

## **Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes**

**June 3, 2020, 7:00 p.m.**

**Via Zoom Videoconference**

Present Board Members: Jenny Emery, Mark Fiorentino, Melissa Migliaccio, David Peling, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, Brandon Webster, and Dwaritha Ramesh and Jack DeGray (Student Representatives).

Absent Board Members: N/A

Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **I. Administrative Reports**

#### **I.A. Chairman's Corner (5 min.)**

Melissa Migliaccio, Board Chairman, shared opening remarks. Organ even overwhelmed by unity solidary – teachers and students being respectful. It seems as though each time we meet in 2020 there is a new heaviness. The Board has no tolerance for racism, keenly aware that our children are watching us for best practices to lead with grace and purpose. GPS Equity Team met yesterday and an immediate plan is being developed. There is new leadership in the administration and a great team there. Our Superintendent will quickly investigate concerns brought to the administration inequities of any kind.

#### **I.B. Superintendent's Announcements**

- Dr. Grossman stated he walked with Mrs. Migliaccio tonight and was able to see students and families coming together for what is happening in our world today. He is deeply committed to ensure the respect for all individuals. Granby Public Schools has no tolerance for any racist messages and will hold any individuals accountable. On Monday, the Granby Equity Team got together and discussed concerns in the community as well as in the world today. The goal is to bring a more specific plan to the BOE and community at large. We will strengthen that plan as the Granby Public Schools Cultural Proficiency in Equity Action Plan. Our district has also already partnered with the CT Center for School Change, National Conference for Community and Justice and the CREC Outreach Program for Multicultural and Diversity. The administration and Equity Team will also join forces with the Anti-Defamation League and the Farmington Valley Health District. Requested the town to organize a community conversation. The district already has established goals regarding equity – developing a new understanding and increasing urgency and looking to establish things immediately to involve students, families, staff, and the community at large with community conversations, book clubs and looking at curriculum to incorporate multiculturalism and equity. The Assistant Superintendent's office will report out at the next meeting many of the things included in our equity team. These are trying times and we need to come together as a community.
- There are many end-of-year events going on such as goodbye waves and field days. The middle school is also hosting a game day and the middle school moving-up ceremony at 5 p.m. on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The Reopening Task Force has been formed. More details will be reported on later in this meeting.
- At the last meeting Board Meeting, Brandon Webster inquired if we can send a survey to special education families and how they view distance learning. Just letting the Board know this was done and the district is review the results.
- Parents are starting to hear from principals regarding the pick-up of items from lockers/desks at the schools.
- Summer programming is going to be virtual this summer.
- Met with YMCA Director Brian Liss to discuss our continued partnership and assistance in reopening school.
- There is a lot of hiring going on relative to teachers retiring or leaving for other districts.
- The 2020 Teacher of the Year will be announced next week.
- The Board Retreat will be held on August 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss strategic planning.
- To the community at large, I will do everything in my power that the Granby Public Schools treat all people as individuals and with respect.

Jenny Emery thanked Dr. Grossman for his leadership with so many things facing us and also commented it was nice to see community engagement in the center of town today. Melissa Migliaccio inquired if we will we hear about the results from the special education parent survey at the next meeting. Dr. Grossman stated Marian Hourigan will work with Aimee Martin to provide a report at the next meeting.

### **I.C. Student Representative Reports**

Ms. Dwaritha Ramesh and Mr. Jack DeGray, Student Representatives, reported on learning online and adjustments to student life. Additionally, two students from Kelly Lane Primary School, Aislin Eichelberger (Ms. Narciso, Grade 1), and Brayden Waite (Ms. Diemer, Grade 2), shared their experiences with distance learning. Dwaritha stated things are wrapping up and that yesterday was technically the last day of classes for seniors. Students are finishing projects but things are starting to slow down now. She stated seniors would like clearer communication about exactly what will be done on graduation day. Mr. Dunn, Principal, stated an email will be sent out either later today or tomorrow morning with all of the details. Jack DeGray stated also that things are slowing down considerably with classes this Friday and next Monday. He informed the Board he took AP exams and stated he was prepared well.

Aislin Eichelberger, Grade 1, was asked by her teacher, Ms. Narciso, what she likes about learning at home. Aislin stated it is good but she would rather be in school. When asked what she likes doing, she stated like doing the steam projects. She also informed the Board that she likes to see her teacher and her friends in class meetings and her favorite part of class meetings is when students read their diary stories. Brayden Waite, Grade 2, thanked the Board for letting him speak about distance learning and read a statement he prepared. He likes the fact that he can finish his work and activities fast and has the rest of the day to play. He always has writing, reading and word study work. Twice a week he has an optional meeting and his teacher reads a book or plays games with the class. He informed the Board that Seesaw is hard to use with his device so he draws on a piece of paper and takes a picture. The thing he does not like about distance learning is that he doesn't get to see his friends.

Jenny Emery commented it has been a joy to have Dwaritha Ramesh for the last couple of years stating she has been a wonderful representative for the BOE. She also informed the Board that Dwaritha is salutatorian of the Class of 2020. Dwaritha thanked the Board stating it is great that the BOE allows a student voice at the meetings. Melissa Migliaccio informed the student representatives that they are relieved from attending the last meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Rosemarie Weber stated she also wanted to thank the student representatives for sharing what goes on in the high school on the academic, social and athletic side and that when the students give their perspective on things the district is dealing with, the Board takes those into consideration. Brandon Webster also acknowledged Dwaritha's and Jack's participation and applauded them for their efforts as student representatives.

### **I.D. CABE Student Leadership Awards**

The Board presented the CABE Student Leadership Awards to middle school students Addie Zinck (Grade 8) and Brandon Klein (Grade 8), as well as high school students, Lindsay Gilton (Grade 12) and Mark Jones (Grade 12). Melissa Migliaccio spoke about the criteria for the award which are leadership skills encompassing a willingness to take on challenges; capability to make difficult decisions; concern for others; ability to work with others; willingness to commit to a project; diplomacy; ability to understand issues clearly; and, ability to honor a commitment. She then read biographies written about each student.

### **I.E. Annual Curriculum Report**

Ms. Marian Hourigan, Interim Assistant Superintendent, presented the 2019-2020 Curriculum Report to the Board. She informed the Board that last year, Granby developed a five-year curriculum review cycle in order to systemically update and review all curriculum. In addition, Granby began to use Eduplanet21, a virtual curriculum warehouse where all curriculum is written and stored for easy access by all teachers. K-8 Language Arts was the focus of curriculum writing last year and this year K-8 Math has been the primary focus. Ms. Hourigan reviewed the opportunities provided for staff this year. Next school year, there are four important areas which will be focused on: Distance Learning, Curriculum, Tiered Interventions, and Equity. Brandon Webster inquired what subjects will be up for curriculum revision. Ms. Hourigan stated math, music, school counseling, AP Computer Science A, and Chinese Grade 8 are up for curriculum revisions.

## **II. Public Comment**

Mr. Ken Mouning echoed comments made earlier about the turnout of the Granby community representing the Black Lives Matter movement. He stated social media has been hot over the past week. He inquired if there would be any more feedback going to parents about the incident that occurred. Melissa Migliaccio stated she appreciated Mr. Mouning's comments and level of involvement with the schools. She stated she cannot share anything related to student discipline due to federal law and FERPA; however, what she can share is remedial steps. She thanked Mr. Mouning for all of his support as a Granby parent and citizen.

### **III. Consent Agenda**

#### **III.A. Minutes**

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Brandon Webster to adopt the minutes of the May 20, 2020 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 7:54 p.m.

### **IV. Old Business**

#### **IV.A. Reopening Task Force Update**

Dr. Jordan Grossman provided an update to the Board on the Reopening Task Force. He stated the last meeting was attended by all members of the Task Force and also had roughly 20 members of the community. The district is trying to be very transparent with what the Reopening Task Force is doing. This is not just a Granby Public Schools decision on how to reopen. State guidelines must be followed and we are still waiting for those guidelines. Summer school guidelines were just received and are very strict. He stated he would like to have a decision/plan by mid-July and inform families by August 1<sup>st</sup>. We are discussing what went well with distance learning and what we are doing right now. Rosemarie Weber, Co-Chair of the Task Force, stated there have been two meetings so far and that the district also partnered with the CT Center for School Change. The purpose and goal of the meetings is to bring students back to school keeping in mind the equity and social emotional piece. At the first meeting, we discussed factors such as physical buildings, transportation issues, number of students in classrooms, walking between classrooms, special education issues, and issues that deal with K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Jennifer Parsons, the new Assistant Superintendent, put together a nice brainstorming tool collapsing ideas into various categories. A Thought Exchange Survey was developed with open-ended questioning, such as, what went well, didn't go well, concerns, etc. This will go out by the end of next week. She stated some considerations that came down from the state for summer school may be in the guidelines. The Task Force will meet again next week. Melissa Migliaccio stated the Board should plan on a mid-July Special Board Meeting to ensure the district can meet the guidelines. All of these things are going to cost money not budgeted for FY21 given the current economic climate. Granby received a grant of \$47K which will not go far. She asked Board members to start thinking creatively about this problem. Jenny Emery stated summer school guidelines essentially say until there is a vaccine, congregations of people are dangerous in close proximity but this is virtually impossible. Using the physical facilities, we have and the teachers' engagement is important and that is the goal – to try to allow for a model for at least some in-person instruction. Melissa Migliaccio asked Anna Robbins what the balance was at the end of April. Ms. Robbins stated approximately \$508K and she believes this number will increase.

### **V. New Business**

#### **V.A. Superintendent's Annual Report .**

Dr. Jordan Grossman presented the Superintendent's Annual Report to the Board. Melissa Migliaccio stated Jordan has seen it all over the past 5 months and has handled it with maturity and responsiveness. Dr. Grossman stated this is not the type of annual report he envisioned as the Superintendent of Schools and that this community and BOE have been wonderful since he was appointed. This school year will be remembered as a year of a new Superintendent of Schools and a school system that faced a world pandemic. He stated for Goal #1, Student Achievement, he is looking at a process for district and school level data teams to review data from a district-wide and school-level perspective. He has worked with coaches and administrators to increase the amount of time spent on the Smarter Balanced interim assessments. We will not have any comparable data for this year and it is possible students will not take it next year either. For Goal #2, Establishing Personal and Professional Relationships, he is looking at and discussing with administrators their past goals, evaluations and school improvement plans and assessing current and future practices in special education. Under Goal #3, Board & Community Relations, a new Middle School Principal, Taylor Wrye, and Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Jennifer Parsons, were recruited and hired and are wonderful additions; a Board Retreat has been scheduled with a major focus on the vision of the Granby Public Schools' graduate; and, he immediately got involved with the Granby Equity Team and looking at the achievement gap as he wanted to look at this a little further and bring the work down to the school level. Under Goal #4, Educational Leadership, worked with the Board on a school counseling strategic plan; accepted to be an affiliate school district next year for Teachers' College; led the district from schoolhouse learning to a successful transition to distance learning; and, formed Reopening Task Force. Under Goal #5, Business Matters, Dr. Grossman stated he presented a plus one budget upon his arrival and is happy that he and his team were able to pass a 2.92% budget; worked with the Building Committee on developing and approving education specifications; and negotiated a new food services contract as well as continued collaboration with the town for technology.

## **V.B. Superintendent's Contract**

The Board discussed and considered the approval of the Superintendent's contract effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. A motion was made by Melissa Migliaccio and seconded by Sarah Thrall that the Granby Board of Education approve the Superintendent's contract for the period beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. The only change to the contract is aligning it to the fiscal year changing the dates from July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2023. Melissa Migliaccio stated Dr. Grossman has not asked for a salary increase which is greatly appreciated by the Board. This motion passed unanimously at 8:28 p.m.

## **VI. Miscellaneous**

### **VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports**

#### **VI.A.1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication**

This subcommittee met this evening to discuss many of the items already discussed tonight. The Teacher of the Year has been selected and will be revealed next week; worked with coaches to develop professional development curriculum writing; summer curriculum writing math, counseling, music, Computer Science, and Chinese 8; Granby Equity Team met and came up with a plan; a final document was released on summer school yesterday and it will be virtual; discussed school counselor's plan and reviewed the three categories, academic, college & career planning and social/emotional learning; followed up about number of students participating in BRYT program and as of March 13<sup>th</sup>, 11 students were in the program and continued to receive report during distance learning; and, a report on transition years was given and there is a lot of communication between administrators and counselors.

#### **VI.B.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities**

Jenny Emery stated this subcommittee has not met.

### **VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports**

#### **VI.B.1. CREC/CABE**

Mark Fiorentino reported CREC has not met since the last meeting. Melissa Migliaccio stated CABE continues to send information to Board chairs.

#### **VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation**

Jenny Emery stated there is nothing new to report.

### **VI.C. Calendar of Events**

Melissa Migliaccio inquired what Game Day is for 8<sup>th</sup> graders and Dr. Grossman stated there are virtual games and students sign up to play. Ms. Migliaccio stated the Lost Acres Fire Department and volunteers did drive-bys with lights and sirens for graduating seniors which was very exciting for students. She informed the Board to mark their calendars for graduation. Linda Powell will send information on award ceremonies.

### **VI.D. Board Member Announcements**

Sarah Thrall thanked Marian Hourigan for stepping in as an Interim Assistant Superintendent. She has been a wonderful leader and this was a very challenging time for her to begin work in Granby. She earned a lot of respect of teachers and administrators. Dave Peling inquired about graduation and if Board members will be allowed on stage. Dr. Grossman stated Board members who have graduates will be able to participate and will receive further instructions from the high school. Jack DeGray thanked Dwaritha and the Board for making him feel comfortable asking questions during meetings and thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve on the Board.

### **VI.E. Action Items**

There were no action items this evening.

## **VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting**

There was no need for an Executive Session this evening. A motion was made by Jenny Emery and seconded by Dave Peling to adjourn the meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber  
Board Secretary