

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
ROCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rochester, Massachusetts
16 Pine Street - Rochester, MA 02770**

**MEETING MINUTES
December 3, 2020**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Thursday – December 3, 2020 at 6:30pm., by Zoom

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sharon Hartley– Chairperson, Anne Fernandes – Vice-Chairperson, Robin Rounseville and Katherine Duggan

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools; Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Instruction; Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services; Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations, Eugene Jones, Director of Facilities; Derek Medeiros, Principal; Charles West, Assistant Principal; Toni Bailey, Recording Secretary; teachers, parents and members of the press and public.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm., by Chairperson Hartley. Ms. Hartley introduced the Rochester School Committee members and stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being video-taped, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the Agenda will be followed as outlined.

MEETING TO ORDER

I. Approval of Minutes:

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: October 1, 2020 and November 5, 2020

Chairperson Hartley asked if there were any changes to the minutes of October 1, 2020

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to approve the minutes of October 1, 2020 as presented
SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes
SECONDED: Robin Rounseville
IN FAVOR: 4:0
OPPOSED: None
MOTION PASSED

Role Call: Ann Fernandes-Yes; Sharon Hartley-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes

Chairperson Hartley asked if there were any changes to the minutes of November 5, 2020

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to approve the minutes of November 5, 2020 as presented
SO MOVED: Robin Rounseville
SECONDED: Anne Fernandes
IN FAVOR: 4:0
OPPOSED: None
MOTION PASSED

Role Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

B. Approval of Minutes – Executive Session: November 5, 2020

Chairperson Hartley asked if there were any changes to the Executive minutes of November 5,2020

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to approve the Executive minutes of November 5, 2020 as presented
SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes
SECONDED: Robin Rounseville
IN FAVOR: 4:0
OPPOSED: None
MOTION PASSED

Role Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

IV. General

A. Reopening Update

Superintendent Nelson, made a request to Chairperson Hartley, that Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services, and Derek Medeiros, Principal, assist in the re-opening update. Chairperson Hartley granted this request.

Mr. Nelson stated the following:

Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to address the school committee tonight in regard to our re-opening update. I can't believe that we are in the first week of December already, and it is my hope that all of our students, families, and staff had an enjoyable Thanksgiving break – even if that means it may have looked differently this year.

As we look at our current hybrid, learning model, we continue to examine our enrollment, as well as which learning models our students are selecting. Presently at Rochester Memorial School, there are 422 hybrid students, 60 remote learning students, and 26 students who are being home-schooled by their parents/guardians right now.

Moreover, finding substitutes continues to be a difficult challenge this school year for Rochester Memorial. Although we have increased our rates in the region, finding substitutes continues to be a challenge for school administration, despite additional advertising for such role.

We continue to be impressed by our students' resilience and ongoing efforts to capitalize on their teaching and learning opportunities. Our staff members continue to be flexible problem solvers and engaging our students in learning opportunities – no matter what learning setting they are in.

With regard to COVID-19 and its impact on our school community – overall, we have been pleased that we have not seen school transmission of the virus thus far, and believe any cases have been isolated in nature, or coming from the outside.

Our school district has been releasing a weekly "Dashboard" that shares COVID-19 data and key indicators with our school stakeholders. To date, we have had 29 confirmed, positive COVID-19 situations system-wide in the Tri-town in regard to all of our school buildings. Rochester Memorial has not confirmed a case since September 16 related to their school building. As of today, we have four individuals who are in quarantine, awaiting test results after displaying COVID-19 symptoms, and the Board of Health continues to be an excellent support for our schools in terms of guiding our safety, work and helping our decision makings around any COVID-19 scenarios.

Furthermore, we recently surveyed our parents/guardians to have their perspective thus far regarding the school year and the different learning models. We view this as an important first step in looking at ways to improve our model in moving forward during the school year. There were 292 parent/guardian responses for Rochester Memorial and a total of 1,200 responses system-wide.

Recap:

March 13, 2020:

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education closes schools statewide

August 5, 2020:

Old Rochester Regional Superintendency Union #55 – released “Back-to-School Plan 20-21”

September 16, 2020:

Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester and ORR return to schools in our Hybrid and Remote Learning Models

November 20, 2020:

Back to School Feedback Survey to Parents/Guardians went live (Note: there were three reminders district-wide to parents/guardians to complete this survey)

December 3, 2020:

Sharing results with School Committee members, community members, public and press

Survey Responses by Grade:

Project Grow:	1%
Kindergarten:	12.7% - 37 responses
Grade 1:	12.3% - 36 responses
Grade 2:	15.1% - 44 responses
Grade 3:	15.8% - 48 responses
Grade 4:	12.3% - 36 responses
Grade 5:	17.5% - 51 responses
Grade 6:	13.4% - 39 responses

Question:

The overall communication from school to home is adequate regarding learning expectations and school updates?

Response:

Strongly Agree: 78; Agree: 117; Neutral: 39; Disagree: 14; Strongly Disagree: 7

Question:

Synchronous and live instruction on Mondays and hybrid-out school days are?

Response:

Very Helpful: 53; Helpful: 58; Adequate: 76; Somewhat Helpful: 47; Not Helpful: 22

Question:

My child enjoys hybrid-in school days?

Response:

Strongly Agree: 198; Agree: 35; Neutral: 12; Disagree: 1; Strongly Disagree: 4

Question:

On hybrid-out school days, my child has enough connection throughout the day with teachers?

Response:

Strongly Agree: 36; Agree: 93; Neutral: 63; Disagree: 33; Strongly Disagree: 24

Question:

During my child's hybrid-out school days, the workload is?

Response:

Adequate: 75%/186; Too Little: 12.1%/30; Too Much: 12.9%/32

Question:

My child is enjoying the current remote learning model?

Response:

Strongly Agree: 12; Agree: 13; Neutral: 7; Disagree: 2; Strongly Disagree: 0

Question:

During my child's remote learning school day, the workload is?

Response:

Adequate: 28; Too Little: 1; Too Much: 5

Question:

My child has an appropriate amount of instruction during their school day?

Response:

Strongly Agree: 9; Agree: 13; Neutral: 5; Disagree: 3; Strongly Disagree: 4

Question:

My child has enough interaction with their teacher during their school day?

Response:

Strongly Agree: 12; Agree: 14; Neutral: 5; Disagree: 1; Strongly Disagree: 2

Question:

Based on the current COVID-19 metrics and trends of the Tri-town, I would prefer my child's school bypassing February vacation and replacing the week with four remote learning school days?

Response:

53.2% - No, I'm in favor of keeping the school calendar as is

46.8% - Yes, I'm in favor of adjusting the school calendar and doing away with February vacation

Question:

Based on the current COVID-19 metrics and trends of the Tri-town, I would be most comfortable with my child returning to increased, in-person learning opportunities with a classroom set-up of?

Response:

62.9% - At least 3 feet of social distance between all individuals (i.e. students and staff)

37.1% - At least 6 feet of social distance between all individuals (i.e. students and staff)

Question:

Based on the current COVID-19 metrics and trends of the Tri-town, I would be comfortable with my child returning to increased, in-person learning opportunities even if it leads to a change in their current homeroom/classroom teachers?

Response:

33.6% - No; 18.4% - Undecided; 48.0% - Yes

Question:

Based on the current COVID-19 metrics and trends of the Tri-town, I would be comfortable with my child returning to increased, in-person learning opportunities even if it leads to using communal spaces such as gyms, auditoriums, and cafeterias as classrooms?

Response:

10.5% - No; 6.3% - Undecided; 83.2% - Yes

Question:

At this time, based on the current transportation guidance from the Department of Education, we are unable to guarantee transportation if we were to increase in-person learning opportunities. Do you have the ability to transport your student to and from school on their current cohort's hybrid-out learning school days?

Response:

21.9% - No; 78.1% - Yes

Mr. Nelson stated the Commissioner has informed Superintendents there is a potential that the transportation guidance may be updated later in the month or early January, and at this time there are no immediate changes to our plan as far as the present learning model.

Mr. Medeiros stated he couldn't be more proud of the staff, students and custodians for all the hard work they all did prior to school beginning, which has made RMS such a success, putting in to place all of the practices and protocols around the building to make learning successful in a safe environment. Mr. Medeiros stated in the past RMS has had part-time lunch aides, and this year they combined the position and hired a full-time campus aide/lunch aide, who is able to assist with all of these tasks - lunch, mask breaks, bathroom breaks, recess, etc., so the students have a consistent face to see on a daily basis.

Mr. Medeiros noted in the survey results, there is a lot of good data and there are certainly some areas to work on. Mr. Medeiros stated obtaining substitutes has been a challenge, but again, the staff at RMS has been working together as a TEAM (one unit), and they have been able to make it work if a staff member is out of the building. Mr. Medeiros thanked the parents/guardians for their assistance/understanding of the many changes that has had to take place from the academic piece to the change in transportation.

Mr. Nelson stated in closing, Administration is focusing on planning efforts on how to increase in-person learning opportunities, particularly for the youngest learners. Mr. Nelson stated since August, we have been talking about that population being of huge concern, in terms of lack of in-person opportunities, and what potential academic gaps could grow. Mr. Nelson stated in-person learning is something we want for all of our students, but we have particular concerns of some of our youngest learners. Mr. Nelson stated in recent weeks we have had planning conversations with the Association on ways to bring back our lower elementary students - particularly, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and possibly Grade 2 and continue to work out details of that Plan. Mr. Nelson stated the survey data was an important first step on how to build off of the re-opening of schools, and once we solidify a Plan for consideration, he would ask Chairperson Hartley to call a formal meeting to discuss the Plan and the possible next steps, while considering the current COVID-19 Dashboard data and key indicators at that time.

Questions from School Committee Members:

Anne Fernandes

Was the Likert Scale Model was used to collect the data for the survey?

Answer: Yes it was.

In the areas which were either “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” (they were a very small population of which responded), were the respondents provided with an opportunity to give more qualitative information on what their thoughts were regarding? Did you compile any of that data as well?

Mr. Nelson stated the presentation was to look at the big picture from the school committee’s standpoint, but we do have the ability to “drill down” into these different sub-groups of the data. Mr. Nelson stated even if it is 4 to 5 responses in a particular area, we can look at - Who were they? What grade level? Were they all the same grade level? What does that tell us? – Mr. Nelson noted there were opportunities for parents/guardians to give qualitative data in comment sections as well.

Robin Rounseville

How is the school nurse coping? How is she able to handle the increased demands? Do we have a line-up of substitute nurses?

Mr. Medeiros stated Ellen Murphy is a phenomenal, outstanding human being and he honestly doesn’t know what he would do without her. Mr. Medeiros stated he and Mr. West, as well as staff members check in on her on a daily basis to see how she is doing. Mr. Medeiros stated Ellen always has that “smile” on her face, and most likely the one thing bothering Ellen the most is that she is not able to give you the “Ellen Hug” when you walk into her office. Mr. Medeiros stated Ellen engages in Zoom meetings, is in close contact with the other nurses throughout the district, and she collaborates with both the Central Office Administrators, as well as the Board of Health in Rochester.

Mr. Nelson stated we do have two nurses that we have on board right now and it depends on their other employment work schedules, but just like substitutes in general, it remains a challenge for us. Mr. Nelson stated not only Ellen, but the nurses district-wide, have been remarkable in the work they are doing not only during school hours, but after school hours as well, in terms of managing the virus in each of the buildings and sharing resources with one another. Mr. Nelson stated he meets with the nurses regularly, and they also meet with the town nurses system-wide to be as consistent as possible.

Anne Fernandes

How far along are you with in the process of working with the Association for bringing back our early learners, and do you have an expectation of when you may have the Plan complete?

Mr. Nelson stated every grade is a priority grade and we want all of our students back in the building. We understand it is not ideal for any learner, even those who are in the remote learning platform – they want to be back in the building as well. Mr. Nelson stated the most important work is to identify priority grades and the lower grade levels (Kindergarten, Grade 1 and possibly Grade 2) are of most concern for many reasons. Mr. Nelson stated we know it is more difficult for Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students to be able to manage the aspects of remote learning, in terms of zooming – using management systems, etc., and more importantly literacy.

Mr. Nelson stated we talked about what this would like in terms of space in the building being used; and, with this most recent survey to the parents/guardians, hearing from them as far as what percentage would be okay if returning the lower grade students back to school, even if it meant having to change classroom teachers, and using staff differently.

Mr. Nelson stated every day is a new day around COVID-19 and many of the agencies (CDC and our own state government) has cautioned us around the holidays. Mr. Nelson stated as far as an expectation of when we may have the Plan complete - this will give us a little more planning time, and it will show us how COVID-19 impacts the local community and statewide after the holidays, bringing us to early or mid January, depending on supporting COVID-19 data for safety – which remains our #1 priority.

Chairperson Hartley thanked Superintendent Nelson for sharing the survey results and stated she would like to volunteer herself as a representative if we have conversations with the Association and if she could be helpful.

Ms. Hartley stated at the last school committee meeting, they were united as to the importance of bringing our youngest children back to school full-time or as close to full-time as possible. Ms. Hartley stated the next step is to continue planning for this age group to return back to school, and a meeting of the school committee members, whether it is a planned meeting or an additional meeting scheduled, to put the Plan in place.

Ms. Hartley stated she understands we need to be cautious of the continuing COVID-19, but she knows our children, in order to become the learners and readers that we want them to be, will benefit from our teachers face-to-face and we want them back in school as fast as we can.

Mr. Nelson stated we will continue to use this data from the parent survey and Principal Medeiros and Assistant Principal West will begin reaching out to families at particular grade levels. Mr. Nelson stated transportation is a big area of concern, and at this point the guidance from the state is the guidance and as a school district, those families who need transportation, we are obligated to provide it. Mr. Nelson stated this is the reason we need to work with families specifically to see if they are able to transport their child to/from school, and we will continue to articulate a Plan to bring before the school committee.

Mr. Nelson also reiterated that this next step aligns with what Administration had said since August and it also aligns with what the Department of Education said, in terms of particular subgroups. Mr. Nelson stated we were not a district that started remotely – we started with a hybrid model with students in the building; we offered more in-person learning for some of our more complex learners, including special education, ELL and pre-school students and students who were in foster care or homeless. Mr. Nelson stated as we plan to increase opportunities for our lower grade levels, it stays true to our initial Plan back in August and it aligns with the guidance of the Department of Education.

Robin Rounseville

In terms of bringing students back, even in the current situation, can you tell me where our special education students fit in? It sounds like some special education students are in more than two days a week?

Mr. Nelson stated based on students individual needs, those students with particular services who are categorized as high level of needs, we reached out to those families and we talked about what meaningful services would look like for them, which involved increased, in-person learning options.

Robin Rounseville

When we talk about bringing back students in grades K and 1, would there be more special education children that would come in that group?

Mr. Nelson stated the entire grades in K and 1 would be welcomed back, while maintaining the six feet of social distancing.

B. Technology Replacement Fees

Mr. Nelson stated there has been some new revenue streams, including grant funding and CARES funding, and we have been able to secure additional devices for school including iPads for our youngest learners and additional chromebooks for our upper elementary grades. Mr. Nelson stated the iPads and cases are in and it has been a priority for our tech team to get these devices ready to roll out. Mr. Nelson stated Mr. Barber will explain how we will be able to maintain these new devices.

Mr. Barber stated at the end of FY20 in March, technology devices were disbursed to students in a very quick manner, since we wanted students to be able to have a device for learning in their homes, and there really was not a system when this technology was handed out. Mr. Barber stated at the beginning of this school year, when we went to full 1:1 devices for each of the students, we had parents/guardians sign a waiver, and each individual device that was assigned to a student had documentation.

Mr. Barber stated the District has had the opportunity to update many of the technology needs for instruction, such as chromebooks and iPads, and at this time, we feel an update to the Student Handbook should be taken into consideration. Mr. Barber stated with the 1:1 initiatives, there has not been fees or costs charged to the students or families for this equipment that is now being provided.

Mr. Barber referenced:

File: JQ-STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGE:

Charge for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment. Students who are indigent are exempt from paying fees. However, indigent students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies and equipment.

Mr. Barber stated he would like to recommend the following proposed replacement fees for damaged or replacement of equipment, based on the researched charges that are being incurred:

Chromebook – Complete Unit Replacement	\$ 300.00
Chromebook Screen	\$ 50.00
45W Adapter w/Power Cord (USB-C Connection)	\$ 50.00
Keyboard	\$ 50.00
iPad – Complete Unit	\$ 325.00
Apple usb-c to lightning cable	\$ 25.00
Apple usb power adapter (block)	\$ 25.00
Case	\$ 50.00

Ms. Hartley

Is this same fee schedule being requested of all the districts?

Mr. Barber stated yes and that it was passed at the Marion School Committee last night.

Ms. Hartley

How many damaged items have occurred thus far in Rochester?

Mr. Barber stated 16 screens have been broken.

Ms. Hartley

Who would be responsible for taking the actions to collect monetary fees for damages?

Mr. Barber stated we have had monies collected, and those funds are placed in the revolving account, so that we can use those funds solely for the purpose of replacing technology units, and these payments have been coming through the technology department. Mr. Barber stated when an item is damaged, the technology team from that particular school reaches out to the parent/guardian or he himself reaches out to the parent.

Ms. Rounseville

We have collected some of the fees already?

Mr. Barber stated yes we have collected fees for just screen replacements. There has been no “full-unit” fees collected at this time.

Ms. Rounseville stated she understands the need for damaged replacement fees, but she feels as though it could be one more burden to a family in tough times, but again, she understands the need – they are not inexpensive and we want the device treated with care.

Mr. Barber stated we do know if there are families that have major hardships, we are willing to sit down with that family, however, having replacement fees approved by the committee, gives a little bit of credence that every product does need to be well maintained and that you don’t just leave it in a backpack and toss it across the floor – that there is potentially a risk that the family would be responsible for damages for something that is not mindful.

Mr. Medeiros held up a new iPad device showing the committee members what the product looks like – each iPad has a screen protector and a case, and was set up by the technology team with all of the applications a student would need to be successful in a hybrid/remote learning model.

Anne Fernandes

Do parents/guardians sign for the piece of equipment to go home?

Mr. Barber stated Mr. Medeiros will be sending out an email to all Kindergarten and Grade 1 parents/guardians explaining when these iPads will be disbursed, as well as a copy of the Waiver of Liability form that parents/guardians will be signing in order to claim this device, along with a copy of the replacement fees.

Kate Duggan

Do these fees only apply to an instance of “rough handling” or what if a student just goes to plug a unit in and it no longer works?

Mr. Barber stated the technology team would be able to identify a “damaged” device, as oppose to a device that just no longer works (nothing broken on it) – it’s just old.

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to approve the student fees listed above that are specified on the memo received regarding the student handbook.
SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes
SECONDED: Robin Rounseville
IN FAVOR: 4:0
OPPOSED: None
MOTION PASSED

Role Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

C. Solar Project

Mr. Barber stated as we continue to look for alternative methods of financial resources to provide continued benefits to our school, we are proposing an opportunity with Solect Energy that falls under Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target “SMART”, which is a similar Solar Panel program that is being implemented at the Old Rochester School District.

Mr. Barber provided to the school committee members the SMART programs benefits for the District:

- A 20-year fixed tariff program that provides incentives for distributed solar and storage
- Behind-the-meter applications to offset your energy usage
- Standalone applications – compensation direct from the utility for 20 years
- Declining incentives as capacity is awarded – earlier projects secure higher incentives

The Solar Power Purchase Agreement “PPA” – Block 6 expected incentive

- Savings per kWh (year 1) = 4%
- Year 1 Forecast Savings = \$ 2,300

- Annual Avoided CO2 = 634,000lbs
- Contract Forecasted Term Savings = \$ 405,000

Mr. Barber brought forward a “Solar Carport Proposal” to the school committee and requested from the committee to write a “letter of intent” allowing us to move forward with implementation and next steps towards electric engineering, utility applications, SMART incentive applications, etc., to ensure the District cost free benefits from Solar Panel installation at the parking lot facilities.

Mr. Jones stated he has reached out to the Board of Selectmen in Rochester and they are on board with this proposal as well. Mr. Jones stated there would be no liability to the roof of Rochester Memorial; the car ports would be placed in the parking lot where faculty, community members park; there would be charging stations installed-for future use; and, there is no monetary requirement from us. Mr. Jones stated this goes along with the town for its “Green Community” initiative.

Mr. Jones stated the “letter of intent” would give us the opportunity to get the SMART application and the Interconnect application through Eversource, which is critical and which it would set up our PPA block. Mr. Jones stated there is a possibility if we get this “letter of intent” over to Power Options, we might fall into the “Block 5” incentive, which would double the incentives in the first year.

Mr. Jones stated there are approximately 20-25 other school districts that have gone with this project - it would reduce snow removal; the carports vary in size - will be able to accommodate any vehicle; and the carports have lights under them for safety. Mr. Jones stated this “letter of intent” just starts of the process – if we were to go forward with this – the committee would have to approve the contract.

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to approve a “letter of intent” from the school committee regarding the Solar Project that was just presented.

SO MOVED: Anne Fernandes

SECONDED: Robin Rounseville

IN FAVOR: 4:0

OPPOSED: None

MOTION PASSED

Role Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

V. New Business

C. Business

1. Financial Report

Mr. Barber presented a memo as of November 30, 2020 indicating the Rochester Memorial School currently has \$287,228 available of the general funds appropriated in the 2021 Fiscal Year. Mr. Barber stated we are able to identify how our funds are currently encumbered and expended and out of the \$6.3 million dollar budget appropriated to the District - 83.21% is directly assigned and is spent/encumbered to student instruction.

Mr. Barber stated at present, we are not able to fully encumber funds for substitutes and utility costs until we get further in the school year.

Mr. Barber presented the Facilities Director's Report dated December, 2020 as follows:

- Covid-19 protocols strictly adhered to for HVAC, Cleaning, Sanitizing and traffic control
- Nightly sanitizing all our buses with static spray sanitizing equipment
- Deployed all DESE/CDC required Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
- Protective shields installed in all required areas
- Testing shields acquired and available on site
- Playgrounds temporarily closed per DESE/CDC recommendations
- Nurse and student services issued required additional safety PPE
- Freezer #2 repaired
- Submitted capital improvement requests to the town
- Conducted routine maintenance on all facility systems

Mr. Barber stated the Food Service Director's Report dated December, 2020, shows the overall increase from the percentage perspective of the participation with the free lunch and breakfasts being offered at school. Mr. Barber once again noted that on Monday evenings, from 4:30 to 5:30 at the Old Rochester Regional High School, meals are being offered to families with students from 0 to 21 years of age, and explained the process of how to order these meals on line.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

On November 12, Chairperson Hartley, Anne Fernandes and others worked together with Superintendent Nelson on his goals with regard to this year, and his evaluation process.

On November 18, Ms. Hartley met with the Co-presidents as to teacher evaluations, being it again an unusual year.

Ms. Hartley extended best wishes to Tina Rood and her family at this time and stated that Ms. Rood was in the process of writing a letter objecting to holding MCAS testing this year for students at RMS. Ms. Hartley stated in Ms. Rood's absence, they needed another member of the committee to take on this task. Anne Fernandes stated she would write the letter. Ms. Hartley stated they have a general template from ORR, and other information from MASC that she would share with Ms. Fernandes. Ms. Fernandes stated she would also write a letter to other members so they could have input as well.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Superintendent Nelson stated the Department of Education has allowed flexibility around snow days, and at the Joint School Committee meeting, who annually oversees the calendar for the Tri-town public schools, voted unanimously in support of the Superintendent in making the decision to convert snow days to remote learning days if appropriate. Mr. Nelson stated obviously if there were significant power outages in the towns, then the decision would be made to cancel school altogether.

Mr. Nelson concluded that Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell and Mr. Craig Davidson have been working collaboratively regarding additional grant funding, and recently have applied for a "Social/Emotional Competitive Grant" as well as a "Hate Crime/Anti-Biased Grant".

Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell stated she is working on the January 11th Professional Development Day. Dr. Pearson-Campbell stated she has asked teachers in the district to submit a PDP (Professional Development Plan) for 55 minutes, since there are many staff members in the district who are experts in certain areas. Dr. Pearson-Campbell stated teachers will also be working on Project-Based Learning, based on our Strategic Plan, and teachers will also be meeting virtually by grade levels, to meet with their peers in different buildings.

Mr. Craig Davidson stated when school abruptly closed last spring, there were a lot of initial evaluations and re-evaluations for special education students in progress. Ms. Davidson stated TEAMS in all of the buildings worked on new time-lines at the beginning of the school year, and he is happy to report all of our testing has been completed and we are up-to-date with the testing from last spring, and expressed a “thank you” to all of the hard work from our educators in all of the districts.

Mr. Davidson stated that providing individual services for our students this year looks differently based on our hybrid model of teaching this year, however, the educators have reached out and communicated with families establishing how services can be provided, even though it may be differently this year.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Mr. Medeiros reported the following:

On Monday, November 16th grade level teams participated in our second building wide professional learning community meeting with both he and Mr. West. At each PLC meeting, grade level teams continued to analyze Aimsweb and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarking data by answering guided questions provided by administration and these responses have provided insight into how we can all support our students learning, moving forward this year.

On Tuesday, November 17th Rochester Memorial School Council met via zoom and worked on the construction of building a new 2-year School Improvement Plan.

On Thursday, November 19th and Friday, November 20th, fire drills for both Cohort A and Cohort B students were conducted. These were alarm sounding drills done in collaboration with Chief Weigel and the Rochester Fire Department and the students did an outstanding job getting out of the building and getting to the appropriate places on campus.

Mr. Medeiros extended a “thank-you” to the entire tech team, and to Mr. Simmons for unpacking, programming and preparing the K/1 iPads for distribution to the students and staff.

Mr. Medeiros stated on November 30th, Mrs. Audette – Grade 3 Teacher – facilitated a recorded training for all of our K/1 staff in the district by zoom in Apple Classroom, and noted this software will allow our K/1 teachers to manage student iPad content while they are in school.

Robin Rounseville

Are we still able to meet the demands of our students since we shifted our reading paraprofessional to a different position?

Mr. Medeiros stated the reading paraprofessional was re-allocated to a remote teacher, however, she is still helping grade 2 from a reading standpoint. Mr. Medeiros stated they chose grade 2, since the paraprofessional had already established a relationship with the students when they were in grade 1 last year. Mr. Medeiros stated students are getting quality reading instruction from their classroom teacher first, and then going to the trained professionals, whether it is for enrichment or deep intervention.

VIII. School Committee

B. Committee Reports

1. Budget Subcommittee

Chairperson Hartley stated they met this evening at 5:00pm with Mr. Barber, as well as the leadership staff from the Superintendent’s office, for an initial kick-off meeting of the FY22 budget. Ms. Hartley

stated Mr. Barber explained his approach to budget building (zero-based budget), which we have used in the past, and Mr. Barber spoke out as to his philosophy of budget building. Ms. Hartley stated that weekly meetings on Thursdays at 5:00pm have been scheduled until the budget is complete.

2. ORR District School Committee

Mr. Nelson stated conversations were held at the high school level around dual enrollment and foreign language requirements; and, the re-opening, specific to the secondary level presentation, was given.

3. SMEC

Anne Fernandes stated Novembers meeting was rescheduled to December 14.

4. READS

Mr. Nelson stated a meeting was held on November 12 and reported the following:

- Meeting was called to order – Recognized Paulajo Gaines, Department of Education and Secondary Education
- Minutes were approved
- There was an update on the Special Education Administrator’s report
- There were discussions on Action Items:
 - FY20 Audit
 - Cumulative Surplus
 - Policy Updates – Actions Required
 - Sexual Harassment Policy
 - Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity Statement
 - Issuing Grades During Remote Learning
 - Reviewed and updated Policy Manual
- Tuitions and Fees Adjustment for FY21 were discussed
- The Executive Director recommended approval of new staff
- Snow days were discussed – similar to how we are going to handle snow days – remotely
- Additional informational Items by the Executive Director were discussed:
 - Status of In-Person Learning during COVID-19
 - Copy of MOA and review meeting information
 - FY21 Projected Revenues/Expenses
 - COVID-19 Expenses
 - Program Updates and/or Student Feature
 - SCRO/MOEC Update
 - Resignations/Retirements

Mr. Nelson stated the next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2020

5. Tri-town Foundation

Robin Rounseville – they have not met

6. Early Childhood Council

Kate Duggan – next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2021

7. Policy Sub-Committee

Kate Duggan stated the meeting was held on November 9 and reported the following:

The following policies were reviewed:

- School Year and School Calendar
- Organization and Instruction
- Curriculum and Development
- Curriculum and Adoption

Ms. Duggan stated they reviewed revisions that were suggested by MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees), which were all very minor.

Ms. Duggan stated she has received no feedback from the Rochester School Committee members of any changes.

8. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee

Kate Duggan stated the meeting was held on December 2 and reported the following:

- Leading up to this meeting, the District Leadership has been doing a lot of work in speaking with outside agencies about how to approach potentially changing policies (re-wording policies, working with Early Ed Coordinator to build equitable support for students with disabilities ages 3-5)
- In early November, they conducted Professional Development for teachers
- Worked on some grants with partnerships in community groups
- Worked on identifying how we might enact some changes to further our district in a quest for an anti-racist district
- Discussions were held on a name change for the committee
- Divided into two working groups to work independently to talk about the 9 themes that had been identified as priority areas for discussion and action
- The committee would like to reach out to high school and Jr. high school students to get them involved
- The next meeting is scheduled for December 22

IX. Future Business

A. Timeline

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – January 7, 2021 @ 6:30pm – to be determined how the meeting will be held

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – March 11, 2021 @ 6:30pm and will be held remote through zoom

B. Future Agenda Items

- MCAS Results Report (November/December – depending upon receipt of results)
- Initial Budget Review (January)
- Approval of Chairperson’s Annual Report (February)
- Interim report on School Committee progress toward goals (February)
- Budget Approval (public hearings) (February)
- School Committee Reorganization (May/June – depending on election date)
- School Choice Vote (May)
- Administrator Contracts (May)
- Summer Warrants (June)
- Approval of Leases (June)
- School Improvement Plan Update/Approval (June)

X. Open Comments

Anne Fernandes extended a “thank-you” to everyone – for staff members who are still listening this evening, central administration, facilities, parents, Toni Bailey and the school committee – this is a hard job and she is very grateful for everyone!

XI. Information Items

LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED AT THE MEETING

Meeting Minutes of October 1, 2020
Meeting Minutes of November 5, 2020
Technology Replacement Fee Schedule
Solar Project Recommendation
Principal's Report – December 3, 2020
School Business Administrator's Report – November, 2020
Food Service Director Report – December, 2020
Facilities Director Report – December, 2020
2019-2020 School Committee Dates Calendar

Meeting of the Regular Rochester School Committee meeting ended at 7:55pm

MOTION: by Sharon Hartley to adjourn the meeting
SO MOVED: Robin Rounseville
SECONDED: Kate Duggan
IN FAVOR: 4:0
OPPOSED: None
MOTION PASSED

Role Call: Sharon Hartley-Yes; Anne Fernandes-Yes; Robin Rounseville-Yes; Kate Duggan-Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Bailey, Recording Secretary