

MINUTES OF DERBY BOARD OF EDUCATION ON MARCH 19, 2020

Called to order at 6:30

Pledge of Allegiance 6:30

**Roll call:**

Janine Netto

Tara Hyder

Jim Gildea, Chair

Rebecca O'Hara

Laura Harris

Dan Foley

Ken Marcucio

George Kurtyka

Melissa Cannata

Dr. Matthew Conway

Jim Gildea review Ned Lamont staff meeting on the website meeting last night.

Meeting materials and matters on the agenda. It will be posted on our website before we meet that requirement.

Jim Gildea I'm the chair

**Public Participation** – No response

Does anyone from the public wish to speak? One. Two, does anyone from the public wish to speak? Going twice. Does anyone from the public wish to speak, three times.

We can go to our topic number two.

**Educational distance learning plan review**

I will turn it over to the superintendent.

Dr. Conway:

Sharing updates with elementary and secondary in terms of updates on the distance learning. I emailed documents to you.

Starting with the elementary. All classes, all grades, beginning on Monday we'll shift from supplemental learning, give them the learning packets, the hard copies as well as online using Google docs and Google forms. That was a multiple week plan for the first two weeks. We are on week one with that.

We will transition them on Monday to utilizing Google classrooms for all grades. The teachers this week have been building these classrooms up to those already been using Google classrooms. There's been training provided available, all the schools will be using and how to act with them online for both parents and teachers. But Monday, we've done trial runs already with Google classrooms is due with a number of different classrooms for students and teachers.

Will the Board members have access to it?

The Board wouldn't have access to Google classrooms. It's a pretty detailed plan. These are our Google sites that we created particularly for the everyday platform that we rolled out last week, packets with the notices are on there as well with the link to the Special ed notice is also out to parents.

All these notices as well, we needed individual phone calls we made, Special Ed reaching out to each of the families to ensure what our plan is for their child. And to ensure that each element of their IT's is going to be met as best we can. And where there's any kind of disagreement with it, we will work with that parent individually to come to an agreement.

But we are using our social workers, school psychologists, a speech learning pathologist are all going to be conducting individual student sessions. A Special Ed teacher is in a Google classroom. They are not going to be identified as a special ed teacher. They are simply identified as a second teacher in that classroom to assist all students. Maintaining confidentiality for special education students.

Social work hours will be done with Google classroom as well. Any questions at all with the elementary plan? I know you need time to review it. I'm always available for questions.

### **Questions.**

Ms. Harris: What about our students that are in ACES programs. Are they getting plans from their schools?

Dr. Conway: What was that question?

Ms. Harris: I asked if we had any means to find out if our students at ACES will be getting help at home for schooling?

Dr. Conway: We are working on those plans for those students from ACES that they are being provided services through ACES. We will still monitor them in the learning through ACES, not the Derby Public Schools.

Week one is continuing with our supplemental learning plan. Week two, we now transition into Google classrooms. Week three, we have flexibility in classrooms to make sure families are supported that have multiple kids. Go over a firm schedule by school during week three. And week four, we go full digital classrooms for all students.

Mr. Gildea: So you said the full digital classroom, a schedule you would have. The way I look at it first, the fourth week, the same minutes recommended students spend a few minutes on reading, 60 minutes on writing, 60 minutes on math, right? I assume the work getting the time before we go back.

Dr. Conway: That is correct. In Google classroom for this week is that getting assigned they are getting their work done in a half an hour for the day having heard that from students. Teachers are being very diligent and make activities and assignments that they are putting into Google classrooms so that doesn't happen. It is going to be a weeks' worth of material that they're putting in for students to work on, but we certainly don't want a complete day being completed in a half an hour.

Mr. Gildea: If I could ask a follow-up question to that. So now, I understand it's happened today, but is there a point a student, I'm a eighth-grade social studies teacher. Is there any point that my 8<sup>th</sup> grade class at 10:00, 10:45 is their teacher on-line or is there proof that they are online?

Dr. Conway: No. That's all being built right now be in place by Monday for the next week. But that could be changed by week three when we have a better idea all schools with siblings with different things going on and different people from homes, what that will look like. Two types of learning, the synchronist and the aynchronist. It's going to take breaks throughout the week and students are going to be having their assignments to work off and checking with the teacher as needed versus time where the teacher is actually on with them the whole time for the whole class and individual. So it's a combination of those as we go through the first week, they're building up a more structured schedule for the next week.

Ms. Tara Hyder: The middle school level, they're working all day long. I don't know if that's the right way to go. There's no instruction. So I'm wondering if we can put together a schedule because a lot of them are half the schedule for 60 minutes of reading. Now it's 30 minutes of reading. They're going in a regular school day essentially. And I'm wondering if something like that can be considered because a lot of parents have reached out to me, as a parent myself, kids are working overall, and I don't know if that should be of this work especially the absence of directing freshmans.

Dr. Conway: Great question. As we go through next week a lot of information, that will direct how we move forward. The classrooms are being built out with a week's worth of work. Again, I'd rather have more than less given what we have heard from districts.

Ms. Tara Hyder: Right, but in the absence of instruction, there's a lot of busy work all day long and there's no teacher teaching them. It's kids doing work and there's no instructor.

Dr. Conway: Sure.

Mr. Jim Gildea: Can I interrupt you for a second. So do you think that the work that they're giving one on one to come up?

Ms. Tara Hyder: At this point, I have heard from parents, especially at the middle school level, in the past, the kids have been working all day long. And there's no teaching or learning. It's completing tasks.

Mr. Jim Gildea: That answers my question. Thank you.

Ms. Tara Hyder: And my own point is, I don't have Google classrooms. But I'm wondering if the plan proposed to do today is for a certain time is Monday and how it will work throughout the day and we

worry about oh my gosh, have it all online. Go in to teach each day and give a follow-up for that assignment.

Dr. Conway: Great question. And that is the format. So they will be online teaching every day. About two hours of time building lessons into the Google classroom, four-hour instruction on a daily basis.

Ms. Tara Hyder: Is it live instructions or is it recorded instructions?

Dr. Conway: With Google classrooms, it's live. And on Zoom it would be live.

Ms. Tara Hyder: Do we have the ability to record live teaching at that exact time, so if the kid misses they would have the opportunity to go back with that teacher?

Dr. Conway: Google classrooms the teacher is available in Google classrooms, your providing instruction and your answering questions for the student or students. Zoom gives you the feature to record when we're doing a small group or class lessons actually recorded. And then have opened and replayed. There are other tools that do that as well.

Ms. Tara Hyder: One of my other concerns is a bit selfish, in my own house, my two kids and myself have to be online like who will work just have it be recorded to go back. That would be a great option.

Dr. Conway: Weekly activities, again, this is supplemental learning put together. We thought we were going to be out for two weeks. And this was not meant to replace classroom instruction. This is what we tried to supplemental learning. And there is a response form for all these different activities are answered in so there will be a recording those who completed them. Activity and packets as well. That was week one. Monday is supplemental learning. It's live learning in a classroom. It's new learning. New lessons. Lessons they are working on in the classroom the same as they were in school.

Question:

Do all the teachers have been made aware of this? They may have certain time slots.

Dr. Conway: We are going to work out the time slots, schedules, family schedules, students, as we have to move forward. As an example we have with setting up individual classrooms, going from grade to grade classrooms. All students in third grade have access to it as well. With five third grade teachers all teaching the same thing so they can do it individually in the classroom. They also want to take advantage of the time where students may have access the same material at another time of the day.

So after the first week, I think we're going to have a good idea because you do have more students in different grades in different schools and in a single household trying to all get on at the same time could be an issue. But we'll issue multiple chrome books to those families simply accessing all at the same time may or may not present different challenges.

Ms. Tara Hyder: Dr. Conway, in terms of the type of work that is going to be planned for students, so far it is not the type of work that they have been doing in school. It's much more processing this project. And it's not reflected of their individual learning. Are the teachers going to give guidance on just implementing day to day in the curriculum? That's not realistic. And that's not what they really requested in what they had in their experience in the day to day school experience.

Dr. Conway: Thank you. I will touch base with Mike and Jen on that because it is going to be getting what they have been getting directly from the same curriculum and on to what meets in the classroom.

Mr. Jim Gildea: I have a question. I understand essentially how it works. And I understand it will take two to three weeks to get it up and going. What is the thought on grading a student for our kids? How do you expect a balance to what is going on versus people who are not going on in the fifth-grade level?

Dr. Conway: We're still talking about and looking for guidance also from the State Department of Education on this as well, so that we have help across the district and a number of different recommendations to all. There is conversation of a pass/fail. There are some products of different groups of superintendents have take part in that for myself going through pass/fail at this time. I would not necessarily advise because I think it's going to – some students pass/fail may not put in the effort and I think one way to is if it can't wait right now more than ever. We need to speak effort out of kids even though it might be more challenging. Not necessarily for our high school kids who have been in Google classrooms, in a classroom doing classes online using digital devices, but more so for our middle school and elementary kids.

At this time, the school going forward with the same grade of classes that we've been using throughout the year. The assignments will be graded by the teachers just as they would have been handed in the classroom.

Mr. Marcucio: Are they taking attendance in the Google classroom?

Dr. Conway: Yes, we are taking attendance as well.

Ms. Hyder: Dr. Conway, what kind of support have the teachers are making on are they going to provide daily instructions on Google classrooms?

Dr. Conway: So, we've been hearing and working all week to develop who are not familiar with Google classroom to become more familiar with Google classroom through support. We have multiple staff members who are very good at it and have offered themselves to support other teachers. They have put together a tutorial, slide shows, Google docs. And give them formats to support teachers on things to consider when working Google classroom and when working with Zoom online. Opportunities for those teachers to practice with teachers before going live and talk and support that they need so that they can become more proficient at this.

It's not going to happen overnight for anybody. But it's a significant shift, students are going to be learning as well as the teachers.

Ms. Harris: Did any of our elementary schools give out the chrome books today?

Dr. Conway: Irving, Bradley would be about 90. Anybody left without a chrome book will be called individually, dropping it off if they have to, but we are putting chrome books in all students' hands.

Ms. Hyder: I do have one other question about grading instruction. In terms of grading. No one's tried it yet. So I'm wondering about the grading and how that's going to work. And that to be on hold for teachers are learning and our students are learning.

Dr. Conway: Local levels across the State as if we all transition every district to vast majority. I don't know anyone not using Google classrooms, but certainly we're sharing curriculums, and activities for

students across the district all the same week. They're available to all of us. Those of us who share on the State level as well. Things are being shared. They're all topics of same questions about grading. What does that look like? Well, I said do we have any chain starts at this point over the next week, two weeks.

So now to change too now, more of us will have a greater experience with what this experience will be like when.

Mr. Jim Gildea: I just like to say that, we did reach a point that nothing will encourage kids that will not work hard. Nothing will encourage a kid to do the bare minimum.

Jim, could you repeat that? I couldn't hear you.

In assessing grades. Somebody mentioned pass/fail. Encourage some level of what the grade is to acknowledge if kids went out as they want to take advantage of what's happening as they have been.

Ms. Netto: Continue to grade them at the same standard. They're adjusting not only to the educator. They're still adjusting. They've got to be clear. There's a lot going on. So I do have my great concerns about the pressure that we're adding with all this straight off the bus. So that's just my two cents. You know, I'm sitting in the house. I think I've got all the grades covered across the board. In all honesty, I haven't had my kids look at one thing yet. Because they needed some time to, you know, teaching what's going on around them. And I'm worried about the kids that don't have the support at home from parents. And all of this new way of learning, we're going to grade them the same. And on top of it, some of them feel like the world's on around them. So I do have my concern of keeping the grading standard the same.

Ms. Hyder: I agree with you 100 percent, Janine.

Ms. Netto: So this is just something we're going to look at along the way.

Dr. Conway: We're all looking at this together.

Ms. Netto: And I do have a question specific to our seniors. Is there any talk about you know, kids that have been accepted to college, you know, they have these scholarships, what happens now to those kids?

Dr. Conway: That's a great question. It's a question that I had a call with the Commissioner. There's probably 100 questions in a document that we have that is still, we're working through, we're working together to get the answers to. But for seniors is a big one. And it goes beyond if for those who have been accepted at a college as well. Because there are several things we share over the next period of time in terms of arts.

Ms. Hyder: That will dictate the pass/fail as well, that alone.

Dr. Conway: The amount of consideration given to a number of different factors that we never have had had to look at before in regard to this.

Mr. Gildea: What type of resources can be provided? Are we going to engage parents and make sure that their kids are on board? Are we going to make sure that they're doing their time? What level of

support if any student may not have that local engagement at home, but they are going to have to learn?

Dr. Conway: So it's going to start with making phone calls to every house, talking to a parent to find out the type of work that they do need. And then as best they can, provides those books to those parents and to those kids. The daily phone calls are going to be made to each of the households the kids that are not online interacting every day.

Ms. Harris: Doc, do we get the guidance counselors involved with that part?

Dr. Conway: All of our staff members are going to be involved, Laura, guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, every position we have is going to be a part of this plan. And have all in the students learning, even all of our paras.

Mr. Gildea: You have gone over the elementary program.

Dr. Conway: Yes.

Mr. Gildea: Okay. Any more questions on the elementary program. Program, contents, grading on how that works?

Ms. Hyder: I just have one more concern. Basically, it's a general concern about all of these levels that I wouldn't want to try to mimic the hours of school days at home. So I just want to be realistic and think about what the kids need, the support that the teachers need, the support that the paras need. We need to keep it real for people.

Mr. Marcucio: Does the State Department say anything?

Dr. Conway: Again, the State Department, while they're giving us resources, it's not answers to these questions. So we're all working through this together, learning from each other, with each other. You know, not just Connecticut but there are States would be the exact same questions. They're all great questions. And we don't have the answers to them yet. And I think we're going to find the answers. Again, this is a complete shift in how we provide learning. So if you think of if you are making something one way, literally we got a group making it an entirely different way, but make the same product on machines, nobody ever used before, it would be a difficult with, you'll have to do it at a pace, where people will feel confident and feeling supported, feeling confident, excited, so that excitement comes out in their teaching, in the learning. But it's going to take a while. This is not overnight. They're going to try things that won't work.

Mr. Marcucio: University.

Dr. Conway: As much as we try and prepare for the senior level, when we first went one to one, and with online learning, digital learning, was for that exact same reason Ken. Because if you go to any college campus, they walk around with their laptops and phones. They're not necessarily in classrooms. They're different models in what we've been doing every day. But we're not in the college industry. We're in the K-12 world. So in the K-12 world, shifting to what you see that a college campus is definitely learning curb for every teacher, every parent, every student who is not –

Mr. Marcucio: Ask Tara about what they are doing in Fairfield.

Dr. Conway: Even at the college level they're struggling for those that have gone straight online learning, even instructors. So at the college level, you have instructors that are just doing regular classes. UConn still have classes that will be held. It's a shift. So for those teachers that have been set up on Zoom, not blackboard, because they were doing online learning through blackboard, they were doing regular classroom teaching on zoom, was not an easy task for them even, but it's a different environment that those students are in. And for us, to do this across all classrooms, all districts and 100 percent. So there's no classroom interaction at all. So we're going to be trying new things, creating ways of learning, monitoring it the students have to do it at a pace where everybody feels supported, feels confident in learning and just to be supported.

And Tara, please feel to share what they share in doing in Fairfield.

Ms. Hyder: It's probably a lot of the same new learning every day for all of us. It is every day from 8 to 5. We teach with Google classrooms. At this point, I'm not certain I can call it teaching. Because I'm not sitting. It's not the same type of engagement that you have when you're face to face in multiple classrooms. It's not satisfying right now because it's not the same.

I post assignments, the kids respond. I learned how to record myself on programs. I'm learning to record myself on the bottom of the screen with my desktop in front of me and modeling something for them and recording that and putting it into these Google classrooms. And hoping that they're watching it in a household. Keep in mind that we don't know what's happening in the home. It's not going to be perfect in a lot of situations. I want to keep in mind that we can't keep kids at a kitchen table for six hours a day.

At the same time, our teachers and in many cases our parents who have to support their children. That is really hard for them as well. Many aspects of this, but we have to think about every person at their length. We really need to consider not watering things down, one small step at a time. When it comes to grading, about what we're going to do with that because learning just won't be the same. Thank you.

Dr. Conway: Thank you very much, Tara.

Mr. Gildea: Do you look at it, I know you're really involved in your district? Do you do it at almost two different levels, K-6 or K – 8 or 9 – 12?

Ms. Hyder: That's a great question. The elementary school that I worked, last Thursday last school day. So we rushed every K through 2 class and set up Google classrooms for every kid. K through 2, they need people. Not going to be as effective. And that's heartbreaking. Then a 3/5 a little more tech savvy.

Mr. Gildea: Thank you. Any other questions on the distant learning plans review.

Dr. Conway: Coronavirus update.

Kaitlin: Student outreach. Because sometimes that does work better, student to student than to staff sometimes. It's better communicated. If there's any way, I don't know if the updates that was shared. It looks like it's shared more with students so like they have less questions.

Mr. Gildea: Thank you very much Kaitlin. We appreciate you're here. Outstanding stuff for sure. Thank you Kaitlin.

Dr. Conway: Thanks Kaitlin.



**Updates on the Coronavirus on the agenda.** I think you've seen everything that's coming out.

Mr. Gildea: Just an overview of the schools, just quick. One thing to ask in particular, kids in the school.

Dr. Conway: Sure. So starting with the high school, the pattern of the cleaning is going to go high school, middle school, Irving, Bradley. And we have delayed some of it this week obviously to be able to put students back once we realized it's going to be longer than two weeks.

So during the first two week process, we would have had all four buildings done within the first week. That changed once we realize we were going to be here out longer than the two weeks, where we wanted to allow teachers back to be able to get their materials that they are going to need to be teaching from home as well as now students they have materials that they left school with their belongings or their laptop, to be able to come and pick those things up.

They will resume at the high school tomorrow. They should finish up at the high school tomorrow. They will be moving over to the middle school. All areas of the middle school will be cleaned except for the areas at this time, except for the cafeteria area we are serving and are still serving lunch until we return, lunch and breakfast out of the cafeteria.

Then we will go over to Irving School and then Bradley. Cleaning all schools by next week. Once schools are done, they're being locked up. Their access cards have been shut off so that nobody could even accidentally enter the area who may have a card and forget that access cards will be shut off. Nobody will be in and out until we reopen. In terms of the meals, we are serving, today we served 307 meals. That number has gone up each day so each family to take advantage of that in two locations at Team and at Derby Middle School. Today there were about moving, one was 165. The other one was 162 serving at those two locations.

The more the word gets out, more people know will show up and grab a breakfast and a lunch. So the way that process began on Tuesday – on Monday, rather, picking up Tuesday lunch and your Tuesday breakfast. Two bags, lunch in one, breakfast in the other. And the next day you pick up again, your lunch for that your lunch for that day and breakfast for next day.

It seems to be working very well, numbers have gone up.

Mr. Gildea: Any questions on the coronavirus?

Ms. Netto: May I just say one thing?

Dr. Conway: Yes.

Ms. Netto: I don't want to come off as the jerk in the room, but I have to say I was a little disappointed today when kids entered the building at the high school and my phone blue up that we ripped all of their stuff down off of their lockers. We have got to be a little more sympathy for what these kids are going through. And I have to say I was just a little disappointed to hear it. So if we're allowing kids in the school, let's stop ripping down the walls until the kids are out. It was just, you know, it's like corn stalk and wounds. And I was a little disappointed today.

Dr. Conway: I apologize for the way that happened, but again, other students otherwise wouldn't be coming back in school under the initial plan for the two weeks when we started at the high school, but what could have gone out is notification. Taking those items that were on the lockers. But we take

them down carefully put them down somewhere, but realize we can't put them back up because they're contaminated.

Ms. Netto: I get that. I'm not trying to be – I know we are all doing our best, but it's just I'm being extra protective I guess.

Dr. Conway: When they get back in, there will be plenty of time to redecorate their lockers. We'll make that happen.

Mr. Gildea: Any other questions for the superintendent?

Ms. Hyder: One more question about teachers. Everyday when I wake up, there's a pit in my stomach how to figure out how to do this. I'm wondering what Derby Public Schools is committing to supporting teachers. I don't think we can just assume that oh, they know technology here. They can figure out Google classrooms. What's in place to support teachers to do this well? Because teachers care so much about their kids. And they care about their job. And I want to feel like they're supported and can do their very best in this really unique situation, teaching from home. I want to know what can the schools do to support the teachers? They're smart, they know technology. I'm afraid to think that something could be in place to support them. Maybe TV, formal TV set up. Maybe a Zoom TV like this, where people model this is how you can use this APP or this is how you can teach that way. I know you can do that in Google classroom, I know you can do that in Google meets actually. In Google meets, that's an APP that I'm familiar with not Zoom. You can flip screens and model on one side, how to do something, while the people in your meetings can watch you do onward things.

Knowing that there's three months of school left in the school year, I'd just like to make sure that teachers have every support that they need moving forward so that they feel comfortable doing this stuff.

Dr. Conway: This whole week. And thank you for that Tara. This whole week is teachers getting the support that they need. They're getting the supports that they need. And how they need it and you have teachers helping teachers. You have administrators helping teachers. All those supports are available. We're going to do this at a pace again that they feel supportive, confident. The big word that they need to do. It's not just about using the tools. It's also about how you forget yourself. Take a break to ask questions to raise a group that you have teaching online together. And so forth, so all those different techniques and strategies are being rolled out to teachers when they're able to process it with other teachers in a big supportive environment, online, but all those things are happening all throughout this week and will continue to happen every day moving forward. We have to support our teachers. This is a brand new thing for students and teachers. And it's not going to go well if we're not supporting teachers.

When we found out this Monday this week, we invite all the teachers by school, it was a manageable group online to a Zoom meeting. And it was an amazing feeling where they all came, logged in and were all there together. So 52 to 58 people in a zoom meeting together, just talking back and forth, supporting each other, sharing ideas, asking questions. But that's how we began this week, was bringing all the teachers back together and that's going to continue throughout this whole week. And will continue in all the days moving forward. We can't provide enough support right now to our teachers to be able to make them, to be able to have them feel confident in this type of teaching.

Ms. Hyder: Thank you, Dr. Conway. Is there an opportunity to provide Feedback in some sort of a Google survey.

Dr. Conway: Each of the schools have Google doc. And When Google doc gets up, for teachers have a question and answer document. Just like we're doing across the State, with superintendent's as well. Not just us, but all your colleagues in real time, the support is there.

Absolutely been amazing experience.

Mr. Gildea: Any other questions. I know we all probably know this, but just what I've heard of State meetings and conference calls. Efforts of the entire staff. Every grade level. Every teacher. Every para professional.

This was pretty neat. This was our first meeting like this. Be well. But we appreciate everyone's responsibility.

With that in mind, consider a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Netto, first.

Mr. Kurtyka, second.

Adjourned.

Recording secretary:

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Marianne Samokar

Recording secretary

