

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 2, 2020  
6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Sharon Hartley, Chairperson, Anne Fernandes, Vice Chairperson, Tina Rood, Danni Kleiman, Robin M. Rounseville

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Doug White, Michael Nelson, Principal, Derek Medeiros, Charles West

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:04 P.M.**

**Dr. White** opened the meeting with a statement.

**Over the last couple of months, our District has been dealing with not only the COVID-19 Pandemic, that has impacted the daily education of our Students, we are also in the midst of some horrific racial events at the local and National level that has caused pain, anger and hurt to many of us in our Community. Despite the effort as an Educational Community to address the topic of Racism through curriculum and training for both Staff and Students, we still have not been able to stop the deplorable racial actions and behaviors of some. As a result, it is the job of Educators to keep looking for ways to ensure we find policies and processes to help all our Students realize the importance of equity and justice for all. We need to stop racism in our Community that is causing this pain and anger and manage to embrace and care for each other. I know this is the top priority of our leadership Team and they are committed to collaborate, advocate and support the effort that is needed to make this happen. Thank you!**

**Chairperson Hartley** stated that she appreciates the work of our leaders and preparing to move forward and acting with kindness, vision and leadership.

**Dr. White** stated that this afternoon the Leadership Team has put out a statement that everyone should receive as well as on our website about the direction and the work we are looking to do across the District. Also, the principal at the Junior High made a Statement in his morning announcement yesterday and Mr. Duvall made a video expressing his concerns and the work he is going to do at the High School level as well. We as Educators need to make sure we are there for our Students and our Community.

**Tina Rood** saw Mr. Cormiers presentation and saw some of the Parents comments below it encouraging him to be even bolder and call out racism as it is and say that we are an anti-racism School. Tina also said that the words coming from parents in the community is to be bold.

**APPROVE MINUTES FOR MAY 7, 2020**

Chairperson Hartley stated that she has one correction. The Student whose poem she read is Quinn Perry.

Danni Kleiman said that her name is spelled Danni not Danny that needs to be corrected.

Also when put in the minutes that 6<sup>th</sup> grade came to pick up their things, the other grades were not put in the minutes and they came to pick up their things also.

**REMOTE LEARNING:**

Derek Medeiros stated that they outlined what their remote learning plans and weekly schedules were looking like. They continue to grade level poc staff meetings to review the remote learning plans.

Conversations continue to be about what those plans look like and making sure that the Students are being exposed to the pre-requisite standards or power standards that the State put out. Our

conversations continue to be about what the weekly plans look like. Mr. Medeiros also stated that we want to make sure we honor the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students the right way. I will be inviting the School Committee to a virtual 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation ceremony. Also, inviting the Staff, School Committee and Students and there is a 100 person limit. Last day of School is the date of the graduation, June 18, 2020.

#### **SUMMER AND FALL REOPENING:**

Michael Nelson spoke to the Committee about Summer Camps and who is running them. Department of Education released their guidelines for Summer camps. Also, the Department of Early Education Department released their guidelines for Emergency childcare that will start June 8, 2020. There are quite a few guidelines and safety precautions need to be in place. Mr. Nelson also stated that they have been planning for multiple scenarios with Charlie West and Kyle Letendre.

Chairperson Hartley asked if Summer programming would take place in Old Rochester?

Mr. Nelson said that they are planning for that but they are not positive at this time.

Chairperson Hartley asked how are we handling the devices that have been borrowed and what about the classroom closings?

Dr. White stated that there will be a more In depth closing that will take place.

Derek Medeiros stated that the Teachers would come in as they did when they cleaned out the Students lockers and when they came in to get some of their classroom supplies. The Governor hasn't cleared anyone to come in the building yet all together so they can come in a few at a time to clean for the upcoming new year and get their belongings.

Dr. White stated that the Tech Team is developing a plan on how they are going to get all the chrome books back. A letter is going to be sent to all the Students that have one. Students with the chrome books will come and drop them off and sign that they did return them.

Chairperson Hartley asked if there was anything regarding fall opening.

**Dr. White** stated that there were a couple of meetings earlier in May and the meetings with the Commissioner was about PPE's or safety supplies and the need to start purchasing them right away so that we're not caught off guard at the beginning of the year. Things such as masks, gloves, cleaning supplies, gowns, shields, thermometers... The State is also looking at buying large quantities and then the Schools can make the purchases through the State. The Towns have care money and this is exactly what that money is for so it's not coming out of our budget money it will come out of the surplus money. The Commissioner is coming out with the guidance for reopening in the fall around June 15<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioner stated that about 85 to 90% of the guidance is following these steps so if your going to go out of those steps, you have to give him just cause for why you are not going to follow the steps for opening in the fall. He also talked about a continuum and he talked about a red where it would be a current status of remote learning from home all the way to green where it is normal as we left it. It will probably be a blending of in person and remote.

#### **READS APPOINTMENT:**

Anne Fernandes made a motion to appoint Michael Nelson as the READS representative.

Dani Kleiman seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

#### **BRING STAFF MEMBERS UP TO MINIMUM WAGE:**

Anne Fernandes made a motion to bring staff members up to minimum wage.

Tina Rood seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

#### **CULTURAL PROFICIENCY UPDATE:**

Michael Nelson spoke about the actions that have happened locally and nationally. The statement that was released by the leadership council this afternoon and was emailed to all the Committee Members. It

is critical that we need to take it seriously. Racism has no place in our Schools. All of us need to be bold and make sure that we make our Schools safe for everyone. It is an ongoing commitment.

Mr. Nelson also stated that there was a meeting back in the late Summer of 2019 about anti-Racism. We started a Cultural Proficiency Team in each Building. Each Team was made up of 5 members and met quarterly. For those who may remember, on opening day they made a specific choice of Mr. Steve Pemberton who is the Author of the book, "A chance in the world". They picked him for a specific message to set a tone. On October 31<sup>st</sup> our professional development team took training from an outside consultant whose President and founder of Changeworks Consulting. There were three main objectives with that training, one was to engage in self exploration and reflection of personal attitude believes and assumptions regarding equity, cultural proficiency and anti-bias education.

Become familiar with the principals elements, tools and barriers and equity and cultural proficiency in Schools. And to begin to develop awareness, knowledge and skills and interrupting bias, creating policies that support educational equity. November 1<sup>st</sup> the entire leadership Team participated in the same training. On January 17<sup>th</sup> diversity talks kicked off the personal development day. Mr. Nelson said that the Cultural Proficiency Team worked with their specific buildings. They heard from a Nationally renowned speaker Dr. Adolf Browne who really emphasized the need for talk. The COVID-19 came and changed everything. Partnered with Diversity Talks and worked with 725 Students on a presentation. As far as future action items, More future Social Media training for Students grades, Survey's grades 6-12 on hold for now. We need to bring more learning opportunities to Students and we need to take a look at our policies and procedures around racism.

Anne Fernandes asked if Diversity talks is available to the Committee.

Michael Nelson said yes it is.

Anne Fernandes asked Derek Medeiros who was on the Cultural

Derek Medeiros stated I am on the Committee and Mr. Cruz and Mr. West, Ms. Higgins and Mr. Solair, Mr. Cioper.

Anne Fernandes asked Derek Medeiros how the handle the Team and what they do.

Derek Medeiros stated that they work as a Team and meet at RMS and they work on articles on professional development day. We are going to continue the work and the conversation and the trainings.

Charlie West also talked and said that how are we providing our students with the information and how are we providing with the sensitivities around racism. Responsive classroom and the way our Teachers respond to this.

Danni Kleiman also said that maybe if the Parents come in for some of the training as well it might move out more globely.

Michael Nelson stated that that was great information. We are willing to partner with anyone that we need to.

Tina Rood spoke to the Committee and asked about books and are we choosing books to help us with this.

Michael Nelson said that our curriculum has more than one story as a whole. Reviewing curriculum is a serious process that takes time and it doesn't happen overnight. We are going through a transition right now.

Tina Rood asked that in the past we have done a group read, have we thought of doing one that has Teachers doing it in a different perspective.

Michael Nelson said that it was a great suggestion and we will keep exploring that.

Tina Rood asked who organized the group (Tri-Town against Racism) and how can we get in touch with them?

Michelle Hartley said that she could help with that.

Anne Fernandes said to contact Allison.

Michael Nelson stated that Barbara Sullivan asked to be added to one of the upcoming School Committee Agenda's for transparency purposes.

Tina Rood stated that Michael Nelson has been doing a lot of work for this Committee and asked if there are ways that they can get involved and support.

Michael Nelson said that there is a joint meeting coming up and in speaking to the Chairperson, Cary Humphrey, they have asked for us to invite all School Committee Members from specific Boards and to invite our Towns People. Mr. Nelson also said yes there are ways that the Committee can help.

Chairperson Hartley spoke to the committee about the second event and said the first thing she did was check their policies and they need to review their policies. Chairperson Hartley feels that it is the foundation of our School and it is the step they need to take and to look to other School System to see other anti-racism policies or a policy that is appropriate for us and she has a policy for the Committee to look at that she feels is right for the School System. She also said to Charlie West that he was right about responsive classroom, it does provide a language and ways of responding and acting that can create many cultural warrants that within a School can make a huge difference with Children and Adults and Families so when you use Responsive Classroom, the children say that this is the way we do things around here. Responsive Classroom offers us with a lot of tools and a lot of help. We've made some beginning steps at the beginning and need to un-pack and we need to all respond in the same way. If someone has a backpack that no one has unpacked yet we need to all respond in the same way.

Tina Rood asked if we were providing ways for the Parents to talk to their Children, ideas to talk to their Children that may be uncomfortable?

Michael Nelson said that it goes with what we are trying to do right now.

Charlie West said that he's been thinking a lot about this and we need to be cautious about this. The kids are already dealing with the COVID-19 this year and now they are dealing with this issue.

Anne Fernandes said that there are probably are books in the library for the kids that will help.

#### **SUPPORT STAFF ROLE DURING CLOSURE:**

Michael Nelson said that our Para Professional continue to work under the Special Education Liaison or Teacher. Every case load is different. This support can be looked at in three ways. One to one support for a specific Child, small group support for children that are receiving special services, Para Professionals might be supporting a whole group class also who needs that learning environment. Mr. Nelson also stated that they agreed on weekly development. We have a subscription to Para-professionals online courses, each week we assign 3-5 courses and at the end of each course there is an assessment for them to do about the course that they took. The Para Professionals are under the direction of the Superintendent. Mr. Nelson also wanted to thank the Para Professionals for all of their efforts during the remote learning.

#### **RATIFICATION OF SUPPORT STAFF: amendment**

Anne Fernandes made a motion to approve the Support Staff Memorandum of Agreement As amended.

Danni Kleiman seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

#### **SUMMER WARRANT:**

Dr. White said that the warrants need to be signed so the bills are getting paid. We need to get at least three signatures.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Dr. White said that there are a couple of things to discuss and out of FY20 budget there are a couple of things changed. Three purchases were made and the money had to come out of the FY21 budget to pay for them in the FY20 budget. The adjustments were made. The new amount for the FY21 budget is \$6,309,641.

Anne Fernandes made a motion to approve the FY21 Budget for \$6,309,641.

Tina Rood seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Dr. White also said that he wanted to talk about Leases tonight but he would like to have another meeting at the end of the month to discuss them.

Michelle Harley said that June 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. is available and is good for all Committee Members.

#### **CHAIRPERSON REPORT:**

Michelle Hartley spoke to the Committee and said that she attended a number of meetings this month including the Budget meetings.

#### **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:**

Dr. White wanted to say thank you for the opportunity to serve on these Committees for ten years. Michael Nelson would like to make a request for representation from the School Committee for four bodies, the first being a task force, once the guidance comes up from the Commissioner, to look at what reopening is looking like. Mr. Nelson has a list of Teachers and would like 4 members on the task force, one being a School Committee Member. Also, to have guidance on how to move forward on hiring a central office positions, and hiring a Director of Student Services hiring Committee, also given flexibility from the five chairs around the Title of the Business Manager position.

#### **PRINCIPALS REPORT:**

Derek Medeiros spoke about closing out the School year and how the 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation will be transitioning to the Junior High. He also stated that obviously we are missing a lot of transitional activities for our incoming Families and Students. As an Early Childhood Team they met and discussed how they could provide remotely transition opportunities for our incoming Kindergarten Students. On June 12<sup>th</sup> our Kindergarten transition website will be launched. On that website there will be video tours of the building using Mr. Medeiros voice, he does a tour coming in the front door showing the Cafeteria and the Kindergarten wing. The Kindergarten Teachers are doing a short video and bio of themselves. A letter went out to the parents of the Kindergarten outlining all of this information. Online registration this year and how to get the information to us. Also guidance on how to get their residency information to us so we can finalize their registration. Mr. Medeiros also said that he has some good news! Our Rochester Memorial PTO, on behalf of Ms. Swift, Ms. Rego, Ms. Peronis, and Mrs. Forand applied for a Lighthouse fund grant for an outdoor classroom. Their taking one of our courtyards in the middle of our buildings and making into an outdoor classroom. Mr. Medeiros said that he would give the Committee an update once he gets word about the grant.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None

#### **OLD ROCHESTER DISTRICT SCHOOL:**

Tina Rood said that an Audit was done and we were told that we need a Stabilization fund. We also need cyber security for our internet and files. Central office is already working with the Tech Team with that and the Stabilization funds and to have these things in place. With 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation it's a big thing for them. Yearbook pick up was last week. We will also have a virtual awards night on Thursday night. They will have a Senior Awards night and Graduation.

Michelle Hartley said that she has heard lots of comments about the placards in front of the School and is wondering if they can be moved because past Teachers and other people are trying to look at them and they are in a position where people can't stop and look at them in their car.

Dr. White said he would mention it to Mr. Duvall and see if he can accommodate it.

Tina Rood said that June 4<sup>th</sup> is the video for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Graduates. The Senior parade happens on June 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Senior Awards night is on the June 6<sup>th</sup>, Senior Prom is on June 4<sup>th</sup> at the YMCA.

**SMEC:**

Anne Fernandes Met June 1<sup>st</sup>, had the first meeting of FY22 budget and we renewed Dr. Katherine Coopers Contract.

**READS:**

Michael Nelson will be at the next meeting.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD:**

Nothing

**POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE:**

Danni Kleiman

Michelle Hartley said thank you to Danni for her years of service and wished her good luck.

**DEDICATION TO DR. DOUGLAS WHITE: CHAIRPERSON MICHELLE HARTLEY**

She stated that this is Dr. Whites last meeting. She said that it's been an amazing ten years working with Dr. White. The Book we are dedicating to you is "Swimmy" the Author is "Lea Lionni" and its a book about Teamwork. Chairperson Hartley read the book. Dedicated to Dr. Douglas White from the Rochester School Committee.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

Anne Fernandes made a motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

Danni Kleiman seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.