

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
May 6, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Via Zoom Videoconference

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

Absent Board Members: Brandon Webster

Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Superintendent's Announcements

- Good evening and welcome to everyone this evening. This week we are celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week. Students and families have truly honored them by creating videos and signs. Additionally, today is National Nurses' Day and last week we celebrated National Principals' Day.
- As announced by the Governor yesterday, schools will not return for the remainder of this school year. It remains to be seen what will happen with summer school and the beginning of the school year in the fall.
- A survey on distance learning progress was sent to families today and is due on Tuesday.
- If students are struggling with school or social/emotional needs, please contact your principal and teachers. School social workers, psychologists and social workers are all available to help you as well.
- Mr. Dunn will be speaking to the BOE regarding graduation and end-of-year activities for the high school. Our hearts truly have to go out to our high school seniors. There was nothing to communicate on specific plans relative to graduation and end-of-year activities until yesterday because it was our hope that we would be back in school.
- Principals will be sending communication to families in the next few weeks regarding end-of-year activities for their respective schools.
- Regarding summer school, there will be guidance going out from state been in contact with local organization running camps to ensure we are aligned. Families will receive information regarding this. We are acting on information we receive.
- We have been communicating with the Hartland Superintendent and Open Choice Office on a regular basis to make sure our families coming from out of town are up-to-date on communication.
- With regard to students' personal items left at school, the district will be working with the public health department for what is the safe way for students to pick up items. Parents will be hearing directly from school principals with regard to students picking up their personal belongings left in lockers.
- Will be forming a reopening committee to establish how to reopen schools in the fall. Waiting for guidance from the State as to what our opening in the fall should look like. This committee will be led by Central Office administrators, a BOE member, as well as medical, parent, student, and union representation.
- We are continuing our relationship with the Farmington Health District on program entitled Resiliency Grows Here. This is a program sponsored through the Farmington Valley Health District and will be instituted in Grades K-5 in the fall to assist with the social and emotional wellbeing of students. It will be open to Grades 6-12 in the following year.
- The district is offering additional technology workshops for families. Workshops were held at the middle school and will be available for elementary and high school families as well. Further communication will be coming from the schools.
- I am happy to report that the GEF Program, "Stay Home, Stay Creative" is very successful. Thank you to parents and students who are sending them pictures and videos to post.
- Thank you to McKenna Ryan who performed a song from the musical, *Mama Mia* this week to start off staff appreciation week. Unfortunately, students worked hard on this musical and were not able to perform it.
- Interviews for the Assistant Superintendent position have been completed and a final candidate has been selected. I will bring the candidate to the Board at the next meeting on May 20th to meet the community.
- The district is working on a plan to recognize our retirees and 25-year employees this year.
- This evening we asked two middle school students to also participate in our student report on distance learning. Wells Road students will report at the next meeting and Kelly Lane students at the following meeting.

Melissa Migliaccio thanked Dr. Grossman stating that these are interesting times to be a new superintendent and that Dr. Grossman has led our district very ably during these times. The communication as both a parent and board member have been excellent. Thank you for you and your team's work. Mark Fiorentino inquired about the meals program and if it was still getting good usage. Dr. Grossman stated, yes, he will get recent numbers but the numbers have been very consistent week to week.

I.B. Student Representative Reports

Jack DeGray spoke about SAT exams; however, his audio was not clear. Junior planning was held last week and this week. Students spoke to counselors about what they will need to do to prepare for the college application process. Mark Fiorentino inquired if the guidance counselor meetings will be held via zoom or teleconference. Jack stated it will either be a Google Classroom or Zoom meeting but can also be via e-mail exchanges.

Dwaritha Ramesh stated although she is disappointed about a regular senior year, she is making the best of situation and trying to think ahead and stay positive. Administrators will think of some way to allow these events to happen for this year. With regard to distance learning, she stated as she reported at the last meeting things were going very smoothly and stated they are going even more smoothly as time goes on. It has become a new normal. AP classes are ramping up and AP exams will be held next week with different versions of the exam.

Middle school student, Sydney Henry (Grade 7), informed the Board that distance learning is very good. There are many positive things happening. For example, Ms. Bryanton holds a virtual art club classroom where students can post art, drawings and photos. Additionally, many teachers hold Google Meets every week even just to say hi and check in with peers and teachers. Ms. Buckley held a review Google Meet for an upcoming quiz. It has been a great way to connect with peers and teachers. Overall, distance learning has been great and is getting easier every week. She stated she is enjoying it. Melissa Migliaccio inquired how many hours a day does she do work? Sydney stated she starts around 8 a.m. and ends around 10-11 a.m. and attends meetings in the afternoon.

Middle school student, Chase Alexander (Grade 8), stated district learning has posed some unique challenges for students but the biggest surprise is how smooth the transition has been. He misses his friends and the social interaction component. Teachers are trying ways to stimulate that environment by using Google Meet quite frequently with unique games and conversations. Mr. Hershon also held a lunch hour to discuss topics. Since spring break ended, a feedback day was instituted where no new material is assigned on that day. This has allowed students to get work done or improve upon previous assignments. He stated distance learning has been a positive experience and is surprised how he is still able to learn while appreciating and enjoying it as well as still interacting with teachers and students. Ms. Migliaccio inquired about extracurricular activities and if he has found any way to compensate for missing those. Chase stated there will be an attempt to hold a Bridges Meeting next week.

Sarah Thrall asked the students how they get themselves motivated. Sydney stated she gets up early and that distance learning has flexibility. She just enjoys learning but Google Meets motivates her to keep going because of her enthusiasm to share. She tries to finish her work in the morning so she will have time in the afternoon. Chase stated he has the same thought process to do his work in the morning. Dwaritha stated that notification has definitely has been tough but she is still doing all of her work. She does not get up at 8 a.m. as she is most productive later in the day/evening starting her work around 10-11 a.m. Jack stated he likes to do this work when he wakes up so that he can enjoy the rest of the day.

I.C. Interim Assistant Superintendent's Report on Grading

Ms. Marian Hourigan, Interim Assistant Superintendent, provided an update to the Board on grading for elementary and middle school students. She stated district and school leadership teams have come together to adjust grading procedures to best reflect the changes in delivery of instruction. For elementary students, the third trimester report card will look different this year. There will be two sections: one section will indicate the standards taught in Numeracy, Reading, Writing, and Science and the second section will contain comments related to students' participation, areas of strength and areas for continued growth. Grading practices at the middle school will continue as they were prior to distance learning; however, teachers are relaxing some deadlines when posting grades or forgiving some missing work, when appropriate. Grades are intended to provide evidence of student progress and help to identify students needing more support or a new challenge. With regard to grading at the high

school, the CT State Department of Education provided guidance to districts to use a Pass/Fail system as a basis for student grades during distance learning. A decision has been made that the high school will provide students the option to receive a Pass/Fail for 4th quarter courses or receive traditional letter grades on a per-course basis. Both AP and UConn ECE programs have confirmed they will accept Pass/Fail. Students need to communicate their preference to their school counselor by the end of the first week in June.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Sarah Thrall and seconded by Rosemarie that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed unanimously at 7:45 p.m.

IV. Old Business

IV.A. Second Reading of Draft Policy 5122 - Teacher and Class Assignments

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication Subcommittee recommended draft Policy 5122, Teacher and Class Assignments, to the Board for a second reading. Sarah Thrall stated she has not received any comments on this policy. This policy will move forward for a third reading and approval at the next meeting.

IV.B. Second Reading of Revised Policy 5141.21 - Administering Medication

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 5141.21, Administering Medication, to the Board for a second reading. Sarah Thrall stated she has not received any comments on this policy. This policy will move forward for a third reading and approval at the next meeting.

V. New Business

V.A. Special Education Update on Distance Learning

Ms. Aimee Martin, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, provided an update to the Board on distance learning for special education students. Things are humming along in special education. As you know, the last day of school was March 13th. During that first week materials were gathered thinking we would only be out of school for two weeks and they would post opportunities for students. This being teacher appreciation week Ms. Martin stated she would be remiss if she didn't say Granby has the best special education staff in the state. She said there was not a lot of time to plan. IEPs had to be met. By the next week the teachers and support staff were engaging with families. They have been online face to face with students since then. It was stressful for everyone that this will continue to the end of the year. It is exhausting. A lot of parents are sitting with their children while they are getting their direct services. A child who has a disability may have services all day long. It can be a long day for some of our kids. Teachers slowed down some assignments which was helpful. She stated she Meets with administration and special ed staff at each school once a week to talk about any issues. Ms. Martin stated teachers go into Google classrooms and try to modify appropriately for each child. It has been an amazing transition and she is very proud of the people doing the work. We have kept all of our teaching assistants and provided a lot of training and technology for them. They go into Google Classrooms and engage with students as well as coordinate with teachers. We have just started distance PPTs where teachers and support staff will need to attend. We are following everything from state to follow the IEP to best of our ability. It is not perfect but she is not concerned that special education has not kept up with general education.

Sarah Thrall commented some of her friends have said the Special Education Department has been phenomenal and they can't say enough about their teachers. She inquired if Ms. Martin seeing anything in particulate as needs for Special Education Department, i.e., tips, best practices. Ms. Martin stated there needs to be more time for collaboration with general education peers. More time should be dedicated for a conversation of what works for special education students vs. general education and how do we prevent overwhelming kids who are getting those services and doing all of the classroom work. Jenny Emery thanked Ms. Martin for raising the issue of teaching assistants. There are places where we can be penny wise and pound foolish. All teachers and teaching assistants are working and is great to hear how they are engaging with students.

V.B. High School Graduation and End-of-Year Activities

Mr. Michael Dunn, Granby Memorial High School Principal, provided an update on graduation and end-of-year activities for high school students. Mr. Dunn stated as parent of a senior himself, he knows how this has impacted our students. There is a lot of disappointment going through the community given the Governor's decision yesterday. Mr. Dunn reviewed the process as follows: 1) There have been regularly scheduled graduation meetings and those have not stopped; 2) The Graduation 2020 Committee consists of administrators, Class of 2020 officers, staff advisors, office staff, and two parents of seniors and this group has been meeting since March; 3) A survey was sent recently to the entire class to solicit preferences; 4) Administration has been in regular communication with the Farmington Valley, NCCC and DRG B high schools to share ideas; 5) Exploring various vendors and resources to facilitate a virtual event; and 6) Admin has maintained regular communication with State of CT and Farmington Valley Health District regarding best options.

The following options were reviewed:

Option A: Traditional graduation on June 16th. (This option does not meet the Governor's Executive Order.)

Option B: Restricted traditional graduation with limited guests and use of the field in collaboration with Police Department to enforce guidelines set by the Executive Order and public health officials. (This option does not meet the Governor's Executive Order.)

Option C: Virtual ceremony with drive-through diploma to be broadcast on June 16th. A video will definitely be created for the graduating class even if there is a traditional or restricted traditional graduation.

Option D: Delayed graduation. There was interest in a delayed event but there is no guarantee of all students participating.

Mr. Dunn stated he will be communicating to the senior class as soon as possible. Most high schools are considering some combination of a virtual ceremony. There are several other end-of-year events such as award ceremonies, etc. He stated even if we go with a virtual or drive-through celebration, students would need their caps and gowns and would need to come to school to pick up those items. There may also be an opportunity for a graduation photo. He stated there might be a possibility to work with parent groups for a summer send-off or delayed safe graduation event. Melissa Migliaccio stated we do not know what the Governor is going to allow or not allow at this point. Mark Fiorentino thanked Mr. Dunn and the entire team stating he knows it is quadruple the work and is grateful for everyone doing the work. Nothing would mean more to the kids than maximizing what we can do for them. Jenny Emery stated a lot of people are asking to contribute to the celebration for seniors. She inquired what is the right advice to give people who want to help. Dr. Grossman stated any recommendations regarding graduation can be sent to either Mike Dunn or my office. The goal is to go as long as we can without making it a final decision. We still have time. We are keeping our vendors and contractors in place until the last possible minute. Mr. Dunn stated Granby has a wonderfully generous community and parents. Dr. Grossman also informed the Board that 8th grade promotion is being discussed and worked on as well.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

Sarah Thrall reported this Subcommittee met this evening. The Guidance Department gave a presentation on their strategic plan and outlined their goals and action items under those domains. The Subcommittee will be looking to have the full Board look at this later on in the fall. The Assistant Superintendent gave her report. Central Services has been extremely busy. An announcement regarding summer school will be made on May 15th - awaiting that announcement from the Governor. There has been a lot of work on report cards and grading. Teacher of the Year has been chosen and will be announced at the end of the year. The professional development day on May 26th will focus on distance learning and professional development around that. A distance learning survey has been sent to teachers. Equity team meetings were held in April. Also discussed summer school programming to include intensive reading and math tutorials for students. Mark Fiorentino inquired when the Board will see the guidance plan. Ms. Thrall stated the Subcommittee had a first look at it this evening and will have it as an agenda item in June. It may potentially go to the full Board later in the fall following some sort of Board Retreat.

VI. Miscellaneous (Cont'd)

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Mark Fiorentino reported CREC has not met since last meeting. Melissa Migliaccio stated she continues to forward CABE correspondence on to Jordan. A lot of great ideas are being shared.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Jenny Emery reported GEF has not met.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

The only upcoming events are Board Meetings. Melissa Migliaccio stated she looks forward to seeing people there.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VI.E. Action Items

1) Numbers for the lunch program for Mark Fiorentino.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

A motion was made by MM and seconded by RW to enter into an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. This motion passed unanimously at 8:21 p.m.

The Executive Session adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber
Board Secretary