

*NOTE: When feasible, TRSB meetings are videotaped. These meeting minutes reflect only a basic summary of the meeting topics, discussion, and action. The Vimeo recording of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/trsd>  
Materials presented at the board meeting may be viewed at:  
<https://public.timberlane.net/sau/trsb/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fsau%2ftrsb%2fShared%20Documents%2fSCHOOL%20BOARD%20MEETING%20AGENDA%20MATERIALS%2f2020%2d21%2f09%2017%202020%20Meeting&FolderCTID=&View=%7b8B0F59BE%2dD93D%2d4E49%2d9509%2dA6F7531FCCAB%7d>*

**TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Regular Business Meeting  
September 17, 2020  
7:00PM**

**Performing Arts Center  
40 Greenough Road  
Plaistow, NH**

**Call to Order (00:00:00)**

Chairman Farah called the August 20, 2020 meeting of the Timberlane Regional School Board to order at 7:00PM and then led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Board Members Present**

Brian Boyle, Lee Dubé, Kimberly Farah, Barbara Kiszka (joined via phone after approved motion at 7:02PM), Sheila Lowes, Sarah Machermer, Shawn O’Neil, and Jennifer Silva

**Seated at the Board Table**

Dr. Brian Cochrane, Interim Superintendent of Schools

**Others Present**

Sandy Allaire, Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Learning  
Lucy Canotas, Director of Elementary Curriculum (K-5)  
Geoff Dowd, CFO/Business Administrator  
Ken Henderson, Director of Technology  
Nany Louiselle, Director of Human Resources  
Gary Paradis, Facilities Director  
Mark Pedersen, Director of Secondary Curriculum (6-12)

**MOTION: Mr. Dubé motioned to allow Barbara Kiszka to participate remotely via phone; seconded by Mr. O’Neil. The motion passed 7-0-0.**

This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (00:02:23)**

**MOTION: Ms. Lowes motioned to accept the TRSB Regular Business Meeting minutes of September 3, 2020; seconded by Mrs. Silva. The motion passed 8-0-0.**

**DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS (00:02:58)**

**Brian Stack, of Plaistow, (00:03:33)** expressed his disappointment in the letter that went out today stating they were still not able to bring Grades 7 and 8 back to the middle school due to staffing issues. Mr. Stack asked the Board whether all avenues have been exhausted to bring educators in. He suggested looking at multi-age classes, working on a different schedule at the middle school, looking at emergency hire/emergency certification procedures to get college kids in. He described a massive equity issue at the Middle School; the District is not providing the same opportunities for two grades of students. He offered to assist in any way that he could.

**John Goldman, of Sandown, (00:05:26)** described Remote 1.0 as a disaster and described Remote 2.0 as marginally better. The response to Covid 19 in March and April was probably the correct response but six months into the pandemic, there has been one death of a child under the age of 18 in NH. The Timberlane District has, at most, eight cases with the active case map showing Atkinson and Sandown having none and Danville and Plaistow showing 1-4 cases in each town. Using the NH State Epidemiologist’s guidance, the District should be in school

five days a week. His question to the TTA & TSSU is what has changed? The staff has been on vacation, going out to dinner, going to church, going to Walmart, going shopping. Students are socializing, they are going out to dinner, families are socializing together, they are going shopping, going to Walmart, and going on vacation. The only thing that has changed is that neither are in school five days per week. Other districts have been able to be in school, mitigating issues as they arise. For years, parents have been told to leave the educating to the teachers and the professionals. Now, and not by choice, parents are becoming the teachers and professionals. Parents have adjusted for months. His question to the TTA & TSSU is what's the plan? Contracts and budgets will be scrutinized and cut by the voters if students are not in school. The data shows there is not a Covid 19 problem in this District. If we do not get back to school soon, there will not be a district to come back to.

**Kelly Rue, Danville, (00:14:23)** expressed frustration that some members of the Board were not looking at the parents as they spoke making them feel as though they were not being acknowledged or listened to. The Board explained they were taking notes and reading the letters as some had already been emailed to the Board before the meeting.

**Stefanie Dube, Danville, (00:15:50)** stated that some parents are being berated for their views on how remote learning has affected their children and have been accused of not appreciating the teachers. This is false, unfair, and unacceptable. Mrs. Dube said she was asked to read three statements from parents.

The first statement was from a parent who must work and is having to tell both children that I am sorry, but I cannot help you. Tired, drained, depressed, sad, overwhelmed, lost, confused, withdrawn, angry, scattered, agitated, failure and desperate are the words used to describe remote learning for their 4<sup>th</sup> grader with ADHD and an IEP. The children and the community are suffering.

The second statement referenced a 5<sup>th</sup> grader who is also struggling with remote learning. The letter described a total meltdown wherein the student refused to participate in the zoom meetings, wouldn't do his work and cried. He said he can't do this. He can't do his schoolwork at home. Home and school were not meant to be one and the same place. The author asks why kids can go to camps, after school programs, the YMCA, sports, friend's houses, stores, restaurants, beaches, arcades but not school? Kids are being made to feel imprisoned, dangerous to society and dehumanized. So, what is the problem? Its not the pandemic because the numbers and statistics just do not support that. What are we making them suffer and struggle for? How are we, as a community, going to react to the first suicide? At least they didn't die of Covid, right?

The third statement was about a second grader who is also not doing well in remote learning. The parent is frustrated by all the wasted time and breaks. Forty-five minutes of screen time just to say good morning. The zoom classes just are not practical for younger children. This parent would rather receive the assignments and allow the students to do the work at their own pace. If things don't change soon, this parent will be forced to homeschool. This child has an IEP and is already falling behind. This parent feels like they cannot waste another second. Remote learning is not sustainable, and this district needs to get these children back in school.

Salem, NH with over 3500 kids, has been able to figure this out and yet Timberlane has not. They figured out how to get back to school safely. Their kids are also not wearing masks all day. Mrs. Dube sent this Board the Salem re-opening plan in July hoping it could be used as a blueprint to open Timberlane schools. Mrs. Dube questioned whether Dr. Cochrane has spoken with the Salem Superintendent and if not, why not? This district needs to get back on track. Other schools have understood the importance of having kids in school as means to keep the children safe, safe from depression, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal thoughts, academic slide, food insecurity and overall emotional distress. Not having the kids in school is an abject failure by this district. The only thing differentiating other schools from Timberlane is the teacher's union. Charter schools are open, private schools are open and other public schools are open having already worked it out with their unions. Parents need the School Board and the Superintendent to stand up and take the necessary steps to get children back to school in person, five days per week. The conditions necessitate the modification of this MOU. Enough is enough.

**Chris Rue, of Danville, (00:26:06)** recently retired from twenty-five years of military service in which his children have been to school all over this country. He is originally from NH and has returned to NH. His wife (from CA) is loving it except for the schools. His son has taken to NH, but he is not making any friends. He is stuck on the computer all day. Thank God Mr. Rue can work from home to help his children. This is supposed to be about the children. They are the future of the world. He understands that “a lot of teachers do not want to come back to school and that’s cool, let’s find some new ones.” The voters are going to have a say and they will change things. Please let’s get the District running for the children.

**Kiera MacDonald, of Atkinson, (00:30:05)** remote learning is watching your child sit staring into space while she is supposed to be engaged in learning while you gently remind her for the seventh time in an hour to pay attention. It’s watching your daughter melt in front a screen that we spent the last six years of her life monitoring. It’s watching the light being pulled from her eyes while the excitement of learning slowly disappears. It’s knowing our child will have a negative impression of school or the next twelve years after this is through. It’s knowing that if we want her to absorb even 50% of what is being delivered, we need to hover over her for 6.5 hours. It’s knowing that she could potentially have a learning disability that would need extra services and not even having it acknowledged. It’s knowing that as parents, there is nothing you wouldn’t do for your children and knowing that you are completely helpless. It’s knowing that her teachers are doing the absolute best that they can but via zoom, it will never be enough. Six-year olds aren’t meant to be tied into seats to learn independently. She will be fundamentally behind for years to come. In first grade, she should be focused on letters, sounds, numbers and reading not how to navigate through Google classroom to watch different YouTube videos. Other towns have figured it out with simple solutions like plexiglass, good hygiene, masks, and social distancing when possible. There were three scenarios that Timberlane families were asked to choose which one they would prefer: full remote, hybrid or five full days. The School Board has made major accommodations or two of those categories turning schools upside down, inside out and changing the way school is delivered. But, thus far, zero accommodations have been made for families who not only want but absolutely need five full days for their families to continue to survive and thrive.

**Melissa Richard, of Sandown, (00:33:30)** wanted to discuss what her family is experiencing on remote learning. Her daughter is a senior at the High School. She is a student athlete and in the top 5% of her class. She has a 504 for her anxiety. She chose to take Physics so that she could get her NH Scholar medal. Unfortunately, her Physics teacher is teaching remotely or the entire year. Her daughter is having a hard time following lessons while trying to do split screens on Zoom. The proctor for the class cannot assist because he/she does not have a science background. Her daughter’s 504 plan specifically states that she can ask questions on the side. Guidance has advised her to set up separate zoom meetings with her Physics teacher. She is a student athlete who does not even get home from practice until 7pm. The teacher has not yet responded to an email today about today’s homework assignment. Her psychology teacher is late to log into zoom because she is tending to her own children. She often teaches with a toddler on her lap or one running around the room. Her daughter also took cooking. She gets to cook one day a week; the rest are PowerPoint assignments. Her high honors with distinction is in jeopardy. The teachers need to be in the classroom. They need to be teaching. The Seniors have had no preparation for college. No guidance about scholarships, how to apply to colleges, nothing. She is not getting the education or support that she needs because the kids are not in the classroom. Whether they are six or seventeen, these kids need to be in the school five days per week.

**David Bird, of Plaistow, (00:39:03)** wants to know why the email about the middle school was sent three hours before this meeting. Did we truly only know three hours ago that we do not have enough teachers for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades? Proactive communication is what is needed. How many teachers or proctors are needed to open the Middle School? Mr. Bird is willing to take a leave of absence from his work and help if that it will take to open the Middle School. This is not the teachers vs. the kids. We need to fix it and think outside the box. We need to say, specifically, “we need X number of people with this expertise to do this”. As a community we need to work together.

**Jeannie Mailhot, of Plaistow, (00:45:23)**, said she is so proud that so many people have come up to speak. There has been so much backlash that people have been truly petrified to speak. She recently posted on social media telling people who are afraid to speak to come to her and share their stories so she could share it with the Board. Most of the people she has spoken with have children with IEPs and 504 plans that are left with absolutely no resources at home. She spoke to one woman who has only received one email. Another woman whose son has regressed dramatically since last year recently got a 15-minute zoom set up, no re-assessment, no figuring out what she could do at home. It feels like we are prioritizing the potential impact of something that could happen with Covid instead of prioritizing the potential impact this has on our kids. People do not want to talk about the fact that they have had to decide whether to go to work or leave their 11-year-old at home alone. Everything her own son needs help with, you cannot get on a computer. The numbers are such that kids need to be in school. We are not even reaching a baseline education for these kids.

**Michelle Whelan of Plaistow (00:50:56)** stated that she is seeing firsthand what the school does not see which is frustration and general lack of receiving the education that we would expect. Although she has heard some positive reviews on how school is going thus far and she does acknowledge the efforts of her sons teachers, she does not feel like this model is a one size fits all plan. In advocating for her children and others throughout the District, she has been called a teacher basher, told she is impatient, that she has the wrong interpretation of information that is being put out, that she wants something that is unsafe for her child and that she should stop complaining. The kids are suffering from this. Education should be a valuable and significant experience and that is something that remote learning is lacking in a huge way. The numbers in NH support a full reopening of schools. America is back to work; everyone needs to adjust.

**Kevin Borba, of Sandown, (0055:55)** stated that he and his wife are also there to share concerns and stories from multiple families. Many people are being silenced due to the threats and name calling that have gone on. A parent's job is to advocate for their children and while we may not always agree as to the best path to do that, accusing people of "wanting to put our kids in death's doorway" is crossing a line. Understandably, there are families that do not feel comfortable with a full return to school and that should be respected. However, families who desire a full return to school should be respected as well. We have felt nothing but confusion, lack of communication, disrespect, pushing agendas, and the use of the term "advocating for the students and children" as nothing but using them as pawns for the teachers own interests. Mr. Borba is in the carpenter's union in Boston. He was laid off for a week and when called back, was located directly next to a Covid testing site. He and his co-workers took precautions, and no one got sick with the virus and each of them returned home to their families daily.

One grandparent shared that their grandchild has figured out that he does not have to read anymore. "It will just read for me online if I click this button."

Another mom of a Middle School student shared that her son's teacher has been out this entire week with no substitute. The teacher has been assigning work but has not been available for questions or advisory. The teacher's message "There is no direct instruction today for unnamed advisory and all classes. This means do not join your zoom meeting. I will not be there. There is no sub. Take attendance by writing I am here and signing your name in the comments below." This leaves the parent wondering how often this is going to happen.

**Meg Borba, also of Sandown, (00:59:00)** read that a mother from Danville relayed that she is not able to have both of her daughter's online because their internet connection will not support both students. They have gotten the more expensive packages of services but its just not enough, not to mention the added expense. Students have not been set up properly as there has been no guidance at the High School level to tell kids how to plot out their High School years. Their 6<sup>th</sup> grader has learning disabilities and is on a pretty strict IEP. She is not receiving the services that she is supposed to. Today, she waited over 30 minutes for a class to begin, and it never did. Another teacher cut class short so she could take a break because she was so overwhelmed with her young twins that were also at home running around. Her daughter has not had one full day of school; at best

they have been half days. Teachers with poor internet connections go uncorrected while she was told her internet connection is her problem.

Lastly, another mom said that her son's teacher has been great. She has been extremely engaged is doing everything she can to make this work. Still, she sees her son not absorbing the information, the parents having to reteach assignments, stay right by his side to keep him seated at the computer, crying due to headaches and full on body sliding on the hard wood floors because he just cannot contain himself any longer. He is so over stimulated that this is causing a downward spiral for him. He has checked out. The regression he has experienced is extremely concerning. They were told during an IEP meeting that a neuro psych evaluation would not be considered due to the teachers not seeing any of these issues last spring, almost seven months since a teacher has observed him in person. Evaluating a child based on what a teacher can see while on zoom is not an acceptable way to determine a child's need for services. With four formal diagnosis, a personal therapist, pediatrician, and a child's neuro psychologist all advocating for special needs, the refusal to do any testing on the educational level, where are the priorities here?

Where are the expectations and standards for the teachers? While some are doing an excellent job, others are not showing up on time, or at all. Some are chasing children and have them on their laps. Yet others are forever having connectivity issues. Classes need to be monitored; teachers need to be held accountable. The same standards of providing an equal education need to be given to our students whether full time, hybrid or remote. Our kids deserve more. The basis of the situation we are in right now does not support these numbers. What it does support is the personal agendas, the fear, and the unwillingness of many people to do their part. If not now, when the numbers are low, then when? Parents are looking for answers. We are also asking you, the Board, to please put your foot down and stand up for our children. Of all professions, we've never seen one that was so essential be manipulated and controlled in such ways as the TTA & the TSSU have done. Enough is enough. Please give our children the proper education that they are entitled to.

Mr. O'Neil read the Mission Statement that is on the back of his name plate to the public. After hearing all the people speak, we are failing our children miserably. He stated the Board often has their hands tied on what they can do but clearly, they need to come together to resolve these issues.

**Alana Richard, of Sandown, (01:07:26)** brought the student perspective to the Board. She said the students really do want to be back, but they do not understand why it has to be this way? Why can Salem be back in school and they have so many more students? We are also connected to them through CTE, so we literally have students going to Salem and coming back every day. The students are asking that the Board make every effort to get them back onto school full time. She explained that she finds remote very difficult with the split screens and just the sheer amount of time spent on the computer.

Mrs. Silva asked Dr. Cochrane if he knew how many schools were in school full time. He said that the most popular model is hybrid. He also said that he had spoken to the Salem Superintendent over the summer. The Hybrid model is truly the most difficult to implement. Dr. Farah acknowledged all the speakers and their concerns and said that the Board is actively working to try to get students back into these buildings five days per week. The Board is looking at the new metrics issued by the state, implemented new hiring procedures, new people have been hired for Special Education. There are open positions on the website for pandemic floaters and substitute teachers. Dr. Cochrane stated that eight floaters have already been hired. Teachers have been giving up their prep time to fill in for other teachers and that is how the High School has been able to stay open. However, that is not sustainable, and they are still hiring more people. Significant changes are taking place with paras on IEPs this year. Accommodations are still coming in and things change every day. Dr. Cochrane asked that Mr. Henderson send an email blast to parents explaining how to volunteer.

#### **SCHOOL RE-OPENING PLAN UPDATE (01:28:27)**

The State of NH, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control, put out new information on September 1, 2020 entitled

Considerations or Transitioning Between School Instructional Models Based on Level of Community Covid-19 Transmission and Impact on Local Schools. Dr. Farah asked the Board to consider that these guidelines be used as the basis for moving in between models. She would like to insert these into our re-opening plan for the next meeting.

Board members agree that we currently meet these NH metrics to reopen. However, we fall under a “strained” staffing situation and we cannot change models until we have enough staff to cover it.

<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>Mrs. Silva motioned that the District use the 9/1/2020 NH Bureau of Infectious Disease Control metrics in our re-opening plan; seconded by Mr. Dubé. The motion passed 7-1-0 (Mrs. Kiszka opposed).</b>
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Dr. Farah stated that there are several executive summaries on staffing and asked if there were any Board questions. Mr. Boyle asked what number of staff is needed at the Middle School to get it open. Mr. Pederson indicated that seventeen people are approved as remote only with another one pending. He estimated they needed to fill 10-15 proctor positions in both the MS and the HS. Per state RSA’s, Unified Arts classes are required to be offered at the MS level.

Mr. Boyle said that our number of people requesting accommodations seems very high relative to other districts and asked how that is determined. Mrs. Louiselle said that once the District understands what the employee is asking for, or example, full remote, or maybe two out of the four days, they would have to document it with a note from a physician, or if they lost child care, that would be documented as well. Childcare is a legitimate reason if it was lost due to Covid 19. However, a recent change states that if a teacher chose for his/her children to be fully remote, he/she cannot use that as a reason for accommodation.

Mr. O’Neil asked Mr. Pederson for clarification on how to read the staffing/accommodation charts. Every day is a new challenge with staffing.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION (01:48:18)**

Dr. Farah stated there is a Special Education update in the packets and asked if anyone had any questions.

**TECHNOLOGY (01:48:24)**

Dr. Farah asked Mr. Henderson to speak to how we are helping families with connectivity issues. Those that cannot afford internet or do not have it have been sent Verizon Wi-Fi hotspots. Parents can let the schools know this is an issue in the PickUp Patrol application. Any internet provider (Xfinity, Consolidated Communications, etc.) is better than a cellular hotspot. Dr. Farah requested that connectivity issues be addressed in an email blast. The new ship date on the Chromebooks is September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We have handed out about 600 Chromebooks this fall. They have been able to give a device to anyone that has requested it but supplies are very definitely running low.

**MOU UPDATES (01:54:55)**

<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>Mr. O’Neil motioned to authorize the Chair to sign both the TTA MOU and the TSSU MOU; seconded by Mrs. Silva. The motion passed 8-0-0.</b>
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**VENTILATION ASSESSMENT (01:57:09)**

Dr. Farah stated that there is an HVAC update in the packet that will be addressed in a non-public because it involves some issues we have with personnel.

**SAT UPDATE (01:57:23)**

School districts were provided with two possible dates for this fall administration of the SAT School Day:

September 23 or October 14. Timberlane Regional High School (TRHS) will administer the SAT to current seniors on Wednesday, October 14, 2020. Scores from this exam will be available in early November. Students will take a paper/pencil version of the assessment, including the essay portion of the exam, as the digital version of the SAT School Day will not be available for schools to use this fall.

This is the SAT school date specifically for Seniors because they missed it in the Spring as Juniors. The Board asked that this be posted on the website as an announcement.

**WITHDRAWAL (02:01:07)**

A list of positions was in the agenda packet. All positions are considered to be new and people can apply to be re-hired. Positions will begin posting by the end of the month. Mrs. Savage and Mrs. Allaire will co-chair the Superintendent search committee. Dr. Cochrane has reached out to the NH School Board Association or their guidance on the Superintendent search. Dr. Cochrane suggested that the position be posted in early November. The Business Administrator position will be posted within the next week or so. That position has a start date of January 4, 2021 as the recommendation is that it will take this person about six months to get up to speed. It will be posted on our website as well as two others.

**AUDIT (02:06:34)**

Geoff Dowd, CFO/Business Administrator, met with Mr. Campo and the audit Manager for the Timberlane engagement. Our actuary has completed his GASB 75/45 report and the audit report is being compiled and reviewed. Mr. Campo and I have committed to having a final report in hand to the School Board for September 30, 2020.

**POLICIES (02:07:06)**

The board reviewed policies EBCG Communicable and Infection Disease, EHAC Electronic/Digital Records and Signatures, JLCG Exclusion of Students Who Present HA Hazard for first read.

<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>Ms. Lowes motioned to approve the First Read; seconded by Mrs. Silva. The motion passed 8-0-0.</b>
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**ADMINISTRATORS REPORT (02:08:56)**

Nothing to report.

**PERSONNEL REPORT (02:09:08)**

Nothing to report.

Dr. Farah requested that the non-public minutes from the 9/3/2020 meeting be at the next meeting for approval.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS (02:10:05)**

Mrs. Machemer stated that the C&A Committee met on Tuesday via zoom. They welcomed some new members because they had some changes in staffing. They reviewed the Vision, the Mission, and their three goals. They made some modifications to their goals around the strategic plan and what education looks like right now in the District. Next topics include summer learning and PE requirements at the October 6, 2020 meeting.

Dr. Farah asked Mr. Dowd about Payroll vouchers and the fact that they have not received them. It was agreed that he would post them for them to sign. Mr. O'Neil asked that the redactions be removed in that electronic format.

<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>Ms. Lowes motioned to go into non-public under 91-A:3, Paragraph II (A) (The dismissal, promotion or compensation or disciplining of any public employee) and (C) (Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person); seconded by Mr. O'Neil.</b>
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**The Board was polled:**

Boyle – Yes	Dube – Yes	Farah – Yes	Kiszka – Yes
Lowes- Yes	Machemer – Yes	O’Neil – Yes	Silva – Yes

**The motion carried 8-0-0 and the Board entered nonpublic session at 9:20PM.**

<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>Ms. Lowes motioned to exit the non-public meeting; seconded by Mrs. Silva.</b>
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**The Board was polled:**

Boyle – Yes	Dubé – Yes	Farah – Yes	Kiszka – Yes
Lowes- Yes	Machemer – Yes	O’Neil – Yes	Silva – Yes

**The motion carried 8-0-0.**

With no other business before the board, Chairman Farah adjourned the meeting at 10:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Lancaster  
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board on October 1, 2020.