

**Special Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Electronic Meeting via Zoom
July 20, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Ms. Kathy Bachiochi, joined meeting at 6:36 p.m.
Ms. Jennifer Davis
Mr. Mike Delano
Mrs. Andrea Locke, Secretary
Ms. Laura Lybarger
Mr. George Melnick
Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Chairman

Also Present: Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School
Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Mr. Timothy Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Food Services
Ms. Trish Lustila, Interim Director of Pupil Service
Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Ms. Susan Mike, Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager

The special meeting agenda and copies of all Board meeting materials were posted on the district's website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us) prior to the meeting, in accordance with the requirements for electronic meetings. Audience members were able to participate by phone utilizing the phone number provided on the meeting agenda. The live recording of this meeting will be available on the district website.

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was established.

Item 2. Presentation of the Stafford Public Schools' Reopening Plan- Fall 2020

Mr. Moccio stated that the public could access the comprehensive reopening plan on the district website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us, under the COVID-19 Updates section on the main page). The complete plan was emailed to all Board members and staff prior to the Board meeting.

Mr. Moccio thanked the staff members for their time and commitment to serving on the school access task force committees.

Mr. Moccio and Mr. Autieri reviewed the Stafford Public Schools 2020 – 2021 School Reopening Plan Executive Summary. Details were provided with regard to procedures, access to CDC guidelines, and staff and student expectations and protocols.

Mr. Moccio and Mr. Autieri responded to questions from Board members. The questions will be added to the list of FAQs and responses will be provided via the district website. Mr. Moccio stated that there are still many questions that the committees and leadership team are working to answer.

Mr. Moccio stated that the complete plan is posted on the website, and he encouraged people to send questions via email. He also informed the public that he and Mr. Autieri will be holding a live meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 3 p.m. at which time they will respond to questions. Mr. Moccio said that a Google form will be emailed to all parents and staff so that they can ask a question in advance of the meeting.

Item 3. Presentation of Proposed Changes to the 2020 – 2021 School Calendar and Adjustment to the School Hours for grades PK - 5

School Calendar

Mr. Moccio said that the Connecticut State Board of Education passed a resolution offering flexibility in the 180-day requirement for students. The resolution provides temporary authorization for Boards of Education to waive up to a maximum of 3 days from the 180-day requirement. The three day reduction is meant to provide staff and families with additional time to build capacity and safely transition back to in-person instruction. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- additional training to adjust to new requirements or policies related to health and safety;
- time for staff to plan classroom set-up and prepare to maximize safety measures;
- attend social-emotional services training.

Mr. Moccio said that currently, the first day of school is scheduled for August 31, 2020. The waiver of three days from the 180-day requirement would allow 8/31, 9/1, and 9/2 to become professional days. In order to shift the first day of school to after Labor Day, the previously scheduled professional development day on October 30, 2020, would be moved to 9/3, and 9/4 would be shifted to a non-instructional day, bringing the total number of student instructional days to 177, and in alignment with the new state temporary requirement. The last day of school for students would remain Friday, June 11, 2021, and a certified staff workday would be added on Monday, June 14, 2021.

Mr. Moccio stated that the proposed changes to the calendar were reviewed by administrators, teachers, and union representatives from the CSEA. All groups agree that the proposed changes in the school calendar will allow the additional time necessary to prepare the buildings, procedures, and to offer the necessary additional training for staff prior to the beginning of school.

School Hours

Mr. Moccio said that due to the length of their routes and the tight timeframe between the middle/high school and primary/elementary bus runs, buses have had difficulty arriving to the primary and elementary schools on time. With the addition of COVID-19 related protocols that are required between the middle/high school drop-off and primary/elementary school pick-up, the district recommendation is to shift or delay the start time of the primary and elementary schools by 30-minutes. The school day at WSS/SVS/SES would start at 8:45 a.m. and end at 3:15 p.m. The length of school day and the contractual teacher day (7.5 hours) would remain the same and have been shared with the various union leadership.

Item 4. Public Comment

The following are questions that were asked at the meeting. The responses that were provided are included. Those questions that were not answered will be added to the FAQ document section of the district website once a response is available.

If students bring their lunch to school, how will that be handled? Where will it be stored?

Where will coats, etc. be stored when the weather gets colder?

How will health checks be handled on our end? Will teachers be trained to recognize symptoms?

Additional professional development days will be added to the beginning of the school year to provide additional training for staff regarding COVID-19 protocols and procedures.

What will the protocol be if a staff member or student is diagnosed with COVID-19?

The school level office will communicate with the Superintendent's Office, who will communicate with the local health department (NCDHD). The district will follow the protocols as directed by the health department. Communication would be sent to those affected, while protecting staff and student privacy.

What will fall sports look like?

CIAC is planning for fall sports. The district will continue to monitor and follow the guidelines that are provided by CIAC. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation, is on the CIAC reopening committee and will continue to keep the district updated. Mr. Frassinelli noted that he and others have suggested delaying slightly the start of the fall sports season.

Football is currently (July 2020) performing out-of-season condition while maintaining appropriate mitigation strategies.

When will after-school programs run?

The after-school program (STEAM) will run in the fall if the district is on the green plan with mitigation strategies in place and smaller group sizes. The district will be discussing how we may be able to provide these programs if we are in the yellow or red plan.

If a student is learning remotely, can they participate in extracurricular activities?

If a parent / student has chosen the remote plan when the rest of the district is during in-person learning (green plan), it would be understood that those students would not be participating in extracurricular activities.

If there are children moving to Stafford how can they keep their child home for distance learning or home schooling?

The new student should enroll via the district registrar (visit the Registrar section of the website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us)). The parents would then be able to make the choice of sending their child for in-person learning.

What will happen regarding truancy if students will be required to stay home for any illness?

The state has yet to allow any flexibility with regard to truancy at this time. The district will continue to monitor.

Parents aren't always the best judge of when to send their children to school. What will the district do as students enter the building?

The district will do everything it can to safeguard the students on campus. Sick children will be sent home.

What is the status on the Transition students? Will they go directly to their jobs? Or will they be attending school as in the past?

The district is waiting for guidance from the State Department of Education Bureau of Special Education regarding this matter.

What would special education look like for all 3 models of learning? How would the students have 1 to 1 learning if needed for their I.E.P?

The district is waiting for guidance from the State Department of Education Bureau of Special Education regarding this matter.

Will there be band at the elementary school?

At this time, we are looking to have band be part of the school day. Right now the recommended distance is 12', so the district will be investigating which spaces will work.

Given that after school sports and clubs have less children can a student that is opting to work online due to medical concerns are they able to participate in after school activities? Sports, drama, etc...

Local decision.

In the hybrid model will class cohorts be split in half, or would entire cohorts be in school/at home? (so would class size be half size, or would there be empty classrooms learning entirely online?)

The district would be looking to reduce class sizes so that there would be 50% of students within each classroom on any given day.

Are there plans to have an SRO assisting at the schools this year?

There is a candidate to be interviewed by the SRO committee. The Superintendent anticipates that this will happen in the next couple of weeks.

If a child is sent home for ten (10) days is that school days or calendar days?

It is ten (10) calendar days.

If a parent has to get a COVID-19 test, where can they get one?

Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford offers COVID-19 testing free of charge, and you do not need a medical order to be tested. Information is available on the hospital website. In addition, other testing centers in the state are also free of charge.

If a child is sent home and there is no fever, no symptoms and then gets a note from the GP, can the child return to school?

The district will get clarification on this matter.

Calibration of thermometers?

The district will get clarification from the head nurse on this matter.

What will remote learning look like for students that stay home during the in-person learning model?

What about AP courses? Can they be supported during distance learning?

The district is waiting to hear back from the College Board and UConn regarding this matter.

If parents choose to send their children to school, will they have to sign releases in case their children get sick?

There will not be a requirement to sign a release to send your child back to school.

Would the entire district close, or could one or more individual schools close?

This would be a decision that would be made in consultation with the local health department.

Item 5. Review and Possible Approval of the Proposed Changes to the 2020 – 2021 School Calendar

Following previous discussion during the earlier agenda item and after the public was provided with the opportunity to comment, Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board of Education approve the revised 2020-2021 school calendar, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

An updated school calendar and revised school hours will be distributed to parents and staff.

Item 6. Review and Possible Approval of the District's 1:1 Technology Plan

Mr. Moccio stated that at the Board meeting on Monday, July 13, 2020, Dean Fortin, IT/Network Coordinator, provided an overview of a potential plan to purchase enough mobile devices to outfit each student with a device should the district be required to return to remote learning in the future.

The Connecticut State Department of Education requires each district re-opening plan to allow *all* students the opportunity to return to school *full time* starting in the fall, but also to provide families not comfortable in returning to school, the ability to still learn from home. The plan creates different learning models dependent on health data and transmission rates. All three models require students to be engaged in distance learning and be able to access their learning while at home. The IT Department, with the assistance of numerous other staff and administrators, spent many hours preparing, distributing, and then collecting Chromebooks during the spring closure, only to have to reissue the devices for summer school. The shift to a 1:1 model will allow each student to have an assigned device at their school and drastically reduce the gap in instructional time should they need to be sent home due to a school closure or illness.

Mr. Moccio said that included within the 2020-2021 budget, the first year of a technology replacement plan was implemented and will replace 306 iPads and Cases and 568 Chromebooks. When added to the current inventory of devices that are not end-of-life, an additional 226 Chromebooks are necessary to allow enough devices for every student. Each student in district will have an assigned device, with iPads being designated for students in the primary schools, and Chromebooks being designated for all elementary, middle, and high school students. A case for each device is included in the proposal and represents the largest expense. Additional costs are associated with iPad charging stations for each primary school classroom and Chromebook charging stations for each elementary classroom. Charging stations are not proposed for the middle and high school classrooms, as the students will be taking their Chromebook home on a daily basis.

Mr. Fortin provided a detailed spreadsheet via the portal for review by the Board. The spreadsheet utilizes projected 2020-2021 enrollment numbers, and details the current inventory, devices ordered

through the replacement plan, as well as how many devices would be required to implement the 1:1 technology plan. Funding for the 1:1 technology plan is anticipated to be made available through the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief (ESSER), which is more commonly known as the CARES Act. The grant application calculates funding pursuant to Title I, and the district is able to apply for \$187,342. The district is required to utilize all money associated with ESSER funds first, then can request reimbursement through FEMA and the Municipal CARES Act. The CARES Act grant application is currently on hold due to the latest ruling from the United States Department of Education related to the calculation of “equitable services” set-aside for nonpublic schools. The CSDE is still in process of revising the application. Mr. Moccio stated that he does not foresee any change in the amount of money anticipated.

Mr. Fortin was present at the Board meeting to explain the proposed plan and respond to any questions.

Ms. Lybarger asked about the connectivity to the internet. Mr. Moccio stated that any remaining CARES Act money would be utilized for that purpose.

Mrs. Davis asked for a staffing update at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting in August.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board of Education approve the implementation of a 1:1 technology plan, with funding provided through the Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief (ESSER), or CARES Act, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item 7. Obsolete Equipment- Technology

Mr. Moccio stated that Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator, has requested that the technology equipment detailed on the attached list be designated as obsolete because it is outdated, not in working condition and / or damaged.

Per Board of Education policy 3260-*Sales and Disposal of Books, Equipment, and Supplies*, such obsolete equipment must be returned to the Town of Stafford prior to disposal. Should the town not want the items, they will be recycled.

Mr. Melnick made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lybarger, that the Board of Education approve the return of the obsolete technology equipment as presented to the Town of Stafford, according to the provisions of Board policy 3260-*Sales and Disposal of Books, Equipment, and Supplies*. If the Town does not want the equipment, the district will assume responsibility for proper disposal. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item 8. Review and Possible Approval of Expenses Related to the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Moccio reminded the Board that the Connecticut State Department of Education has mandated that districts prepare for all students to return to school buildings in the fall. In addition, districts were required to plan and prepare for students to attend school in a hybrid plan (50% of building capacity while the other 50% of the students learn remotely on an alternating schedule), and plan and prepare for all students to learn remotely. Lastly, districts were instructed to make the plans “fluid” so that students can change from one plan to the other seamlessly with little to no notice.

He said that the items required to implement the district’s COVID-19 reopening plan are outlined below and were not originally included in the district’s budget. The district anticipates receiving additional

funding from the state and federal government to cover some of the listed expenses (CARES Act, FEMA), but has yet to be given any specific dollar amounts.

Mr. Moccio said that while the budget will be impacted by the additional expenses detailed below, he continues to analyze the budget to identify potential savings to offset the additional costs. Administrators have been made aware that all non-COVID-19 related expenditures will require prior authorization from the business manager.

Mrs. Diane Peters was available to respond to questions.

Costs Associated with COVID-19

Isolation Room Staff (4) w/benefits	\$ 104,000.00	District is attempting to obtain medical assistant interns
<u>PPE</u>		
Masks/Face Shields	\$ 34,374.49	
Hand Sanitizer/Wipes	\$ 6,722.92	
Gloves	\$ 390.00	
Gowns	\$ 1,575.00	
<u>Building Services</u>		
Cleaning Supplies	\$ 3,608.17	
Desk Shields	\$ 12,991.99	For those students medically excused from wearing a mask
Plexiglass shields-offices, café	\$ 3,369.86	
Mail Delivery/Pick up boxes (6 locations)	\$ 1,756.94	To minimize the number of people entering the buildings
Storage Unit	\$ 2,500.00	Storage space for items that must be removed from classrooms
Safety Tape	\$ 324.00	Floor markings
<u>Transportation</u>		
Monitors for buses-17 days	\$ 43,888.90	Through September 2020
<u>Supplies</u>		
Miscellaneous supplies	\$ 5,379.45	Paper bags for masks, carts, office supplies, etc.
<u>Technology</u>		
Technology Supplies	\$ 5,752.63	
Livestreaming (devices/bandwidth)	\$ 40,508.00	To support the hybrid & remote learning models
Hot Spots	\$ 170.50	
<u>Software</u>		
Virtru	\$ 428.75	Email encryption software
Go Guardian	\$ 5,990.00	Monitoring software for Chromebooks
Zoom	\$ 1,847.81	BOE Meetings / Staff Working Remotely
Google Chrome License	\$ 1,225.00	Expansion to grades 2 – 8
SAEBRS(\$3 per student)	\$ 4,374.00	Social-emotional screening tool

Powerschool-online forms	\$ 7,788.00	Digital forms (back-to-school, field trips, etc.)
Payschools- e-collect	\$ 2,995.00	Online payment system for parents

Item 9. Adjourn

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, to adjourn. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Sonya Shegogue, Chairman

Andrea Locke, Secretary

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