

(All Public Board Meetings are Recorded and Posted on the District Website)

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE TENAFLY BOARD OF EDUCATION
WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 1, 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 p.m. by Board President Janet Horan who read the following statement:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right to the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon.”

In accordance with provisions of this act, the Tenafly Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be publicized by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough office, Tenafly Public Library, administrative building, in the local press and on the district’s web site.

On roll call, the following Board members answered present:

Mark Aronson	Paula Newman
Natalie Barbanel	Edward J. Salaski
Patricia Flynn	Jocelyn Schwarz
Inbal Israeli Miller	Janet I. Horan
Jane Juhng	

The following staff members were present:

Ms. Shauna DeMarco, Superintendent
Dr. Evelyn Mamman, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Yas Usami, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Ms. Danielle Diaz, Human Resources Manager
Mr. Robert Caputo, Technology Coordinator

Also present:

Mr. Stephen Fogarty, Esq., Fogarty and Hara

Ms. Horan opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, and read the following to enter into a closed session:

WHEREAS, the Tenafly Board of Education has been formed pursuant to applicable New Jersey Statutes, and

WHEREAS, the Board is charged with the responsibility of performing all acts and doing all things, consistent with law and the rules of the State Board of Education, necessary for the lawful and proper conduct, equipment and maintenance of the public schools and public school property of the Tenafly Public School District, and

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10-4-12) permits the exclusion of the public ("Closed Session") from a meeting of the Board in certain circumstances, and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that circumstances exist for such a Closed Session,

WHEREAS, the Board has found the action described below to be necessary and proper,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board on the date indicated above that:

- 1.) The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action on the Closed Session herein set forth.
- 2.) The confidential subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - ♦ Negotiations
 - ♦ Legal issues concerning the continued payment of stipends to employees and payment to service providers for the remainder of the school year.
- 3.) The Board will return to Open Session at approximately 7:00 p.m.

No formal action will be taken.

A motion was made by Ms. Newman and seconded by Ms. Schwarz that the Board convenes in closed session.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting recessed to closed session at 6:09 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Salaski and seconded by Ms. Newman that the Board convene from closed session at 7:02 p.m. and go into open session.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Ms. Horan who read the following statement:

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In accordance with provisions of this act, the Tenafly Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be publicized by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough office, Tenafly Public Library, administrative building, in the local press and on the district's web site.

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Mark Aronson
Natalie Barbanel
Patricia Flynn
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Paula Newman
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Jocelyn Schwarz
Janet I. Horan

The following staff members were present:

Ms. Shauna DeMarco, Superintendent
Dr. Evelyn Mamman, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Yas Usami, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Mr. Robert Caputo, Technology Coordinator

The following principal representatives were present:

Mr. James Morrison, Principal of High School
Mr. John Fabbo, Principal of Middle School
Ms. Brenda Yoo, Principal of Mackay School
Dr. Jennifer Ferrara, Principal of Maugham School
Mr. Brian Ross, Principal of Smith School
Ms. Gayle Lander, Principal of Stillman School

Also present:

Mr. Stephen Fogarty, Esq., Fogarty and Hara

Ms. Horan opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. She stated there were 188 participants at the video conference; and a Q & A will take place later in the meeting.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

Ms. Horan welcomed and thanked everyone for joining the first remotely held Board meeting, and wished all well during this challenging time. Ms. Horan read aloud a special thanks and acknowledgement to the healthcare workers and volunteers who are on the front line of this pandemic. We are grateful for their courage and care in tending to the many patients, some from our own community whose lives have been impacted by COVID-19. This is an extraordinary and unprecedented time in our history, as a school district, as Tenafly residents, as parents, families and neighbors. We are dealing with unfamiliar schedules, disruptions to our professional and personal lives leading to frustration and confusion from our normal daily routines. Ms. Horan thanked the administration, staff and faculty who have transitioned our schools to a virtual learning environment.

Some of the difficulties people faced in a very short time were teachers having to learn and to start to implement new tools for virtual learning; about 800 Chromebooks had to be prepared and distributed for home use; custodians continue to disinfect buildings; keeping the Business office running remotely; delivering lunches, and so many other efforts for the benefit of our students.

Ms. Horan spoke about the full virtual learning plan being rolled out, and the administrative team and principals will talk more about this tonight. Ms. Horan thanked the community members who responded to the recent survey with their important feedback, and this will be addressed during the public commentary of the meeting.

Ms. Horan wished the best for everyone to stay safe by following the health and safety guidelines set forth.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. DeMarco gave the following report:

My thanks to the Board for offering a forum whereby many members of our outstanding administrative team might speak to their respective department's work, their school's work and their own work as leaders in what we have come to know as today's normal: Virtual Education.

This meeting tonight is being held primarily in response to the overwhelming number of complaints cited by Board trustees as being received by them from the public. It saddened me to hear from a trustee last evening that something I shared brought this trustee their first smile in three weeks. In times like these, if we have our health and our loved ones, we have so much to smile about.

Our team as a whole truly values and appreciates the feedback received from so many, as a majority have presented valuable critique that was not only considered, but connected to our work. Through these communications we were able to help navigate parents and separate the emotional stress from the educational concerns. These also give us opportunity to reflect on our own practices, perhaps by tightening, consolidating and merging processes and procedures. Finally, they serve to help us strive to address the needs of more students and families.

Additionally, I have the good fortune of having receipt of critical commentary intertwined with well over 100+ positive comments recorded at each and every one of our schools from parents and students to teachers and principals. These communications support our teachers' work and recognize the value of our approach, strategies and purposeful intent to not take a cookie-cutter approach to instruction in this historic point in time, but to continue fostering the educational professionals who have contributed to the excellent reputation of the Tenafly schools.

Virtual education, also referred to as remote learning, flexible instruction, or distance learning, among other terms is founded on the premise of policy #2412: Home instruction due to Health Condition. The NJDOE has ruled that, given the COVID-19 pandemic, this policy - usually used to apply to select students unable to attend school due to a diagnosed health condition - applies to all students. So doing enables a district to support the continuation of instruction by staff in their homes to students in their homes. As with any student on home instruction, all other district policies remain in effect.

On March 6th, the Commissioner of Education directed districts to begin planning for the possibility of home instruction through Emergency Preparedness Plans. These were to be a proactive measure to be used only in the event a given school was closed by order of the local health authorities. Little did we know what was to come. By March 12th, all Bergen County public schools were ordered closed for 2 weeks, beginning March 16th. Fast forward a few days, this order is superseded by the Governor's Order, which ordered all schools closed indefinitely, but for a minimum duration of two weeks. A stay-at-home order then followed, affecting families and NJ residents in ways we might not have expected.

Tenafly responded in ways that were compliant, courageous and compassionate. We did not pretend to act with certainty in uncertain times; we did not pretend like nothing was going on around us and it was business (or school) as usual; and we did not pretend that every student and every family was facing the same circumstances. Believe me - Pretending would have been easy - it would have allowed us to stay on course, turning our back on those in need: families, students and staff alike, it would have allowed us to continue practicing what we know and turn a blind eye to this new reality and the new strategies it required, and it would have allowed us to avoid the hard questions and challenges. Instead, Tenafly Schools chose to remain at the forefront of education and innovate thoughtfully, deeply and collaboratively to continue providing an extraordinary education in extra-extraordinary times, no matter their duration.

Virtual Learning began immediately with the launch of the 2-week curriculum on March 16th that was included in our Emergency Preparedness Plan. This asynchronous learning plan not only demonstrated compliance with everything the Department of Education required, thereby guaranteeing these days would be counted towards our 180-day requirement, but it provided flexibility, ensuring that all students would have access to learning activities regardless of technology, bandwidth capability, or home circumstance. It was developed thoughtfully and diligently by teachers and shared with parents and students in detail so they could plan ahead - with materials, with family schedules and with a sense of preparedness.

At that time, who knew parents would also be working from home? That dental offices and sit-down restaurants would be shut down, and small business owners would not be allowed to operate from their shops and offices and no new court cases meant a change in plans for attorneys? At that time, we dealt in the reality: that older siblings might watch younger children; that children might be brought to family members for childcare without access to technology or help with school work, etc.

This 2-week plan also allowed our staff in its entirety to continue planning in forward motion in preparation for whatever lie ahead. And what awaited us was astounding:

- A need for 200 Chromebooks rose to near 700 - with an increased need for hotspots - once so many parents were working remotely - and we responded immediately
- a need for action to act carefully and legally on behalf of the district - and all taxpaying families - in support of pupil/staff privacy rights in a virtual setting - and we responded immediately.
- A need for careful and critical examination of special education law and provisions regarding related services in a virtual setting - and we responded immediately.
- A need for professional training, collegial collaboration, and the installation of programs and user licenses that would enable us to deliver instruction with excellence for the long term - and we responded immediately.

By March 23rd, our TPS Remote Learning Center website was shared with the community, outlining the next phase of our plan. March 27th marked the conclusion of our Emergency Preparedness Plan - or what we have come to term "phase one" of the Virtual Learning Plan - and we launched phase two on Monday, March 30th.

Virtual Learning continued and by day 11, in addition to choice boards, standards-based assignments and creative activities, it had been expanded to include demonstration of the additional components necessary for the effective delivery of new instruction in ways that were engaging, challenging and creative. These new components include Real Time interaction with students, recorded lessons and presentations via a variety of modalities compatible with our Google Classroom Platform, and real time availability to parents/students at times that are mutually convenient and via means that are mutually effective.

The current phase of virtual learning will continue to grow and evolve. What it will ultimately look like when we arrive at its peak is yet to be discovered. The creativity and courageous trial-and-error approach displayed by so many staff members leads us to believe the destinations are endless:

- Staff training on current platforms continues resulting in deeper understanding and expanded use of the technology.
- We continue to foster those staff with advanced technology skills in their exploration of new platforms and new ways to connect and instruct students.
- A commitment to student-centered instruction will continue to reveal itself creative ways that will vary from class to class and student to student, yet become contagious, yielding a "I'm going to try that with my class" momentum.

Our overall district plan supports meaningful instruction in both synchronous and asynchronous ways through a wide range of modalities:

- It promotes the use of livestream instruction, as well as the use of recorded instructional lessons created by the teachers (and including the teachers via audio/video).
- It promotes recorded lessons that are always to be supplemented by routine interactive engagement between the students and the teacher for the purpose of day to day continuity and students' social cohesion.
- It ensures that instruction will remain differentiated at all levels. This was especially helped by the legislation passed today which allows IEP accommodations being met in virtual design. The opportunities provided to students with disabilities shall be consistent with the student's IEP to the greatest extent possible, including the delivery of service by related service providers such as speech and other therapists.

What is not part of our plan? A live teacher on your child's screen for the duration of their time together ensuring your child is on task and focused for the virtual school day. This does not mimic the school day, as even in a "real" day, independent work, project-based activities and guided practice is what constitutes a vast portion of learning. We feel for parents who now find themselves providing assistance and guidance, especially to our youngest learners. And it is to you, we emphasize, that flexibility is key and we encourage you to take advantage of the asynchronous activities and have your child do them at a time that best suits your specific situation.

I cannot stress enough to parents and our older students: TALK to your teachers. Reach out to your guidance counselors. If you're struggling with the schedule, with the work, with your emotions, with your given situation - let them know. They want to help and will help you. Parents, the communication chain remains intact. Your concerns and questions begin with your child's teacher(s). The more specific your inquiry, the more accurate the response. Generic commentary about the plan overall is not enough to help your child. What is the issue? What needs are not being met? Trust the experts - the teachers. And if what you receive is not to your satisfaction, reach out to the principal. Generic concern about the plan does not enable those closest to your child to help your child, nor does it give us the opportunity for assessment, reflection and growth.

Our educators' walls have become windows, and all can see each of them working at their craft. Teachers are creators - creating and advancing minds of their learners. Please allow them to continue doing their craft in their style, as professionals, and question that which you would normally question about your child's education experience, not all that you see given the change in this environment.

Our plan for virtual instruction is pedagogically sound, blending real time interaction that mimics the classroom with asynchronous learning activities that are realistic for flexible learners. It is not perfect, and we cannot wait for the opportunity to sit down and be Monday-morning quarterbacks. We just don't know when that Monday is going to come that will allow us to do so.

As of now, I cannot speculate on the duration of the school closure, as we are under the Governor's Order to remain closed indefinitely with no further address of this topic expected by Governor Murphy until April 17th "at the very earliest." That said, there can be no speculation on plans thereafter, including graduation, promotion ceremonies, or other planned events. Once we know more, we will be prepared to speak out on contingencies or alterations to the affected events.

As of now, I cannot speak to how we are assessing in this virtual world - grades? pass/fail? Something other? We have our ideas and collaborations on this topic in place, but are respecting the request from the Commissioner of Education to await DOE guidance on this which is expected later this week.

As of now, I cannot speak to Teacher evaluations, Student Growth objectives, or other items relating to AchieveNJ law - for these topics we also respect the request of the Commissioner of Education and await DOE guidance.

Mr. Usami, our School Business Administrator, will speak to you about the parts of our plan most pertinent to his departments: Food Service and Technology. Then, Dr. Mamman, our Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction will speak more in depth about the details of the plan developed under her leadership and with the expertise of our curriculum and instruction advisory team, many of whom have years and years of experience not only in curriculum and instruction, but specific to Tenafly as well. From there we will proceed to the presentations that will be given by our outstanding principals, each of whom will give you a glimpse into how this plan is integrated at each of their schools.

William Faulkner said: You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.

We have definitely left sight of the shore and are approaching new horizons. None of what we are doing is an investment in time for only the here and now. Then again, none of us want to even put into the universe that we are doing this now for an event like this in the future. So, the investment payoff to our work now will come when we come back together again. We do not expect to return to our previous normal, as that would be unproductive, given all we have learned and invested during this time. Instead, we expect that this time apart is enriching how we will use our time more effectively when we are together and have arrived at a new shore:

- Might we become a 1:1 district, with policies in place that support the continuation of the practices we have instituted?
- Might we start flipping the classroom, and using recorded lessons for the purpose of at-home work in order to foster more productive use of students' in-school experiences?
- Might virtual collaborations become more practiced at all levels - administrators, staff and students?
- Might virtual instruction be used in other ways - will snow days continue to exist or will they be replaced by virtual instruction days?

These are only a few questions that indicate that a bright horizon is ahead of us. Thank you for continuing to swim with us on our journey there.

BOARD SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Usami discussed Food Service and Technology issues.

Food Service

The district is not in the National School Lunch Program, therefore, we are not required to provide free and reduced lunches. However, the Board has subsidized these lunches for eligible students. The district has taken on this expense for quite a few years. We have continued to provide school lunches made by Pomptonian Food Service, and eligible families have been contacted that lunches are available for pickup at the Middle School from 11 am to noon.

We found out that many parents could not get to the Middle School for the lunch pickup; therefore, we switched strictly to a delivery system by our maintenance staff for delivery twice a week (we are allowed to provide up to 3 lunches at one time). These are contactless deliveries to ensure safety measures for both the families and our staff (parents are instructed to open their front door only when the driver gets back into their vehicle). This system has been working out very well. Special thanks was given to Pomptonian for coming to the Middle School to prepare the lunches, to Debe Besold who has contacted all the families, and the maintenance staff for the deliveries.

Technology

The Technology Dept. has worked diligently and expeditiously to remove Chromebooks and chargers from the carts. The Chromebooks were cleaned with disinfectant wipes and approximately 800 Chromebooks were prepared and delivered by the technology staff, the maintenance staff, and Principal Morrison delivered a few Chromebooks. The district thanks all those who were part of this task. All throughout the school closure, we thank the technology

staff who have provided support to staff members, students and parents in order to maintain virtual learning and the operation of the district. A special thanks goes to the district's technology coordinator Bob Caputo who has worked tirelessly to learn about Zoom video conferencing in a short period of time to coordinate tonight's meeting.

Ms. Horan thanked all the people who helped make the virtual meeting happen tonight. She reminded the public that they should give their name and address when submitting a question for the public commentary portion of the meeting.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION REPORT

Dr. Mamman gave the following report:

The sudden switch from classroom learning to a virtual format is a challenge for all of us. We cannot underscore the value of having a teacher by the side of a student in a classroom with student interaction. We understand that our students' families are scrambling to figure out working from home, child care, and home learning. Know that most of our teachers and staff are going through the same issues. As a result, it was our initial goal to provide our students with activities they can do to continue to love learning and not lose that spark we've worked so hard to nurture throughout the school year. When we were thinking of academic content as we worked on the plan, our focus was to keep it simple and no new material at first. We wanted to start with something successful and build from there. We wanted to create activities for students to do so that they can feel confident in completing while they navigate learning from home. We focused on review topics especially as we figured out the technology aspect. We wanted to have realistic expectations about what can be achieved due to juggling work, child care, siblings, illnesses, and caring for extended family. We all want the best for our students, so it's important to keep things in perspective. While students will be challenged, they will be learning more about technology, problem-solving, working together, and communicating, as well as any academic concepts we can integrate into our plans.

Meanwhile, our teachers are doing their best to offer online options that can go a long way toward facilitating interaction with their students. We obtained resources and leveraged existing online materials to support teachers as they move to remote instruction. Teachers are actively learning how to use these platforms as well and are working well into the night to plan and execute lessons virtually. There are a variety of ways that our teachers will deliver new instruction as Ms. DeMarco listed earlier- Google meets/hangouts, Zoom, videos, Screencastify - Teachers will use Google Classrooms and/or teacher webpages to provide the support that students need to be successful. They will use these platforms to curate, provide resources, post daily assignments or reminders, and be accessible for student questions.

Parents and caregivers can expect a combination of two types of virtual learning:

1. Synchronous - The Virtual presence of all students in a chat room or online platform in order to engage in learning at the same time. This could range from a live lesson or discussions about a previously viewed recorded lesson, etc. Either way students interact with their teacher and each other in real-time.
2. Asynchronous - Learning experiences that students can complete anytime throughout the day without the need for real-time, live feedback. Screencastify,

Nearpod & other recorded lessons, video clips, self-guided Powerpoints followed by Q&A or feedback via GoogleChat, GoogleClassroom, etc.

Our teachers have been asked to think about how they are interacting with students and how students are interacting with each other in their current classes, not necessarily focusing on using a particular platform.

- In the elementary schools, we have asked that our teachers schedule office Hours and Real Time Instruction during the elementary Virtual School Day from 8:30-12:30, and teachers should continue to respond to students and parents in a timely manner outside of those hours. In order to avoid students being asked to be in two (virtual) places at one time, we asked that classroom teachers schedule any "Real time instruction" during the times their classes meet. Specials and Wellness rotation teachers should schedule their time when their classes meet for each grade.
 - **Office hours:** A period of time (30-45 minutes daily) when a teacher is available on an online platform such as zoom/chats to answer questions and provide real time support to any student/parent who chooses to join during that period.
 - **Real Time Instruction:** Synchronous learning happening in real time. The teacher presents a lesson and students have the ability to respond to the teacher and peers. (This could be through platforms such as Google Classroom or any other chat platform.)
- At the middle and high school levels, we have asked teachers to be available when their class "meets," if possible, so that students are not double booked with synchronous learning appointments. If they cannot be available at that time, teachers need to post "office hours" as to when they would be available to answer questions. Teachers are using Zoom, and Google Meet for "live" sessions and Screencastify to push out lessons

Different levels will vary in their ability to translate classroom instruction to virtual instruction. We count on our teachers to identify what's most valuable to the student learning and how best to translate that online, given the limitations of a virtual setting.

Examples: A teacher might create and record a lesson on a new topic/concept via video with audio on a device/Screencastify and post on Google Classroom/ teacher website/email link for students to view. Then, the teacher would have a Google meet/Zoom conference to discuss, answer questions, guide student learning, and give feedback, routine interactive engagement between the students and the teacher for the purpose of day to day continuity and students' social cohesion. OR start with teaching a new concept via Google meet/Zoom conference and followed by self-guided resources, Q&A or feedback via GoogleChat, GoogleClassroom, etc. It could be a live morning meeting to check in with students and set up what they would be seeing in a video and/or completing on their own with a live closure with teacher to answer questions etc.

What our students miss the most is what we miss the most: the human connection that is cultivated in our classrooms. The little interactions teachers have with them in the hallways, before and after class or during breaks in lessons, are irreplaceable. While we are working really hard to focus on content in our virtual learning assignments and instructional videos, we know that what matters more is creating structures for personalized touchpoints with our students. We are creating these touchpoints via emails, video messages, phone calls, messages through Google and websites, comments on shared documents, and so forth.

Without a doubt, virtual learning does come with some challenges especially for families and caregivers of our youngest students. While virtual learning offers flexibility, it comes at the price of the structure that the traditional classroom provides. Even though we have a given daily schedule, parents have the flexibility to make the decisions best for them and their circumstances, and inform their child's teacher of their situation. Virtual learning will be different, hard, and it won't replace interacting face-to-face.

Dr. Mamman emphasized that virtual learning has challenges, and if parents need assistance or guidance, they should not hesitate to contact the teacher or principal. Dr. Mamman wished everyone good health of mind and body.

PRINCIPALS' PRESENTATIONS ON VIRTUAL LEARNING

Elementary Schools

Mackay Principal Brenda Yoo presented an outline that included the following:

- Our teachers have developed daily schedules with specific core content areas, as well as social and emotional wellness lessons, and hands-on activities. The schedules are flexible.
- Lesson plans include specific objectives and resources aligned to NJSLA for curriculum state standards, and online activities as well as paper/pencil for the youngest learners.
- Online curriculum resources include Schoolwide Reading and Writing, Phonics First, Everyday Math and Inspire Science.
- Teachers are implementing new programs and platforms such as Imagine Learning, Raz Kids and Math programs to see what works best for students.
- Full implementation of Google Classroom is used by all the classroom teachers for assignments and attendance.
- Daily instructions include live-teaching, pre-recorded videos from the teacher, learning videos and websites.
- Ms. Yoo presented a sample elementary schedule for the different grades.
- Students receive interventions, where needed, during the school day.
- ELL instruction continues to be provided

Smith Principal Ross discussed the elementary special areas:

- Specialists have collaborated with building and district colleagues, their respective supervisors and their principals.
- Specialists developed their own Google Classroom sites and shared with students and parents, making videos, sharing links, running live lessons and engaging in meaningful conversations with students.
- Specialists have also taken the lead in boosting morale in the schools by creating school-wide morning announcements, projects, and sending birthday wishes to students.

Stillman Principal Lander discussed the importance of communication:

- Communication is critical and is ongoing day and night. Team meetings with teachers, specialists and paraprofessionals are conducted at least weekly. Meetings take place with the administrative team, supervisors, parents and the community.
- There are virtual meetings, recordings of meetings and virtual workshops. Teachers are trying new things and sharing new platforms and ways with other teachers.
- Principals' attendance in all Google Classrooms and "pop ins" into virtual class meetings.
- Phone calls are made from principals, teachers, nurses, secretaries, guidance counselors and case managers.
- Daily office hours are held by teachers with virtual meetings/check-ins with the students.
- There are instructional and motivational videos, and a lot of collaboration.
- Ms. Lander thanked the parents, families, caretakers and older siblings for their support and help to make the learning continue in their homes, and for appreciating the dedication of our faculty members.

Maugham Principal Ferrara discussed teachers' reflections:

- All faculty, regardless of their previous technology skills, have further developed their technical abilities and implemented new tools for virtual learning.
- Our school communities are working together in unison in order to be responsive to input and ever-changing needs of groups and individuals.
- Parent support has been overwhelmingly positive, and we thank you.
- Students have enjoyed some of the instructional and motivational videos.
- There is a lot of juggling for parents in managing the curriculum, communication and their daily lives.
- There are varying needs and family circumstances which require flexibility for all.
- Teachers are learning and trying to find the best balance of instruction and communication for all grades.

Middle School

TMS Principal Fabbo discussed some of the challenges students are facing, and discussed the suggested schedule that was created:

- The TMS structure is team based (3 teams at each grade level, each with a team leader). We have departments that go by their curricular areas with lead teachers, and PE and Integrated Arts elective classes, a guidance counselor for each grade level, a full child study team, a vice principal and a supervisor of curriculum and instruction. All of these staff members are working together for the best possible learning outcome.
- Mr. Fabbo described the flexible schedule (students are expected to visit 4 periods each day, in some way)
- Teachers are using Google classrooms as their foundation.

- Mr. Fabbo asked Mr. Morrison to talk about the High School schedule.

High School

THS Principal Morrison discussed some of the challenges High School students are facing.

- Flexibility is taken into consideration as home situations vary, and a suggested schedule was created so that staff and students know what to expect and to give everyone a routine.

Mr. Fabbo and Mr. Morrison prepared tonight's presentation together as the middle and high school are working similarly. This is the 3rd day the schedule is being used. The following was discussed:

- Teachers all have Google Classrooms as the foundation for assignments and links to other apps that are all found in one place. This provides the opportunity for both public and private comments between teachers and students.
- Different resources are used depending on the content and objectives for the day.
- Students are completing work at their own pace, and are learning different ways to share their work with their different teachers.
- There are live sessions happening around the school, but not in every classroom yet.
- There are live chats so Q&A can happen in real time.
- Recorded lessons are being created by teachers daily so students can see and hear their own teacher's presentation.
- Many useful and effective apps are being used
- New things are being tried

Mr. Morrison praised the staff who have successfully, in a quick turnaround, pivoted from real instruction to remote learning, and many great lessons have already been given using live streaming, and live Q&A sessions. Counselors have been fantastic in collaborating with teachers to find out the reasons why some students are not participating. Technology and maintenance staff have been great. Through Zoom or Google Meet counselors have done conferencing regarding class schedules for next year and meetings about colleges. In addition, the CSI team has continued IEP meetings on schedule, CarePlus has continued to reach out to their case load, the ECHO newspaper continues, and Tiger Rundown (THS TV) continues to create programs. We are hoping the music program can put together a remote learning piece as the musical had to be canceled.

Mr. Fabbo discussed the staff's commitment to give individualized attention for all learners. Some students do not need any help, while others need a lot of support. We have the resources to provide academic and emotional support to all students and parents. Counseling sessions are available, and the counselors work closely with the team leaders to assist students who may not show up as much as they should, or their work is not up to par. The special education teams are working countless hours to ensure IEP's are followed. And meetings are held to discuss assessments to ensure students receive accommodations and modifications they are entitled to.

Mr. Morrison talked about staff communication and supervision and ongoing meetings are held both at the middle and high school. Google Meet was used for over a 100 staff members. Supervisors meet with their individual departments. Also discussed was the status of staff with technology – and reaching out to teachers who are not using different platforms or doing live streaming so they can get on board. Mr. Morrison and Mr. Fabbo have been reaching out to particular staff members via phone calls, emails and text messages.

Mr. Fabbo talked about staff communication and meetings are happening constantly (with or without supervisors). Today with our administrative team there were meetings with: special ed teachers, SO, Child Study team, ELL planning, TEA leadership, etc. There are 100 staff members at TMS, and about 150 at THS and staff members receive phone calls, emails and texts all day long. Regarding public communication, Mr. Fabbo said we are doing our best to use social media, recorded announcements, Blackboard calls and emails, website are updated by secretaries and student are reminded to check their emails. He thanked parents who have offered to help.

Mr. Morrison said he will have his first remote meeting with his student cabinet to get feedback on what the first week of phase 2 with the suggested schedule was like for them.

Mr. Fabbo discussed some reflections including the following:

- The attendance process is tricky and continues to evolve
- Every household is unique
- Students are in different time schedules, subject areas are unique
- Flexibility is essential
- The Tenafly community is resilient and supportive, and we want to hear from you to provide you with what you need
- There are many variables to take into account to make this system work for everyone

Ms. Horan gave a heartfelt thank you to everyone who put the presentation together to inform the Board and community of what has gone into preparing an educational environment that is now taking place. She stated members of the public have posed questions and there are 224 participants tonight.

Ms. Horan asked the Board if they had any questions or comments.

Ms. Schwarz mentioned a hot topic in town is about the spring break, and parents are asking what the administration has decided to do for next week.

Ms. DeMarco replied that nothing has changed and we are following the calendar that is in place. It is the administration's recommendation that it is a healthy pause for our educators who have transitioned overnight with remote teaching. There is no determination of how long virtual learning will take place before we return to normalcy, and a break will help us prepare for the time ahead, as well as take care of needs that have been put aside.

Ms. Horan added that many people in town have been comparing the NY state-wide decision mandated by the governor and the DOE; however, NJ Governor Murphy has not given the same direction. Tenafly parents have expressed different opinions about whether or not to have a spring break.

Ms. Juhng referred to the idea of structuring spring break differently, as she has heard some other districts in the county are doing (hold school Monday through Thursday for the rest of April). Ms. DeMarco added that she was privy to a conversation with 15 other superintendents, where one superintendent was choosing this structure, and other unique ideas were discussed specific districts' needs. Ms. DeMarco pointed out that for our faculty the week the spring week is 4 days, and Good Friday is a holiday for students and staff.

PUBLIC Q&A

Ms. Horan opened the floor for the questions the Board received on the public Q&A survey.

Ms. Schwarz has been organizing questions submitted from residents who have listed their name and address. Repeat questions will be passed over if they have been addressed already, and several questions have been consolidated that are similar in nature, therefore, she apologized for not reading every separate question submitted.

Cindy and Henry Kasindorf - 83 Woodland St. - The Kasindorfs thanked the Board and schools for their efforts to create the virtual learning plan; however, they have significant concerns for their 4 children (1 in elem, 1 at TMS, and 2 at THS), and said they believe they are not receiving the level of school work other districts are receiving, and would like to have a day with more structure that resembles the typical school day.

Dr. Mamman and Mr. Fabbo described the comments they received about students having too much work and it is difficult to judge accurately unless we know the specifics. Parents can discuss concerns with the teacher, then the principal, if needed. Mr. Fabbo said TMS and THS went to the ½ day schedule to give students a chance to focus on certain classes and not get overwhelmed. Mr. Ross added that it is important to remember that every family situation is different, therefore, flexibility is built into the structure. Ms. Lander emphasized students have different learning styles and abilities, and accessibility with technology throughout the day, and it is important to reach out to the teacher if there is a problem.

Ms. Horan suggested that if a parent is looking for additional work for their student(s) they should reach out to the teachers. Ms. DeMarco agreed and stressed the importance of good communication with the teachers who need to know what the students are experiencing to better address their educational and emotional needs without them being overwhelmed. It's important to also seize teachable moments.

Ms. Yoo reminded the community of the different learning styles, levels and abilities students have, and some may need, and are offered, additional resources and activities. Mr. Ross added that families have to make the system work for them, and there is no one single way that will work for everyone. Mr. Fabbo said optional work is offered for TMS students who wish to challenge themselves. Some students will do the optional work and others will not, however, the optional work will not impact their grades. Some parents ask their students to do the optional work but may receive resistance from their students. Mr. Fabbo said this has to be discussed with the staff. Parents always have the option of reaching out to their student's teachers to discuss this topic.

Lea Goldman - 7 Depeyster Ave - Ms. Goldman gave thanks for the efforts in these extraordinary times. Ms. Goldman suggested establishing more regular open communication from the Board and Ms. DeMarco outside the BOE meetings. Mayor Zinna gives daily updates. Also, is next year's curriculum going to be modified to account for the fact that some of the students are not where they were expected to be (especially younger students). If not, what should parents do and is summer school a consideration.

Ms. DeMarco replied that the mayor receives information quickly to share, and it is not the same in education, however, when we do receive information Ms. DeMarco conveys it to the public. She is looking forward to an arrangement with the HSA for a group meeting to be able to discuss ongoing topics and to move forward, and a plan is being developed to also connect with students virtually. Ms. Horan added that Board members would like to continue to participate at the HSA meetings.

Dr. Mamman addressed the curriculum question posed and said students' needs will be assessed and a plan will be developed by reviewing all options once we know more of the current situation. Ms. DeMarco added that the unknown is the biggest impediment we are facing now.

Ms. Schwarz read the following 2 related questions that were submitted:

David Hong – 116 Kent Road – Mr. Hong said as we are all painfully aware, all extracurricular activities are currently suspended. In my view, this forcibly freed time needs to be filled. I believe it presents an opportunity for our Tenafly students to come out of this crisis excelling rather than regressing and suggests filling the time with supplemental instruction/work - i.e., increased academic rigor. Rigor seems to have decreased than increased. On some days, either or one of my kids are fully done with their work (including homework) by 1 pm. While I understand this is a hugely challenging time for all of us, it would be helpful for us to be on the same page - increased rigor, not decreased rigor.

Jason Rubach- 23 Birchwood – Mr. Rubach emphasized the students are busy for less than two hours a day. There is no way that anyone would say that kids are busier than they are in school. Please suggest more material for the children. They are being short changed.

Dr. Mamman expressed that teachers need specifics and to hear from the students or parents if children need more work. We are at the beginning of virtual learning and the balance is being worked on constantly to keep the rigor going. Ms. DeMarco added that there are other resources and opportunities available within the building for students to tap into outside of the classroom teacher. Principals added comments about the social and emotional needs of students and the opportunities that are open for them and teachers are offering to students in this time of isolation. Teachers are being encouraged to use more live sessions to help students with academics but also for students' social interaction. At the elementary level extra-curricular activities and opportunities are being utilized, and the Discovery enrichment programs are offered to all students. Reaching out to teachers is the key.

Ms. Newman said she has heard comments from parents (particularly elementary) that there isn't one main place to look online for finding additional work for their children and it would be helpful if the administrative staff could work on this. Ms. Newman added that the live sessions are fantastic and her children look forward to them. Principal Ferrara discussed the important feedback she and teachers receive to better help the students, and consolidating information is one of the goals.

Ms. Schwarz consolidated some questions that were similar:

Several residents wanted to know why we are not going forward to fully live classrooms (full day via Zoom, etc.).

Ms. DeMarco expressed that this format would result in time being ineffectively used, and it doesn't mirror an actual classroom because of the limitations we have. Recorded lessons are more effective with teacher guidance to determine the level of understanding from conversations that follow the lesson. Dr. Mamman explained how effective instruction is tiered; it begins with teaching a concept, then guidance of understanding the concept, independent work is done by student, then the level of understanding can be measured by questions and conversation. There will be some topics that lend themselves to live lessons and teachers will make these decisions.

Ms. DeMarco spoke a little about her meetings and interactions with the executive committee of county association superintendents and discussions of how districts vary with what is working best for them based on many factors and limitations involved. Ideas are shared and plans are still evolving.

Ms. Juhng referred to inquiries by elementary parents who would like to know if live instructional lessons are not going to be an expectation of the district.

Principal Lander replied that teachers are exploring ways of how this platform would work for instruction; and based on their experiences this week with 20 students this was not optimal. Smaller group sessions will be explored, considering varying factors. Principal Ross said the teachers are being thoughtful and mindful in trying to meet the needs of all students in real time. Principal Fabbo suggested everyone take a deep breath during this pandemic. Teachers are learning every day and we need to give the virtual learning process time to evolve and to get used to it, and to gather feedback from the students.

Ms. Newman suggested that families be informed when there is a new lesson and that there will be some sort of an assessment developed eventually so parents will know their children are absorbing the lesson being taught.

Ms. DeMarco clarified that teachers are always assessing before they move on to new instruction as they may have to reteach something or address something, and how that assessment is measured may not be visual to a parent right now. Teachers know their students and will reach out to them individually, if needed. Another factor affecting assessment is the fact that not all students have access to the same resources, materials or help. The administration is trying to figure this out, and is waiting for guidance from the Dept. of Education for the district to be able to make the best choices for the district as a whole and for different groups of students for measured progress and validation.

Ms. Horan expressed that in looking through the list of questions submitted, there is a lot of repetition about similar topics such as extra work, extended day, Zoom usage, etc., and to consider this as an extension of the feedback we already received in the survey. We are not at a point yet where we can answer directly some of these questions, as remote learning is still evolving.

Mr. Aronson thanked Ms. Horan, the administration and principals. He expressed that the Board is comfortable with the plan that has been designed; however, he said he is not convinced the execution of the plan is what was intended, and that he believes 20% of elementary teachers are not performing at a high level, and not reaching out to the parents or students in every classroom, and he thinks this should be acknowledged. He praised Mr. Morrison for meeting with his high school students.

Ms. Horan expressed that she believes several of the principals have indicated tonight in some of their comments that there is still work to be done and some of the faculty members have to get together more to figure things out. Ms. DeMarco added that when the process of parent/teacher communication is not met with satisfaction or not at all, then the administration has something to focus on and deal with. Proper communication is essential for positive results. Ms. DeMarco stated that the meeting tonight is to publicly state what our plan is and for people to know what we expect is being delivered to our students. If what we promote is not being practiced, and fair time has been put in place, then this needs to be addressed. There is a protocol to follow for communication between parent/teacher/principal to properly address and assess a situation before the superintendent gets involved.

Principal Lander added that in some ways we are more connected via virtual means, emails, zooms, etc. and she knows that each team is working together to deliver plans to entire grade levels. Every teacher has had a live opportunity, and plans have been delivered. The plans and the execution of the plans as far as the platforms go are evolving, and expressed that she can't say that there's 20% of Stillman School who are not doing something they are supposed to be doing, or that they are not achieving highly.

Ms. Schwarz pointed out that the comments principals made about exploring a plan to have teachers break students out into small groups was a recurring theme in quite a few of the comments submitted by parents and they looked upon this as a good idea (e.g., 5-10 minutes with one student, 30 mins for a small group of students, etc.).

Ms. Schwarz indicated there were questions submitted regarding grading and pass/fail, and some parents may not have heard about this in the beginning of the meeting tonight, and if Ms. DeMarco would like to comment on this for those parents.

Ms. DeMarco replied that the Commissioner of Education has reached out to all superintendents and asked them to await further guidance from the DOE on assessing in a virtual environment along with the student growth objectives and teacher evaluations. She said some districts have gone ahead without state guidance, but we feel it is in our best interests to see what the options are and then proceed to make decisions.

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were recommended by the Superintendent of schools.

FINANCE

A motion was made by Ms. Schwarz and seconded by Ms. Flynn to approve Resolutions F-1 through F-5.

The motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION F-1 APPROVAL TO ACCEPT EI ASSOCIATES' PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR THE REPAVING PROJECT AT CENTRAL OFFICE

BE IT RESOLVED that the Tenafly Board of Education approves the professional services proposal as attached for repaving the parking at Central Office in the amount of \$10,000 plus reimbursables.

RESOLUTION F-2 APPROVAL TO ACCEPT EI ASSOCIATES' PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR THE MACKAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CIRCLE REPAVING AND PARKING EXPANSION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Tenafly Board of Education approves the professional services proposal as attached for the Circle Repaving and Parking Lot Expansion at Mackay Elementary School in the amount of \$29,000 plus reimbursables.

RESOLUTION F-3 APPROVAL TO ACCEPT EI ASSOCIATES' PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR THE GEISSINGER FIELD GRANDSTAND REPLACEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the Tenafly Board of Education approves the professional services proposal as attached for the Grandstand Replacement at Geissinger Field in the amount of \$53,800 plus reimbursables.

RESOLUTION F-4 APPROVAL TO PAY FIRST STUDENT FOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTE CONTRACTS

WHEREAS, the Tenafly Board of Education ("the Board") and First Student ("Contractor") are parties to a transportation agreement dated, June 17, 2020 ("Agreement"); and

WHEREAS, the Agreement provides that the Contractor shall be paid for transportation services performed; and

WHEREAS, due to COVID-19, the Tenafly Public School District has remained closed as of March 13, 2020; and

WHEREAS, as a result, transportation services have discontinued; and

WHEREAS, in consideration for not terminating the Agreement with the Contractor since transportation services will no longer be necessary while schools are closed, the Board will agree to continue payment to the Contractor through the duration of the term of Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Board's payment obligation shall be contingent upon the Contractor furnishing, on a monthly basis, copies of certified payroll records for each driver who was assigned to a route for the Board as of March 12, 2020 the last day student transportation services were

provided prior to schools officially closing, establishing that the driver's salary was paid by the Contractor;

WHEREAS, the parties have amended the terms of the Agreement to memorialize and clarify the respective responsibilities and obligations of the parties as set forth above.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves the Addendum reflecting the parties obligations above, which is attached hereto.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board President and the Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute the attached Addendum to the Agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution.

(Walk-in Resolution F-5)

RESOLUTION F-5 APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR EXTERIOR BLEACHERS AND COACHES BOX FROM NICKERSON CORPORATION THROUGH EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION OF NEW JERSEY

BE IT RESOLVED that the Tenafly Board of Education approves the contract to purchase exterior bleachers and coaches box in the amount of \$657,600.88 from Nickerson Corporation, 11 Moffitt Boulevard, Bay Shore, NY 11706 through Educational Services Commission of New Jersey Pricing Cooperative, Contract #ESCNJ 19/20-26 for the capital project budgeted in 2020-2021.

Ms. Horan asked the Board if they had any questions or comments on the Resolutions.

Resolutions F-1 through F-5 were approved as follows:

Yes - 9	Mark Aronson	No - 0
	Natalie Barbanel	
	Patricia Flynn	Abstain - 0
	Inbal Israeli Miller	
	Jane Juhng	Absent - 0
	Paula Newman	
	Edward J. Salaski	
	Jocelyn Schwarz	
	Janet I. Horan	

Ms. Horan thanked all the many participants tonight, and the principals who gave presentations and answered questions thoughtfully. Thanks also to the administrators, for Mr. Caputo for putting the virtual meeting together tonight, and for Mr. Fogarty for keeping the Board on track.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION-COMMUNITY COMMENTARY

Ms. Horan inquired if there were any members of the audience who wished to address the Board.

Ms. Schwarz expressed that not all the public's questions were addressed and many of them were similar to the ones posed already; however, all questions have been read and will be shared with the administration. Ms. Horan said this will all be part of the feedback that we gathered from the survey earlier and for everyone to consider as we move forward.

A motion was made by Mr. Salaski and seconded by Ms. Israeli Miller to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Yas Usami
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary