

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Electronic Meeting- via Zoom
July 13, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Ms. Kathy Bachiochi
Mrs. Jennifer Davis
Mr. Mike Delano
Mrs. Andrea Locke, Secretary
Ms. Laura Lybarger
Mr. George Melnick
Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Also Present: Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Frank Bonavita, Director of School Facilities
Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School
Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator
Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford School
Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Mr. Timothy Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Building Services
Ms. Trish Lustila, Interim Director of Pupil Services
Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Ms. Susan Mike, Principal, Stafford Middle School, arrived at 6:39 p.m.
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager

The 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 I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m.

Item II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Shegogue led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Shegogue reminded participants when they would be able to offer public comment.

Item III. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, 06/08/2020

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board approve the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on 06/08/2020, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IV. Consent Agenda

A. Resignation- Certified Staff Member

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON
Senechal, Matthew	Special Education Teacher	Stafford High School	End of School Year, June 2020	To accept a position in another district.

- B. 18-19 Bills, 07/07/2020, \$11,000.00
- C. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 06/29/2020, \$376,537.47
- D. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 07/08/2020, \$129,197.14

Mr. Delano asked a question regarding the Perkins Grant. Mr. Autieri responded. Mr. Delano made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lybarger, that the Board approve the items listed in the consent agenda, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item V. Correspondence

A. **Board Meeting Reminder**- Ms. Shegogue read the Board meeting reminder that was posted on the agenda. It was also noted that there would also be a special meeting held on Monday, July 20, 2020, at 6:30 p.m., to discuss the final draft of the district's reopening plan.

Item VI. Board Reports

There were no Board Reports.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. **Update on District Reopening Plan**

Mr. Moccio provided an update regarding the status of the district's reopening plan. He said that the guidance issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education was shared with districts two weeks prior. The audience was reminded that all of the backup documentation was provided in advance of the meeting via the district's website.

Mr. Moccio stated that prior to receiving the guidance from the State, nine task force subcommittees were created and 90 faculty and staff members are participating on the committees. He said that the committees will be offering input and feedback regarding the district's reopening plan.

Mr. Moccio stated that all districts are required to create three plans- an on-campus model where all students are allowed to attend school or may volunteer for remote learning (minimal spread of the virus), a hybrid learning model where the number of students attending school is reduced through the use of an alternating schedule (moderate virus spread), and a remote learning model where all students will participate in remote learning (high virus spread).

Mr. Moccio highlighted the following practices / protocols:

- A plan will be made to open all schools five (5) days per week.
- An adjustment may need to be made to school hours to allow time for student drop off and bus sanitization.
- Class size and cohorts in grades PK – 8 will depend on the number of students that will be attending in-person classes.
- Social distancing guidelines will be in place; classrooms will look very different and will only contain those items essential for instruction.
- Face-to-face interactions will be minimized with designated foot traffic patterns.
- Drop-off and pick-up boxes will be utilized to minimize in-person contact.
- Signage will be posted throughout the district.
- Contact tracing protocols will be established with guidance from the local health department.
- Monitors may be used on buses during the month of September.
- Ventilation systems will be adjusted to allow the maximum amount of outside air.
- Hand sanitizer will be available. Students will be allowed to take mask and handwashing breaks.

Mr. Moccio stated that there are items still being considered, as follows:

- Should the school hours be shifted and at which schools?
- Should the school calendar be shifted to allow for a later first day of school?
- How will student meals be delivered?
- Will the pre-kindergarten program need to be adjusted?

Mr. Moccio said that a timeline was created to permit the opportunity for development, review, and revision of a district reopening plan by the CSDE submission deadline of July 24, 2020. A working document aligned with the CSDE template was created and distributed to all building administrators so they could begin formulating building level responses and identifying areas that require further attention. On July 8, 2020, the leadership Team, along with Michele Staczek, in her role as head nurse for the district, met to review and begin compiling the district level response. The group also began to formulate the CSDE required three-tier plan for reentry to school.

In accordance with guidelines and regulations from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the learning models detailed below will be utilized.

On-Campus Learning

Hybrid Learning

Remote Learning

<i>Minimal/No Spread of Virus</i>	<i>Moderate Spread of Virus</i>	<i>High Virus Spread</i>
<p>All Students to Attend School or Volunteer for Remote Option</p> <p><i>Safety protocols and procedures in place to ensure staff and student safety</i></p>	<p>Reduced Student Attendance</p> <p><i>Per Local Health Department advice, the number of students attending school is reduced through use of an alternating schedule</i></p> <p><i>Students not attending on-campus instruction engage in remote learning</i></p>	<p>Full Distance Learning</p> <p><i>Per Local Health Department advice, student learning is completely shifted to remote learning from home due to significant transmission rates</i></p>
<p>Local health indicators and trends will be monitored daily through collaboration with the North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) and Connecticut State Department of Education. In consultation with the NCDHD, the Superintendent of Schools will determine movement to a different learning model should the number of cases of COVID-19 increase or decrease.</p>		

Mr. Moccio said that there are still questions surrounding how many students will be returning to the school buildings, how many staff will be returning to the school buildings, how the district will provide a parallel education for those families whose students are not returning to campus, and how the district will be able to shift seamlessly between on-campus learning, hybrid learning, and remote learning. He said that a survey was sent to all parents to determine the number of students anticipated to return. As of Friday, July 10, 2020, the survey included responses for approximately 825 students, with 72% saying they would be returning to school. Each building continues to plan for the reentry of students, including how best to meet social distancing guidelines, cohort students in PK-8 classes, and meet the demands of both on-campus and remote learning. Some parents have indicated that they are not comfortable answering the question regarding a return to school until they see the overall district plan.

Mr. Moccio said that he's asked Mr. Dean Fortin, IT/Network Coordinator, to determine the funding necessary to expand our technology in order to provide a device for each student, as well as the possibility of livestreaming classrooms for students that have opted to not return to school. 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. 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 extended absence. Mr. Fortin provided a cost estimate and a brief explanation of the self-funded insurance plan. Mr. Moccio stated that a detailed proposal would be presented at the special Board meeting on Monday evening.

Mr. Moccio stated that funding to support the various aspects of the school reopening plan will be an issue for the district moving forward. He noted that funds have been 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. However, on July 9, 2020, the CSDE notified all districts that the application process for ESSER funds has been placed 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. He said that the application is being revised, and he does not anticipate any change in the district’s allocation.

Mr. Moccio stated that after the leadership team drafted responses and developed considerations and concerns on July 8, 2020, each task force committee was asked to convene in order to provide input and recommendations with regard to the questions that were posed. Those committee meetings are to occur prior to the two-day administrative retreat on July 14 and 15, 2020. At that time, the leadership team will continue work on the details and logistics within the plan, incorporate the feedback and input from the various committees, and ensure consistency of building level response to the plan. A formal plan will be presented for Board of Education consideration at the special meeting on July 20, 2020.

Mr. Moccio stated that due to the amount of planning and time necessary to prepare for a safe and secure reentry to school, the district may wish to delay the start of school. The current first day of school for students is scheduled for August 31, 2020. He said that this topic would require action by the Board of Education and may be included on the agenda for the Board special meeting on July 20, 2020.

Ms. Lybarger asked if the 180 school day requirement had been waived. Mr. Moccio stated that it has not been waived at this time.

Mrs. Davis stated that the district should be mindful of parents’ needs when making changes and adjustments. Mrs. Davis also asked if the district will need to utilize long-term substitutes. Mr. Moccio said that it is too early to know.

Mrs. Locke asked if those staff that responded that they can’t return will be able to work with the students selecting remote learning so that the classroom teachers are not taking care of both. Mr. Moccio stated that the district is currently investigating solutions, including the potential to share services with other districts. He noted that at the middle and high school levels, teacher certification becomes more of an issue as there is a certification endorsement for each subject area.

B. Presentation Regarding Changes to Traditional Stafford Middle School and Stafford High School Schedules

Mr. Moccio stated that throughout the 2019-2020 school year, both Stafford Middle School and Stafford High School reviewed and worked with scheduling committees to examine alternate schedules to better meet student needs at each school. For the high school, the new state mandated graduation requirements and the need for students to meet a 25-credit graduation threshold was the underlying consideration. At the middle school, a change in student schedule was required to allow for more equitable student access to interventions. Both scheduling committees met frequently throughout the year prior to the COVID-19 school closure, investigated a variety of options, and made adjustments based on faculty, student, and parent input.

The middle school and high school administration provided the documentation detailing their findings, which were made available via the website. The revisions to the schedules were completed just prior to the required school closure period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Moccio said that the presentation is meant to provide context to how students will be scheduled in the future, as schools return to a more traditional schedule.

Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School; and Mr. Tim Kinel, Assistant Principal of Stafford High School; Mrs. Susan Mike, Principal of Stafford Middle School; and Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal of Stafford Middle School, were present at the meeting to lead the Board through individual presentations to explain the schedule changes, and respond to questions from the Board.

C. 2019 – 2020 Financial Report through June 30, 2020

Mr. Moccio stated that Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager, prepared a financial report of funds budgeted and encumbered/expended from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

Ms. Peters reviewed the status of the budget for the 2019-2020 school year, in the amount of \$28,052,217.40. As indicated in her memorandum, a copy of which was provided via the website, the unspent, unreserved amount of the budget is \$72,739.76; however, outstanding invoices are still being reconciled. The school closure, distance learning, and purchasing of items in the 2019-2020 fiscal year that were removed from the 2020-2021 budget in order to meet the Board of Finance budget reduction have resulted in an almost zero remaining balance.

Ms. Peters was in attendance at the meeting to respond to questions from the Board. There were no questions or comments.

III. Public Comment

The following questions were generated during public comment. The district will prepare responses and post on the district website in the **COVID-19 Update** section of the website.

Will students that have their own Chromebooks be allowed to use them rather than the district-provided device?

With regard to remote learning, will students that did not respond well to the computer-based learning be able to complete hard copy packets and scan and return work in that manner?

Is the district considering closing down the pre-kindergarten program?

What will happen to staff members that can't return and may not have an assignment next year?

Details of the reopening plan are critically important to families. In addition, the district should keep in mind that staff did not sign on for, nor are they trained for, handling the protocols that are part of this plan.

When will the students waiting for a pre-kindergarten slot be notified if their child has been selected?

How will the mask requirement be adjusted for students that have a medical condition that makes it difficult to wear a mask? Please consider the implications of segregating these students from others.

What is the district's plan for lunches? Have we considered delivering meals to the classroom?

Has the district considered all students going to school every day with an AM / PM session like was done in the past?

What is the plan for transportation for the students that will attend the technical schools?

Thank you all for facing this impossible task. I can absolutely appreciate the idea of cohorting groups, minimizing movement and mingling, among students, etc. If a child is dropped off to school and proceeds directly to their respective classroom, they then immediately mix with other children representing multiple bus populations. Some of these children ride the bus for an extended period of time, which no distancing is planned it seems?

How will special education hours be met if students are not changing rooms?

Will there be an afterschool program at SES?

If livestreaming is utilized, will it be interactive?

Please provide additional details regarding the health aspects of the plan- protocols if a positive COVID case, who is responsible for contact tracing, accommodations for special education students that need to see facial expressions.

Will there be sports in the fall?

How will special education requirements be met if students are not changing rooms?

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

A. Discussion and Possible Approval of Introduction to Robotics Course, Stafford High School

A memorandum from Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, was provided via the website and portal, which detailed Stafford High School's recommendation for the addition of another robotics course for students who wish to continue along an Engineering Design Pathway. The course is aligned with the district's goal of strengthening Career & Technical Education programming, and creates an option that meets both student need and interest. The additional robotics course will allow students to utilize a more robust and advanced kit, allowing for more complex designs and robots that can complete more strenuous tasks. "Vex Code" is a programming suite that will also allow be utilized by the students.

VEX provides free educational lessons for both robotics courses, so there will be no additional costs to begin the course.

Mr. Autieri gave an overview of the course and was in attendance to respond to questions from Board members.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board approve the new CTE-Robotics course, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Discussion and Possible Approval of Algebra II Textbook Proposal, Stafford High School

A copy of the textbook adoption proposal for Algebra II, prepared by Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, was provided via the website and portal. The textbook selection committee was facilitated by Mr. Edward Kobelski, Mathematics Department Chair at Stafford High School, and included mathematics teachers, Mrs. Jun Zhou and Mrs. Eileen Laramie. The committee has selected *enVision Algebra II*, Pearson Education, 2018, to replace the current textbook *Prentice Hall Algebra II*, 2011.

Mr. Autieri presented the textbook and ancillary materials to the Curriculum Advisory Council on May 14, 2020, who approved and requested the book be forwarded to my office for Board of Education consideration. The books align with the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balance content specifications, embedded interactivities, and balanced mathematical instruction are a few of the reasons the book was chosen by the committee. The committee was also impressed by the books embedded performance tasks, SAT practice problems, and seamless integration with Google Classroom.

The final negotiated cost of the purchase for 150 textbooks, digital access, teacher materials, and shipping charges is \$19,506.41.

On May 18, 2020, Mr. Autieri discussed and presented the book to the Board of Education Curriculum Committee. Mr. Autieri was in attendance at the Board meeting and presented the textbook for consideration and was available to respond to questions from Board members.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board adopt *enVision Algebra II*, as the new textbook for Algebra II at Stafford High School, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

C. Review and Possible Approval of a Proposal to Add a New Non-Certified Secretarial Position for Pupil Services

Mr. Moccio said that as indicated in the memorandum from Ms. Trish Lustila, Director of Pupil Services, she has created a proposal for the addition of a 30-hour per week, 10-month secretarial position for the Pupil Services Department. Ms. Lustila, during her time as the Interim Director of Pupil Services, noted a significant amount of teaching time being spent coordinating and completing paperwork. As such, Ms. Lustila is requesting the addition of a secretary to assume all duties associated with the arranging and coordinating of special education PPT meetings, as well as organizing and utilizing of the document repository in the web-based system. The removal of those duties from teachers will allow for greater amount of teaching time with students, more timely evaluations of students, collaboration with grade level teachers, and consultation with general education staff, thereby reducing the need for pull-out services.

Ms. Lustila's proposal removes funding for the special education consultant, as she will be assuming all duties associated with the position. Having been a Director of Pupil Services for 39-years prior to her arrival in Stafford, she has a plethora of experience with out-of-district placements. The salary and benefit cost of the secretarial position is \$26,070 and will provide the district with an overall cost savings of \$18,930.

Ms. Lustila was available to respond to questions.

Mrs. Davis stated that she does not want the funding for the consultant to be added to next year's budget in addition to the secretarial position.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board approve the addition of a new 30-hour per week, 10-month Secretarial Position for the Pupil Services Department, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lybarger, to move items XI.A.- **Superintendent's Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)**, into executive session. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lybarger, to enter executive session. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 9:37 p.m.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, to return to regular session. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 9:52 p.m.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

A. Superintendent's Evaluation

No action was taken.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, 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 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Andrea Locke, Secretary