

Special Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
July 22, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
Granby High School Auditorium

Present Board Members: Jenny Emery (Via Zoom), Mark Fiorentino, Melissa Migliaccio, David Peling, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, and Brandon Webster.

Absent Board Members: N/A

Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

I. Chairman's Corner

Ms. Melissa Migliaccio, Board Chairman, shared opening remarks and stated the reason for these special meetings is to discuss the plans for reopening schools. She thanked the administration and stated Dr. Grossman and Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Parsons, have done a fantastic job. She also thanked Rosemarie Weber, Dave Peling and Jenny Emery for participating in the Reopening Task Force meetings.

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Grossman stated it is great to see everyone in public this evening and stated this meeting is also being live streamed via Zoom.

III. Kelly Lane Primary School Principal Announcement

Dr. Jordan Grossman, Superintendent, announced the new Principal of Kelly Lane Primary School. In his short tenure as Superintendent, Dr. Grossman stated he has hired a new Middle School Principal, Taylor Wrye, and a new Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Parsons, and stated tonight it gives him great pleasure to introduce to the community a great leader for Kelly Lane Primary school, Ms. Colleen Bava. Ms. Bava brings with her over 17 years of primary and elementary leadership. There was a committee of 19 members who were involved in selecting Ms. Bava as our next Principal of Kelly Lane Primary School. Dr. Grossman informed the Board Ms. Bava was an East Windsor Public Schools Teacher of the Year as a primary school teacher and stated the committee was very impressed with her enthusiasm, collaboration, kindness, and willingness to listen. Dr. Grossman welcomed Ms. Bava's family who attended this evening. Brandon Webster, who was on the selection committee, stated he was happy to have Ms. Bava here this evening and with the profile that was put together, she plans to engage the community and staff and her enthusiasm came through with every round. She has a good depth of administrative experience as an Assistant Principal for many years. Ms. Bava has special education experience and a strong background in Kindergarten teaching experience. Mr. Webster stated we are very excited to have Colleen Bava join the Granby Public Schools. Ms. Bava thanked all of the members of the committee as well as everyone she has met during her short time and looks forward to meeting Board members, staff members and students more personally in the upcoming months. She is looking forward to starting the year off well and, even though we are in unprecedented times, having our littlest learners have a successful year. Melissa Migliaccio extended a warm welcome to Ms. Bava as part of the Granby family and stated she is confident Ms. Bava will exceed all of the expectations of a new principal.

IV. Approval of Minutes from the July 13, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Brandon Webster that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the July 13, 2020 Special Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 6:39 p.m.

V. Revision to the 2020-2021 School Calendar

The Board discussed an additional revision to the 2020-2021 school calendar after the state announced flexibility in the 180-day requirement for students allowing for three (3) additional professional development days for staff. A motion was made by Melissa Migliaccio and seconded by Rosemarie Weber that the Granby Board of Education approve the revision to the 2020-2021 school calendar allowing for three (3) additional professional development days for staff on Thursday, August 27, 2020, Friday, August 28, 2020, and Monday, August 31, 2020. The first day of school for students will be Tuesday, September 1st which will be a half day and Wednesday, September 2nd will be a half day as well. Friday, May 28, 2021 will return to a full professional development day. The last day of school will

remain at June 9, 2021. Ms. Migliaccio stated these three additional days are going to give teachers more time to prepare. Dr. Grossman apologized to the Board because the day after the last revision, the State voted to go from 180 to 177 with 3 days for professional learning. He stated teachers will now have 6 professional development days prior to students starting. Staff and students will have a half day on September 1st and 2nd to ease into the school year. Staff will be able to reflect on how the first two days went in the afternoon each day. Sarah Thrall inquired if the professional development is to be used for COVID reasons specifically. Dr. Grossman stated, yes, for COVID reasons as well as social/emotional learning for students and staff so a little bit of both. This motion passed unanimously at 6:44 p.m. Brandon Webster requested to make a motion to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day on the calendar. Melissa Migliaccio stated the Board should focus on the task at hand which is changing the calendar for reopening. There was no second to this motion so the motion did not move forward.

VI. Reopening Task Force Update

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, provided an update to the Board on the work of the Reopening Task Force Committee and Granby's plan **Stronger Together: A Working Plan for a Responsive Return to the Granby Public Schools** which will be submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Dr. Grossman stated this plan involves safety, equity and academic excellence. Each school district in the state of Connecticut needs to submit a plan by tomorrow as follows: 1) a full return to school; 2) opting-out of returning to school; 3) hybrid model; and, 4) distance learning model. He stated Ms. Parsons will review with the Board and community this evening much of what was spoken about last week. The plan is posted on the Granby Public Schools' website and it is hoped that by this Friday, a "Stronger Together" webpage will be up on our website. Dr. Grossman thanked Ms. Parsons and the Reopening Task Force for putting this plan together.

Ms. Parsons stated there are three pieces of information still outstanding from the CSDE: Department of Public Health (DPH) guidance, opt-out guidance and special education guidance. The Reopening Task Force has been meeting weekly and within the next week or two will be sharing a webpage called "Stronger Together" as well as sharing out the plans of each individual school. Granby Public Schools is called to plan for a full reopening and what the state would like districts to do is have a plan for students to opt-out of attending. Mark Fiorentino wanted to know what type of guidance we are waiting for. Ms. Parsons stated additional direction as to how to handle students who opt-out, i.e., attendance. Mr. Fiorentino stated parents should try to choose a timeframe when choosing to opt-out in order to assist us with allocating resources. Brandon Webster stated this is an unprecedented time and opting out is a completely valid option as numbers are on the rise across the country and we are leading into the fall. Rosemarie Weber stated that all of the options are valid options and that the Task Force and administration have worked tirelessly to bring all of these options to the community.

Ms. Parsons updated the Board on the survey responses stating there was an approximate 70% response rate (1,207 students) with 65% of students planning to return to school and 4% not planning to return (45 students). She stated another survey will be sent to parents which will really assist in the reopening of school. She stated parents who do not complete the survey will be contacted.

Ms. Parsons reviewed the Facilities section of the plan and stated since the last meeting, plastic barriers for work stations have been purchased. The Facilities Department and principals are currently performing walkthroughs of all the buildings. Ms. Parsons reviewed the sanitizing and disinfecting protocols as well as ventilation protocols. All staff will be made aware of hygiene practices. Melissa Migliaccio inquired how the air is drawn out of the classrooms. Ms. Parsons explained the current HVAC systems are being programmed so that 2-3 times per day air in the classrooms will be exchanged with fresh outside air. She stated there is nothing we can purchase at this point in time that would not be a total rehaul of our current HVAC system. Ms. Migliaccio also inquired about the use of bleach for sanitizing and Ms. Parsons stated she does not have information on using bleach; however, the district does have green-approved products. Mr. Webster inquired if the Director of Facilities is also looking at the heating systems. Dr. Grossman stated outside consultants were brought in to review our heating systems to ensure we are good to go with them. Not every building has the same HVAC system; however, all buildings have the capability to move air around. Mr. Fiorentino inquired about sanitizing throughout the day and who will be responsible for that and Ms. Parsons stated custodial staff, teachers and students will all take part in this and will be using safe sanitizing wipes.

Ms. Parsons reviewed the daily operations and what a typical day will look like for PK-5 and 6-12 students and stated since the last meeting, it has been determined the specials' teachers will do longer stretches with cohort-proposed two-week cycles. For Grades 6-12, there will be an extended passing time allowed to assist with sanitizing efforts. Ms. Thrall inquired if there has been any discussion about recess and playground use. Ms. Parsons stated recess will happen as normal and students will be assigned to areas. At the primary school, they are looking at several short recesses throughout the day which will be used for mask breaks. Ms. Migliaccio inquired about students who need services such as PT/OT and Ms. Parsons stated shorter, more frequent work groups will be established for interventionists. In those spaces, the layers of protection will be elevated.

Ms. Parsons reviewed child nutrition and stated lunch will be held in the cafeteria, courtyard and outdoor spaces. The district has purchased two tents and picnic tables for each school and is working on new policies and procedures for serving, ordering and accounting for lunches. On hybrid or remote days, the district will be looking at providing meals. Ms. Parsons stated in order to prevent any bottlenecks during lunch waves, there is a possibility lunches may be ordered and brought to a classroom on a cart. Transportation was also discussed and 65% of parents are willing to transport their students and the district is looking into the best times and systems for drop-off and pick-up. Rosemarie Weber inquired if parents differentiated on the survey whether they can either drop-off or pick-up and Ms. Parsons stated the survey did not get into that level of questioning; however, the next survey will dive deeper into this questioning. Melissa Migliaccio inquired if there will be hand sanitizer on the busses and Ms. Parsons stated students will be asked to wash their hands prior to boarding the bus; however, research is also being done to see if there is a need at this time for busses and it is also being discussed. Students will sanitize their hands prior to entering and leaving the school. Additionally, there will be assigned seats and face coverings must be worn on the bus.

With regard to health practices and protocols, the district is working with the FVHD and nursing supervisor to establish these. For reporting illnesses and protecting vulnerable populations, families, staff and students will be educated about symptoms of COVID-19. Criteria will be established when students/staff need to be sent home and when and how they can return. Jenny Emery inquired what would be required to take temperatures of students entering the building. Dr. Grossman stated he has spoken to health professionals and there is some thought that if there are 900 students waiting to get into a building, then students could be more at risk trying to enter a building and this is why this is not a requirement. Rosemarie Weber inquired if the district is still awaiting guidance from the state regarding if a student/staff member in the building falls ill and Ms. Parsons stated, yes, this is correct and hopefully this will be received soon. Mark Fiorentino inquired if guidance will be received for our medical staff when symptoms arise and Ms. Parsons stated, yes, it will and there will be an isolation room and the nurse would call the parent/guardian to discuss next steps. Mr. Fiorentino inquired what is the school-wide sick protocol and Ms. Parsons stated there will be a list of symptoms and every school will have a school response team as well as a district response team in conjunction with the FVHD.

Concerning masks, all students will be required to wear masks while in the school building; however, if a student has a documented medical reason, they will be able to opt-out of wearing one. Melissa Migliaccio inquired what is going to happen to those students. Ms. Parsons stated perhaps if they are not able to wear a mask, they can wear a face shield or will use a plastic barrier so other factors will be used. Mask breaks will be given to all students during the day as well as self-selected mask breaks. Staff and students will be trained on how to safely wear them.

Regarding the cancellation of classes, remote learning and reopening plans, the district needs to work with the DPH and FVHD. The extent of the impact as well as the length of the impact needs to be in the planning and communication. All plans (full reopening, hybrid model and remote learning) will be communicated to parents. Hopefully next week, a model of what each plan will look like will be available. Dr. Grossman stated after meeting with administration tomorrow, he hopes that each school will have plans in place next week to send to families. All plans for all schools will look identical. Principals will be encouraged tomorrow to invite students back into the school for orientation programs. Melissa Migliaccio stated she has concerns about how we will know students are learning. Ms. Parsons stated the requirements have not been waived by the state as of yet for this year and that she is looking at a continuous plan to build systems around curriculum and assessment for all formats. The plans were discussed as follows:

Full Reopening: Distribution of 1-to-1 devices and teach students appropriate use of devices and structures.

Hybrid Model: Maroon/gold assignment; 2 days on-campus, 2 days off-campus and 1-day remote learning for most; daily engagement expectations.

Remote Learning: Daily schedule of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Special education was discussed and to-date there has been no waiver of requirements under IDEA for provision of a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Delivery of in-service hours will drive the use of additional and/or specialized personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and mental health issues of staff and students was discussed. Schools and teachers will reach out to all students and families and invite them back. Virtual meet and greet sessions will be held. Tier 1 SEL instruction will be embedded in remote learning options.

Ms. Parsons explained there are additional areas of response to the plan not yet addressed as follows: English learners; family support and communication; after-school programming; career and technical education; and, certification and professional planning. Melissa Migliaccio inquired about the need for additional nurses. Ms. Parsons stated she does not see a need at this point; however, the Nursing Supervisor is working on building her list of substitute nurses. Jenny Emery inquired about the economic impact, Dr. Grossman stated the district is spending money on PPE, resources and staffing (bus monitors and teachers not returning) and it is a moving number right now but money is being spent that was not budgeted. Totals are being kept on everything purchased. Mark Fiorentino stated the district cannot completely eliminate risk; however, the district is going to great lengths to minimize the risks. Sarah Thrall thanked everyone participating on the Task Force and stated either in a blended or fully remote model she is highly in favor of synchronous learning wherever possible. She also stated that PLC time is valued as a district and hopefully that can be maintained. Additionally, in thinking about staff, Ms. Thrall stated she is thrilled about the professional development at the beginning of school but inquired what the check-in is for staff after school starts. Ms. Parsons stated she and Dr. Grossman will work with the administrative team to ensure staff is doing well and are comfortable. Optional zoom calls will be sent out to staff to participate in sharing concerns. With regard to PLC, she stated the district is hoping to devote time to that and this will be discussed with administration tomorrow. Jenny Emery commented that she is proud of the options we are creating for families.

Ms. Migliaccio thanked Ms. Parsons again for the tremendous work on this plan and stated Granby will do the best that we can for each individual student.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

Melissa Migliaccio stated there was no need for an Executive Session or Non-Meeting this evening. A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Sarah Thrall to adjourn the meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber
Board Secretary