

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**August 6, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**MEETING HELD REMOTELY THROUGH ZOOM**  
**Rochester, MA 02770**

**Members Present:** Sharon Hartley, Chairperson, Anne Fernandes, Vice-Chairperson, Robin Rounseville, Kate Duggan and Tina Rood.

**Members Absent:** NONE

**Others Present:** Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Diana Russo, Adm. Asst. to Superintendent, Derek Medeiros, Principal, Rochester Memorial School, Charles West, Asst. Principal, Rochester Memorial School, members of the administrative team from Tri-Town schools, teachers, parents and members of the press.

Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairperson Hartley, she welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Ms. Hartley thanked everyone who has worked to help us prepare to start the school year. Ms. Hartley also welcome Ms. Kate Duggan the newest member of the Rochester School Committee.

## **V. General**

### **A. Approval of 20-21 Reopening Schools Plan**

The Superintendent thanked all tri-town stakeholders for their support and patience throughout these unprecedented times and expressed his gratitude to everyone who has been working on the reopening plans. He expressed that it is an honor for him to work in towns that are so involved in their school community. Mr. Nelson asked that Chairperson Hartley allow Principals from our Tri-Town Schools to participate in the presentation. Chairperson Hartley allowed the principals to participate.

Superintendent Nelson, Principal Medeiros, Principal Devoll and Principal Coellner presented the draft plan to the school committee (please see attached). The Superintendent's recommendation is that the school committee approve a hybrid plan to start the 2020-2021 school year. The superintendent reminded the school committee that this plan is very fluid and could change at any time. The superintendent also mentioned that guidance has come from DESE requiring districts to have 10 training days for staff before students start the school year, therefore Mr. Nelson explained that the school calendar would be reviewed for those changes at a Joint School Committee Meeting on August 11th.

Chairperson Hartley thanked Mr. Nelson and the administrative team for the presentations. Ms. Hartley expressed that she noticed three words that are very important throughout this plan, 1<sup>st</sup> is the "fluid", 2<sup>nd</sup> is "relationships" and 3<sup>rd</sup> is "accountability", she believes that if everyone carries out their roles we will be successful. Ms. Hartley asked if school committee members had any questions about the reopening plan presented by the Superintendent.

Ms. Fernandes expressed her heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has worked on this plan. Ms. Fernandes had a question about specialized instruction, Ms. Fernandes asked if the instruction would be different then it was in the spring.

Mr. Nelson thanked Ms. Fernandes for her comments. Mr. Nelson that special educators at Rochester Memorial and throughout the district did a great job last spring with remote learning, he expressed they didn't shy away from looking for new ways of connecting with their students. Mr. Nelson expressed that going forward the district will look a plan where in person learning for complex learners will be administered at a higher level. He expressed he has absolute confidence in our special services educators and paraprofessionals that they will do what it takes to make sure everyone's needs are met.

Ms. Duggan expressed that she believes the plan looks sound, she had a question about contact tracing and how that would be handled if someone did get sick at school. Mr. Nelson stated that there is guidance from the state as well as our own local health departments on how to handle a situation when a staff member or student tests positive for the COVID 19 virus. Mr. Nelson also stated that moving forward the administrative team will have to look at certain situations where certain at risk staff members won't be able to return to in-person, he explained that once these plans are approved and more information comes in about what students will do in-person and what student will do remote learning we will be able to have a better sense of how many remote learning teachers we will need.

Ms. Rounseville thanked everyone for all their work on the plan, Ms. Rounseville asked who the Remote Learning Administrator would be and she also asked about mask breaks and what those would look like? Mr. Nelson stated that the Remote Administrator will be Building Based, he explained that each Assistant Principal would take on that role as well as a lead in the transportation aspect, Mr. Nelson explained that all students with the exception of kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> graders are required to wear masks and all staff members are required to wear masks as well as keeping 6 feet of distance and also using our outdoor spaces, he also explained that during the school day there will be several "mask breaks" built in. Mr. Medeiros also mentioned that he is working with Mr. Ouellette to put clear markings on the playgrounds so that when our classroom teachers go out there they know the guidelines.

Ms. Rood thanked and expressed her gratitude to all the principals for being at the meeting. Ms. Rood asked for the administration to explain the Remote Learning Model and also asked why the Hybrid Out Monday was only a ½ day. Mr. Nelson explained that the Remote Learning Model is separate from the Hybrid Plan, and explained that a Remote Plan has to be offered for families who need it. He also explained that the Monday Hybrid out schedule is still fluid, there will be student time and there might also be some time afforded to staff and he explained the specifics would be worked out at a later time. Mr. Nelson explained that they might utilize that Monday to hold team meetings so that there is no disruption on the hybrid in days.

Ms. Rounseville asked about the Building Remote Block and what it would look like, Mr. Medeiros stated that would be during the Hybrid Out Mondays. Mr. Nelson explained that it was labeled incorrectly.

Ms. Rood asked if the schools are forced by the state to close as they did in March would the hybrid model and the remote learning students stay separate. Mr. Nelson expressed that they would try to preserve the cohorts and try not to disrupt the structure.

Ms. made a motion to approve the Reopening Plan as presented by the Superintendent with the understanding that is subject to change and with the understanding that the calendar would be changed to 170 days and a start date for students of September 16<sup>th</sup> and add the 10 days of training for staff.

MOTION by Ms. Rounseville

MOTION Seconded by Ms. Rood

(Roll Call Vote: Hartley: yes, Rounseville: yes, Rood: yes, Duggan: yes, Fernandes: yes)

Chairperson Hartley explained that the Rochester School Committee has received a Demand to Bargain from the Rochester Educators Association to bargain any working conditions changes. Ms. Hartley expressed interest in participating in negotiations with Mr. Nelson and everyone agreed.

The school committee discussed the possibility of having future in person or hybrid school committee meetings. Ms. Hartley expressed that a hybrid model would allow school committee and some administrators to participate in person and have the public and still participate via zoom, Mr. Nelson expressed he would look at options to have this format.

Mr. James Della Cioppa, Co-President of the Rochester Teachers Association thanked Supt. Nelson, all the administrators and stakeholders who have worked so hard to get us to this point. He expressed himself and team at RMS are ready to start working with Mr. Nelson and the School Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. by roll call vote

(Roll Call Vote: Hartley: yes, Rounseville: yes, Rood: yes, Duggan: yes, Fernandes: yes)