

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: May 12, 2020

Location: Remote Participation
Google Meet

Members present participating remotely: Glenn Maston, Steven Smith, Adam Tracy, Nina Ryan, Matthew McDowell, Michele Tousignant Dufour, and Rebecca Weksner

Members absent: None

Others present participating remotely: Dr. Marco C. Rodrigues, Superintendent

I. Call the Meeting to Order: 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Glenn Maston.

Mr. Maston stated that this meeting will be conducted virtually pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending the provisions of the Open Meeting Law and the March 15, 2020 order imposing strict limitations on the number of people gathering in one place. This meeting will be conducted via google meet.

Mr. Maston noted all members of the committee were present.

II Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting April 28, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of April 28, 2020 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. The vote was taken by roll call.

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|-----------------------|-----|
| Mr. Maston | yes |
| Mr. Smith | yes |
| Mr. Tracy | yes |
| Ms. Ryan | yes |
| Mr. McDowell | yes |
| Ms. Tousignant Dufour | yes |
| Dr. Weksner | yes |

On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

III. Public Participation:

Mr. Maston stated the committee had not received any requests from anyone to speak. Mr. Maston also reviewed the process for public participation.

IV. Reports and Presentations

Report of the Superintendent: School Closure Updates

Dr. Rodrigues gave a recap of what has happened since the last meeting. One important feature of remote learning in the recent guidelines released is the introduction of the standards for new learning. Last Friday, parents received the lesson plans, structure, and the way teachers can communicate through google meet and google classroom. Teachers, curriculum directors, and coaches are all actively involved in creating these lesson plans. On Fridays, families can expect they will receive the packet for the following week.

Ms. Kathy Provost, Assistant Superintendent, spoke about her work with the coaches and their teams. A template was created for teachers to use to keep things as organized as

possible. We used the standards DESE recommended and prioritized them looking at what has already been taught and the standards that are most necessary for students to be successful with next year's learning. These were shared with classroom teachers in common planning time. The teachers then created their own lessons. They are using live videos as well as recorded lessons. Many of the teams are working together to create lessons. This has been a little more challenging in grades K-2. Not all families have devices. Teachers are also supplying non-online material so these students can access new learning. Teachers are available for some office hours. Teachers are planning with Special Education teachers and EL teachers so they can support all students.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that another thing DESE released is a letter to parents detailing the four phases of work. We are in phase 3 now, which is new learning. Phase 4 will be the return to school.

Elementary report cards were mailed to families this week.

Events were organized at elementary schools for students and families to gather their materials. Mr. Dave Champigny, Principal at Forest Avenue Elementary, spoke about the no contact pickup that took place. Shopping bags were packed for each student with materials they had left behind as well as things they would need for remote learning. The bags were prepared by classroom teachers and the specials teachers added to the bags. At Forest Avenue, there were 31 bags left to be picked up out of the 364 packed for students. A plan is being developed to get those remaining bags to students.

Ms. Melissa Provost, Principal at Farley Elementary School, spoke about the class placement protocols elementary families will be receiving. She stated that every year a form is distributed looking for feedback from families that schools can use for class placements for the following year. This will be done through google forms this year. Parents will be able to upload the information and we will have the information back by May 19.

Quinn Middle School has developed a grading system to be in place through June. This is modeled after the system developed at Hudson High School. Mr. Jeff Gaglione, Principal at Quinn Middle School, stated that they are in the process of finalizing the grading system. Grading for quarter 4, which officially started yesterday, will be on a 5 point scale. Students will receive a 5 for work completed at grade level, a 3 for some participation, or a 0 for work not turned in. The final grade for quarter 4 will be pass-fail based on work completed. Scores will be in Aspen so families can see them. A decision was made to issue grades for quarter 3 since we were already 7 ½ weeks into quarter 3 when school was closed. There will be no make-up work for quarter 3 as we want students to focus on quarter 4. There will be an emphasis on effort.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that school psychologists and clinicians are in the process of developing videos for families to support students with social-emotional learning. Ms. Cathy Kilcoyne, Director of Student Services, stated that they started to think about how to reach parents in a quick way. Each week, we will send home a short video on a topic. The first was released this week. Topics include bedtime routines, organization, coping skills for parents, and supporting our youth through the closure.

Dr. Rodrigues gave an update on the meals we continue to prepare and deliver to families. We are delivering to 13 locations three times per week. We are averaging about 600 meals per week. Dr. Rodrigues reiterated that this is for any Hudson resident who is age 18 and under. Meal distribution will continue to June 30 except for Memorial Day. We are looking at approaches to possibly deliver some meals through the summer.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that we would get an update from Mr. Jason Medeiros, Hudson High School Principal later this evening on the planning for graduation at Hudson High School.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour asked if there are any plans for small group breakout sessions for support or intervention. Dr. Rodrigues stated that teachers this week are experimenting with remote learning for the first time and we are seeing differences in upper and lower levels. He said we need to allow teachers the time to experiment and calibrate what we are able to do. Ms. Kathy Provost and Dr. Rodrigues spoke about involvement of Curriculum Directors, Coaches, EL teachers, and Reading and Math specialists. Ms. Kilcoyne stated that Special Education teachers have been and continue to provide services. Teachers will be inquiring with families on whether they need additional services.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour asked what was in the bags distributed to the elementary students. Mr. Champigny stated that teachers packed up what students had left behind as well as things they could need for remote learning. The math specialists added manipulatives, whiteboards, and things from the classroom. Every student's bag was different but everything went home to support learning moving forwards.

Dr. Weksner asked if there has there been any planning on the district side for different contingencies for next year so we are ready when the directive comes from the state. Dr. Rodrigues stated that he and Kathy Provost are putting a small group of administrators together to look at blended learning or a tiered approach for return to school.

Dr. Weksner stated that she appreciates the fact that there are targeted supports for social-emotional supports.

Ms. Ryan asked if we had enough Chromebooks for grade K-2 families that may need them. Ms. Kilcoyne is working to identify students with disabilities that need a device. Very soon, we will provide internet access for families that do not have it. We are identifying families that might need a device. Next year, we want to be more deliberate in technology for all of our students. Discussion ensued about prioritizing the needs.

Mr. Smith stated that he had a conversation with Cheryl Langill, SEPAC representative, who had good things about the special education services that are being provided.

Mr. Smith stated he was surprised that we still do not know who needs devices or internet access. Dr. Rodrigues stated we did not decide to send Chromebooks home to grades 3 and 4 until we knew school would be closed for the remainder of the school year. He went on to say it was not an easy task to remove, sanitize, and distribute them. When teachers first contacted families, there was a question asked about internet access at home. This data we got was not accurate. The principals have worked to clean up the list. We now have about 60 families on the list. Dr. Rodrigues went on to say we have contacted Comcast, Sprint, and Verizon for hotspots for internet access. We have decided on Verizon and are in the process of ordering the equipment. For next year, we will be expanding what we have.

Discussion ensued about being reactive not proactive and planning for the worst.

Ms. Ryan commented that it has been made clear to her that there is frustration about being isolated. The guidance from DESE that the new learning is going to be graded was put out 2 weeks ago. She went on to say it is extremely difficult for parents to get younger children on the computer to do graded work. Dr. Rodrigues stated grading needs to be defined for the elementary level. He went on to say this is a learning curve for teachers as well. Discussion ensued about teaching and grading at the elementary level.

Approved

Ms. Ryan asked when grading be going into writing in the district. Dr. Rodrigues stated that principals would be communicating with their families.

Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee

None

Policy Subcommittee

Mr. Smith stated that this subcommittee had met earlier that evening and there would be some policies in the next packet.

Strategic Goals Subcommittee

none

Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

Mr. Maston stated that the superintendent's evaluation is actively being worked on and will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee

none

Student Report

V. **Matters for Discussion:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. First Reading of Proposed Revisions and Additions to J Section Policies

Mr. Smith stated that these policies revolve around attendance. Dr. Rodrigues stated that there had been a committee to look at the attendance piece. The committee included parents, principals, teachers, and support staff. There was a presentation at the parent forum in February.

Ms. Ryan asked if there has been talk about how attendance and remote learning could work. Dr. Rodrigues said attendance is not being counted by DESE for any days after March 13. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Smith pointed out a missing word in policy JH. The word age should be inserted between early and negatively affects.

Mr. Maston asked about the policies that were removed and had no replacement. Dr. Rodrigues stated that most are no longer supported by MASC and are incorporated into other policies.

Mr. Maston stated there would be a second reading and vote at the next committee meeting.

2. Hudson High School Graduation Plan

Mr. Jason Medeiros, Hudson High School Principal, acknowledged and thanked the Hudson High School community for their patience during this process. Mr. Medeiros stated that Dr. Rodrigues and he have been in touch with their job alike and collaborating with them to look at options. We are looking at the option and evaluating our capacity as a district to deliver a creative model.

Mr. Medeiros went on to say he looks at a graduation ceremony in three parts, the student experience, the family experience, and a community event. It is really hard to do all of these with social distancing. He said we are looking at models where we can be as flexible as possible.

He said other districts are using varying approaches for graduation. Some communities are postponing things and some are choosing to have students walk one at a time. We feel it is important to give our students closure before the school year ends. We also hope to bring the class of 2020 back to celebrate them when it is safe to do so.

We are advocating pushing graduation off a week to June 13 so we can use our outside space. There is a letter ready to go with a link to a survey to get feedback on the three components.

Dr. Weksner asked if we were open to all ideas and how the feedback will be vetted. Mr. Medeiros responded that part of the survey is open-ended but not entirely. The survey will ask for students and families to weigh what they value. Mr. Medeiros stated that there are other events such as awards and scholarship night attached to the commencement that we will also look for input on with the survey.

The Senior class officers are taking ownership of baccalaureate. We are trying to figure out a way to capture that in a video.

Additionally, there are logistical things such as cap and gown day and the return of school property that need to be considered.

3. DESE 2019-2020 Determinations of Need for Special Education Technical Assistance or Intervention - Hudson: Meets Requirements (MR)

Dr. Rodrigues stated that each year the district is designated by DESE through a number of indicators what type of assistance, if any, is needed for Special Education service delivery. There are 4 classifications. Hudson meets requirements and does not need any assistance from the state.

4. Director of Human Resources - Search Process and Timeline

Dr. Rodrigues stated that Ms. Cindy Fensin, Director of Human Resources, is retiring. He stated that the search process will be one that is familiar to the committee. Summer is a very busy time for the Human Resources Department. The posting will be open until June 5. There will be screening, second interviews, and reference checks. We hope there will be qualified candidates and we can announce a new director by the end of June.

Mr. Maston asked if we were still going to have the Evening of Recognition. Dr. Rodrigues stated we would postpone this event to the fall.

VI. **Matters for Action:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. **Approval of available School Choice slots for 2020-2021**

Dr. Rodrigues stated that each year, the School Committee needs to vote on School Choice availability before June. He said that the regulations have changed and it is assumed every district will participate in school choice unless they vote to not participate. This will need to be changed in the policy at some point. We will vote on the number of seats at each grade at each school. School Choice will not be available for seniors at the high school or the Dual Language program. Dr. Rodrigues presented a chart with his recommendation for the number of seats available for each grade for 2020-2021. For next year, there are very few seats at the elementary level. Dr. Rodrigues went through the application process for school choice. He stated that once a student is admitted to Hudson for school choice there is no need to reapply each year. These students are grandfathered until grade 12.

Mr. Smith asked about grade 6 capacity. He stated that AMSA has offered more seats to Hudson students. Dr. Rodrigues said that we will be between 190-200 students in grade 6 and this is at or close to capacity.

Mr. Tracy asked if we could take another look at availability in August at the elementary level should we have an influx of students over the summer and have to increase staff. Dr. Rodrigues stated this would be possible.

A motion to approve the available School Choice slots for 2020-2021 was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Tracy. The following roll call vote was taken:

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| Mr. Maston | yes |
| Mr. Smith | yes |
| Mr. Tracy | yes |
| Ms. Ryan | yes |
| Mr. McDowell | yes |
| Ms. Tousignant Dufour | yes |
| Dr. Weksner | yes |

On a vote of 7-0, the motioned passed

2. **Approval of modifications to the employee vacation carryover policy for FY20**

Dr. Rodrigues stated that one challenge we have encountered with the closure for all non-contractual, administrators, some secretaries, and custodians is vacation time carryover.

Currently, employees are allowed to carry over 5 unused vacation days to the next year. Employees are asked to expend any excess

days over the summer.

Dr. Rodrigues presented an allowance for one year which allows employees to spend their time in the next year without impacting the operations.

Mr. Tracy asked about the preferred times in the document. He asked if it was too restrictive. Dr. Rodrigues stated it is preferred and there is another line in the document that allows for time used to be mutually agreed upon with the employee's supervisor.

Ms. Ryan asked why the time had to be used by the end of December. Dr. Rodrigues said that the employee will be accruing vacation time and it would impact the following year.

A motion to approve the modifications to the employee vacation carryover policy for FY20 was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. The following roll call vote was taken:

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|-----------------------|-----|
| Mr. Maston | yes |
| Mr. Smith | yes |
| Mr. Tracy | yes |
| Ms. Ryan | yes |
| Mr. McDowell | yes |
| Ms. Tousignant Dufour | yes |
| Dr. Weksner | yes |

On a vote of 7-0, the motioned passed

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of FY20 Safer Schools and Community Grant in the amount of \$24,770.00 for phase 2 of the update of security access at Hudson High School
2. Approval of gift from Benevity Causes- Intel Corporation Grant in the amount of \$10,781.66 for MA Coronavirus donation and company match to support Hudson Public Schools and continued Student Learning, Engagement during the Coronavirus pandemic.
3. Approval of Reclassification of Funds

A motion to approve by consent agenda, the FY20 Safer Schools and Community Grant in the amount of \$24,770.00 for phase 2 of the update of security access at Hudson High School, the gift from Benevity Causes- Intel Corporation Grant in the amount of \$10,781.66 for MA Coronavirus donation and company match to support Hudson Public Schools and continued Student Learning, Engagement during the Coronavirus pandemic, and the reclassification of funds as presented was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. McDowell. The following roll call vote was taken:

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| Mr. Maston | yes |
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Approved

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|-----------------------|-----|
| Mr. Smith | yes |
| Mr. Tracy | yes |
| Ms. Ryan | yes |
| Mr. McDowell | yes |
| Ms. Tousignant Dufour | yes |
| Dr. Weksner | yes |

On a vote of 7-0, the motioned passed

VII. **Items of Interest to the School Committee**

Mr. Smith stated that the First United Methodist Church is providing about 700 meals per week to residents. They are getting donations but could use help if people are so inclined.

Dr. Weksner said with all the uncertainty and change she feels there needs to be an over communication of plans and sharing of information to families. Ms. Tousignant Dufour added that most people think if nothing is being said then nothing is being done.

Ms. Ryan said she has heard positive comments about special education. She asked if parents of students who do not have an IEP or need services can reach out to school psychologists. Ms. Cathy Kilcoyne said this is the role of our school psychologists and clinicians. She said if a parent feels like they need assistance they should reach out. Our psychologists and clinicians are sharing caseloads.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour said she has heard about teachers running clubs and having zoom lunches.

VIII. **Executive Session**

Mr. Maston stated that Executive Session was not needed.

IX. **Adjournment**

At 8:53 pm, a motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. The following roll call vote was taken.

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|-----------------------|-----|
| Mr. Maston | yes |
| Mr. Smith | yes |
| Mr. Tracy | yes |
| Ms. Ryan | yes |
| Mr. McDowell | yes |
| Ms. Tousignant Dufour | yes |
| Dr. Weksner | yes |

On a vote of 7-0, the motioned passed

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tousignant Dufour, Secretary
Hudson School Committee