

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: April 28, 2020

Location: Remote Participation
Google Meet

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

Members absent: Rebecca Weksner

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

I. Call the Meeting to Order: 7:01 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 took a roll call of those present:

Mr. Maston	yes
Mr. Smith	yes
Mr. Tracy	yes
Ms. Ryan	yes
Mr. McDowell	yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour	yes

II Approval of Minutes: Regular Meetings April 7, 2020 and April 22, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of April 7, 2020 and April 22, 2020 was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. The vote was taken by roll call.

Mr. Maston	yes
Mr. Smith	yes
Mr. Tracy	yes
Ms. Ryan	yes
Mr. McDowell	yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour	yes

On a vote of 6-0, the motioned passed.

III. Public Participation:

Mr. Maston stated that the committee is trying to move to where we can have live public comment. He stated that there was an error in the email address on the agenda. He went on to say he has not received any emails from people stating they would like to address the committee.

IV. Reports and Presentations

Report of the Superintendent: School Closure Updates

Dr. Rodrigues stated that his report would be an update on the closure of schools due to Covid 19. Late Friday evening, the districts received some guidance from the state about next steps to close the year in a remote learning environment.

He prefaced his remarks by saying this is a very trying time for all of us and is difficult for everyone to navigate. He stated for the past 2-3 weeks we have received emails from parents expressing concerns regarding the quantity of work and the inability to connect through google meet. Dr. Rodrigues stated the team is working diligently to enhance remote learning at Hudson Public Schools. The state's guidelines say we are not just looking at maintenance of skills that have been learned through March 16. We are to look at the power standards released by the state and see what has been addressed and what has not. This is to be used as districts move forward with the specifics of remote learning.

About 200 chromebooks for grades 3 and 4 have been distributed. Ms. Ellen Shuck and her team have done a phenomenal job in removing, sanitizing, and distributing the chromebooks. In anticipation of the google meet capability at the elementary level, email accounts have been created for all students in grades Prek to 2. Google meet is expected to be rolled out for all next week. There have been conversations with the union to discuss the best way to roll this out. The remote learning piece with the new state guidelines is being developed and will be rolled out a week from Friday.

The new guidelines from DESE build on the recommendations of the document released on March 26. There are 2 new areas outlined in the latest recommendations. The first is further defining the recommended elements of a quality remote learning program including a focus on teaching of content and standards critical to students' success at the next grade level. The second area is to encourage districts to move all students to successful engagement in remote learning.

DESE gave a set of power standards per grade level. The Curriculum Directors, coaches, and teachers will analyze what parts we have done, what parts we have to address again, and what is new.

Remote learning is a new science for us and is not for all students and teachers. The district has been working closely with HEA to support teachers and give them the tools they need. There has now been another layer of demand added with the directive on new learning. It is important that teachers work with parents and families to understand and support them in the challenges with remote learning. The state also said it is important to note that remote learning in a pandemic is very different from remote learning as a standard.

Guidelines released include:

- Remote learning protocols for all students
- Engaging core and instruction in prerequisites content standards for success in the next year
- Engagement with teacher and peers
- Offer opportunities for enrichment exercise and play
- Ensure that programming is accessible for all students
- Secure communication exists

- Zoom is not a secure environment for students
- Google meet is the only platform we will use when engaging students
- Define system to identify and engage students not participating in remote learning

Remote learning is not the best platform for students with disabilities, English Learners, and students with social-emotional needs. Equity is an important piece and leaving a student behind is never an option.

Dr. Rodrigues went on to say there is a lot of other work being done, including High School graduation and the operations of the district. There are a lot of unknowns for next year and summer programming. Later this evening, there will be a plan for grades and GPA presented to the committee. Dr. Rodrigues praised the leadership team for the work that has been and continues to be done. He expressed his confidence in what the district is doing.

Mr. McDowell stated that a common theme in the feedback received is the lack of social-emotional learning and the lack of connection. He asked what the google meet would look like at different levels and if K-2 would be involved.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that starting Monday, there would be google meetings for all classes PK-4. Every teacher will catalog the google meets and which families do not have the support system to participate. There will plans developed to reach out to these families individually. We have approximately 50-60 families we know about that do not have internet capability. We are working on a plan to find internet capacity for these families. There is a possible grant from Intel to support this initiative. Additionally, the specials teachers will work together to create a plan to interact with students. Students will likely have multiple interactions throughout the week with different teachers. Next week when teachers connect with students, there will be a focus on the social-emotional piece and the connection with students. Teachers at each grade level will work together and it may look slightly different from school to school. If there is a concern about a teacher, parents may contact the principal. Mr. Smith stated he appreciated the update and all the work. He is glad the plans are moving forward and the elementary students will have the opportunity to use google meet. He stated it might be helpful to highlight in a document the things we are doing to address and measure what we are doing to support the guidelines. He went on to say that having a schedule is a tool, which helps him to help his student. Dr. Rodrigues stated that one of the suggestions in the new guidance is to have a document to help parents navigate a week. Every Friday, parents will get the next week of work with a schedule, and a plan of how to structure days particularly at the elementary level.

Mr. Tracy asked what the projected end date of school is. Dr. Rodrigues stated that June 22 is the last day of school. This will give the district the 185 days that are required including the days we are required to make up.

Ms. Ryan stated that parents are looking for information for kindergarten. She asked if there was any talk about what we might do about things like kindergarten screening. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we are looking at this and there will be more to come.

Mr. Tracy said his assumption is that all students will be moving to the next grade. He asked if there will be evaluation of students that are on cusp levels to identify if they may need to repeat. Dr. Rodrigues said this is ongoing with teachers, parents, and principals. At the high school level, we are trying to give students ample opportunity to make up work they are missing. We want to give students every opportunity to be successful and be promoted. Scenarios will be taken one at a time.

Mr. Maston commented that there is a report from UNESCO indicating that by all estimates 90% of school-aged children on the planet are not in school.

Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee

None

Policy Subcommittee

Dr. Rodrigues and Mr. Smith stated a meeting will be scheduled soon.

Strategic Goals Subcommittee

Mr. Maston and Dr. Rodrigues stated there had been a meeting in February to discuss changing the high school times. They went on to say that for now they will not be meeting again soon.

Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

Mr. Maston stated that this subcommittee had met earlier this evening. Dr. Rodrigues submitted his evidence. The evidence will be sent to the full committee. Committee members will have until May 10 to review the evidence and write up their evaluation. The subcommittee will combine the evaluations and submit to Dr. Rodrigues by May 17 so he has the five days contractually required to review. The evaluation will be posted on May 22 in the backup material for the May 26 School Committee meeting. Committee members may ask Dr. Rodrigues for additional information. Any additional information will be shared with all committee members.

Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee

Mr. Maston asked about another meeting regarding the Apsley building. Dr. Rodrigues stated he would reach out to Tom Moses and get back to the subcommittee.

Student Report

Mr. Maston stated it was nice to see the Round Robin back at the high school this week. Dr. Rodrigues reported that Creating Connections would be back this coming Friday.

V. **Matters for Discussion:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. **FY20 Budget Forecast**

Ms. Patricia Lange presented a review of the FY20 projection, which includes the impact of the closure of schools. The projection is for a savings of \$2.3M. This projection includes a savings of \$1.1M in personnel, a savings of \$763K in general expenses, and a savings of \$472K in transportation. Ms. Lange stated that she connected with each of the 23 budget owners and this is the best estimate of spending for the rest of the year.

Personnel savings have been achieved through less hiring, leaves of absences, and vacancies. We are not paying for spring athletic coaches and daily substitutes. There are savings in contracted services including monitors and after school tutors. We also have savings in professional development for curriculum writing. The general expense forecast has the continued assumption of no spending freeze. Buildings and grounds has a savings of \$67K. This could change. The biggest area of savings is \$701K in tuitions due to student population fluctuations. We are paying

tuitions at 100%. There are also savings in legal fees and professional development. There is some spending over budget in curriculum, technology, and athletics.

Transportation savings are \$472K. There is an assumption that a reduced amount will be paid for the rest of the year. Mr. Maston asked if the contract amendment has been settled with First Student. Ms. Lange said it has not been settled. She went on to say there is a bill in the house that could have some effect. Further discussions are needed.

Mr. Smith asked if we are looking to carry forward the savings this year to offset any potential cuts next year. Mr. Lange confirmed this is the case. Dr. Rodrigues stated we will continue to monitor and bring this forecast back in June and start to make decisions.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour made note of the town finance committee discussion that review of budgets and modifications would not be made until later.

Mr. Tracy asked if there has been discussion of moving fiscal close calendar days. Dr. Rodrigues stated that the house and senate are proposing to do one budget instead of two and then pass that to the governor. If this is not complete by July 1, they will go by the 1/12 rule.

Mr. Maston asked if we would be able to save any further money beyond what is in the school choice account. Ms. Lange stated we would not.

2. **Discussion of High School Grade Calculation and Student Transcript for 2019-2020**

Mr. Jason Medeiros presented documents outlining the high school grade calculations and student transcript for 2019-2020. He introduced the following four principles that guided the creation of the document :

- Continue to recognize achievement students have earned to date
- Give students who have struggled the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course objectives
- Incentivize participation in remote learning
- Minimize impact for students who were doing well but can't engage due to Covid 19 issues

Mr. Medeiros went on to summarize the mechanics. Students will receive a letter grade for terms 1, 2, and 3. Term 3 will be shut off on 3/13 which is the last day school was in session. Students are able to make up any missing assignments. Teachers will prioritize assignments addressing the power standards or key pieces of term 3 work. Students will receive a pass/fail for term 4. A student will pass if they complete 70% of the remote learning assignments. Seniors will conclude on May 29. There will be no final exams given. To receive a passing grade in a remote learning assignment, students will demonstrate some level of proficiency. Flexibility is

being stressed. There is an understanding that different families need things a different times. Timelines are pacing guidelines. We will give students that were failing heading into the closure opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills. If students do this there will be a system to pass for the year.

Students that earn pass will be awarded a 95 for the term and a fail will be 60. The reason for this is to create an incentive to participate in remote learning. Semester-long courses will only have a pass-fail option.

There was a petition to amend the advanced placement policy of requiring students to take the advanced placement exam to earn the AP designation on their transcript. We are proposing to waive the AP test requirement given discomfort in a remote model for testing and the College Board offering a full refund of the testing fee. There are other mechanics in the document around honor roll, valedictorian, and calculation of final grades.

Mr. Smith asked if this is unique to Hudson or was there higher-level guidance. Mr. Medeiros said the guidance around this is vague. Mr. Medeiros and Ms. Angie Flynn have access to different models through their networks.

Mr. Maston asked if we can expect something similar for Quinn Middle School and the elementary schools. Dr. Rodrigues stated we are working on this. We had prioritized the high school. Mr. Smith asked if we expected any concerns on what is outlined. Mr. Medeiros stated that there could be a worry about how students will manage term 4 remote learning while they are struggling with makeup work. There could also be concerns around everyone's pass grade being the same.

VI. **Matters for Action:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. **Approval to reschedule Grade 9 Washington D.C. overnight field trip from 4/28/2020-5/2/2020 to 9/29/2020-10/3/2020**

Mr. Jason Medeiros, Hudson High School Principal, stated that Hemispheres, our travel partner has been very understanding and flexible to deal with. The investment for the trip is protected and it is the hope that travel can occur in the fall. A final decision will be made late in the summer.

A motion to approve to reschedule the Grade 9 Washington D.C. overnight field trip from 4/28/2020-5/2/2020 to 9/29/2020-10/3/2020 was made by Mr. Tracy and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. The following roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Maston	yes
Mr. Smith	yes
Mr. Tracy	yes

Approved

Ms. Ryan yes
Mr. McDowell yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour yes
On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

2. **Approval of contract with Homans Associates in the amount of \$84,138.56 for the parts for the Mulready HVAC Project**

Mr. Tracy asked for confirmation that these funds were coming from the capital plan. Dr. Rodrigues confirmed this.

A motion to approve the contract with Homans Associates in the amount of \$84,138.56 for the parts for the Mulready HVAC project was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Tracy. The following roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Maston yes
Mr. Smith yes
Mr. Tracy yes
Ms. Ryan yes
Mr. McDowell yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour yes

On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Approval of Verizon Foundation Matching Gift to David J. Quinn Middle School in the amount of \$750.00**
4. **Approval of Reclassification of Funds**

A motion to approve the Verizon Foundation Matching Gift to the David J. Quinn Middle School in the amount of \$750.00 and the reclassification of funds as presented was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. The following roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Maston yes
Mr. Smith yes
Mr. Tracy yes
Ms. Ryan yes
Mr. McDowell yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour yes

On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

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

Mr. Smith wanted to express thanks to teachers for going above and beyond, doing little things that make a big difference for students.

Approved

Mr. Maston stated that at the high school teachers are putting videos together telling the high school students they are missed.

VIII. **Executive Session**

Mr. Maston stated that Executive Session was not needed.

IX. **Adjournment**

At 8:35 pm, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Ryan. The following roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Maston	yes
Mr. Smith	yes
Mr. Tracy	yes
Ms. Ryan	yes
Mr. McDowell	yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour	yes

On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tousignant Dufour, Secretary
Hudson School Committee