE](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School buses
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2020 6:56:19 PM

I would like to know how you are going to manage transporting students once schools open. What about safety of the bus drivers.

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy , an AT&T LTE smartphone