

Approved

**Hudson School Committee  
Open Session Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** April 7, 2020

**Location:** Remote Participation

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 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
Dr. Weksner	yes

**II Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting March 10, 2020**

Mr. Maston noted that the March 10, 2020 minutes were amended. A motion to approve the amended minutes of March 10, 2020 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. 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
Dr. Weksner	yes

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

Regular Meeting March 24, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of March 24, 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

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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 that there was a modified format for public participation. Those that wish to participate were asked to send participation to the committee prior to the meeting. Mr. Maston stated he had not received any feedback.

IV. **Reports and Presentations**

**Report of the Superintendent:** District Updates

Dr. Rodrigues recognized the work Ms. Kathy Provost, Assistant Superintendent, has done during this unusual time and the support she has received from Ms. Cathy Kilcoyne.

Ms. Provost gave an update on the work that has been done to date:

Consistent communication has been sent to families as we have received new guidance from DESE (3/12/20, 3/23/20, 3/6/20, 3/27/20, and 4/3/20). We will continue to send communication as new information presents itself. At times, the DESE guidance was not clear cut and superintendents across the state were making different decisions. This has caused some frustration due to comparisons being made between districts.

**Communication Plan**

At virtual faculty meetings last Tuesday, principals rolled out the Communication Plan. Teachers were given documents with guidelines for communication with and to keep track of all the families they are emailing or calling. These guidelines for questions included checking in with how students are doing physically and emotionally, asking if students are able to access materials online or having difficulty with internet access, and giving families information for the Hudson Public Schools plan for food distribution if the need for food came up. Teachers also asked about how each family would like communication to look like going forward. The district was given parameters from our legal counsel and the Hudson Education Association approved the plan before it was rolled out to teachers. Call logs have been given to staff and principals are collecting information so needs can be addressed as they come up.

The number of families that have been successfully contacted so far are:

- Quinn Middle School 82% of families
- Forest and Farley Elementary Schools 94% of families
- Mulready Elementary School ~ 96% of families

At Hudson High School, we are still trying to contact about 150 families.

The school secretaries are collecting and collating information so we know which families may need copies of things.

Staff has been asked to contact families two times per week if the family is amenable to that. Families received a letter from principals detailing the plan and adjustments will be made as needed.

At the elementary schools, a wave video was created to let students know how much they are missed and principals are creating daily morning announcements and posting them on their websites.

Ms. Wendy Anderson, EL Director, has been coordinating with our parent liaisons to complete translations and reach out to families. Ms. Anderson has taken the recommendations from DESE to make sure we are working with our English Language Learners in a way that will continue to support their language needs. She created a detailed document that outlines what all of our teachers will need to do to support these students and will be sharing this with them in the coming days.

### **Remote Learning Plans**

The commissioner created new guidelines last week for remote learning, which we have followed to create these new plans. We worked with the curriculum directors, instructional coaches and principals to customize plans for the elementary, middle and high school levels. The plans are based on developmental level, the ability to create thematic activities to keep students engaged, and the feasibility of delivering across multiple courses in the high school. HEA reviewed the plans and they were discussed with all staff at planning meetings. The district decided to keep the communication plan and the remote learning plans separate, as we felt it important to establish good communication with families and assess their needs before discussing the enhanced remote learning plans. DESE also requested that we post a letter to parents which talks about remote learning on the District website. We posted a letter for parents on Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> with the important information parents need regarding remote learning. Commissioner Riley gave directives that remote learning is not synonymous with online learning, can take place in a multitude of ways, and includes helping students engage with resources in their everyday lives. Districts must be conscious of increased screen time. The commissioner's recommendation is that schools support students to engage in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a regular school day. We expect this learning to take place via a combination of educator-directed learning and student self-directed learning. The remote learning plans will be placed on the website for families once translations are complete.

Ms. Provost thanked the administrative staff, curriculum directors, elementary coaches, and technology department for their hard work during this time.

Mr. Smith asked about the expectation of what teacher interactions would look and feel like. Ms. Provost stated the plan is to have teachers reach out twice a week. These interactions could be checking in on how students are accessing materials online, or could be a little lesson on something and giving possible alternate ways to do things. Discussion ensued about what form the interaction would take.

Mr. Smith asked about interaction online. Ms. Provost stated that right now we would be using google meet at the 5-12 level. She said there has been discussion about the elementary level but there is a need to understand the equity issue. There also have to be parameters for the google meet established.

Discussion ensued about group interactions.

Mr. Smith asked what accommodations will be made for Special Education.

Ms. Cathy Kilcoyne, Director of Student Services, gave a timeline of dates and guidance and directives issued by DESE and the Federal Government. During this time, we have provided enrichment activities and monitored closings at collaborative placements. On March 21, the federal government released guidance that special education services should be provided. On March 26, DESE held a meeting with Special Education Directors discussing the need for special education services, IEP team meetings and timelines. The district's special education law firm provided a training and gave us guidance on procedures and letters for special education services. After these were created, we met with SEPAC to discuss the process of communicating with parents and met with school principals and special education staff to talk about what remote learning entails. Parent letters were sent home about services and virtual team meetings. The special education teachers have started to contact parents regarding services. Special Education coordinators will be contacting parents about annual reviews with the intent to begin these the week after vacation.

Ms. Kilcoyne went on to say DESE states that services for students need to be flexible. We are doing check ins and needs assessments. Our special education teachers can provide some accommodations for work and help students with scheduling.

Ms. Kilcoyne stated there has been discussion around Grid C services. The services cannot and will not be provided the way they are written in the IEP. We will try and find what parents want. Once the teacher has spoken with families, the special education directors and coordinators are available to document what services are needed. Parents have the right to not accept any of these services. We have worked with HEA and the Special Education department to provide them with things they have asked for in terms of how to get started with parents.

Dr. Weksner asked if there has been conversation on how to get infrastructure in place to utilize telehealth for OT, PT and Speech services. Ms. Ellen Schuck, Director of Technology, is working to get HIPAA compliance with google meet. The individual service providers are working on gateways to their professional tele presence.

Discussion ensued about the state requirements and the rolling back of the restrictions.

Mr. Smith asked if we are expecting this to continue past early May. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that we are living day by day. With the peak of the virus in the next week or two, everything we hear leads us to believe this closure will be extended. He went on to say we cannot move beyond what DESE tells us we can do. He went on to say we have been discussing the what ifs with respect to if we do not return to school.

Mr. Smith asked if there was an update on MCAS and graduation. Dr. Rodrigues stated there are no updates, but it has been a topic of conversation among superintendents. The legislature has given the commissioner autonomy to cancel or postpone MCAS. Dr. Rodrigues stated that the district also needs to look at things like grades and GPA.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour asked what supports and professional development are teachers given to support distance learning. Ms. Kathy Provost stated that Ms. Ellen Schuck and her team are helping with the technical aspects of google meet. She went on to say we are asking teachers to go to a site with good lessons on digital citizenship.

Dr. Rodrigues gave an update on Kindergarten registration. Currently we have 99 completed registrations. Out of these 99, 70 are regular K registrations and 29 are dual language

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registrations. Additionally, we have 13 partial registrations of which 10 are regular and 3 are dual language. We also have 19 students returning from our PK or Hubert programs and 40 students on the census who have not contacted us yet.

Ms. Ryan asked if we know where the thirty students that applied for the dual language are located. Dr. Rodrigues stated he would get this information to the committee.

**Subcommittee Reports**

**Budget Subcommittee**

None

**Policy Subcommittee**

None

**Strategic Goals Subcommittee**

None

**Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee**

Mr. Maston made note that the Board of Selectmen has made a change to the date of the Town Election. The election has been moved to June 29. Dr. Rodrigues would like to adjust the timetable for his evaluation. Mr. Maston stated that the subcommittee will schedule a meeting to work out what that looks like.

**Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee**

None

**Student Report**

None

V. **Matters for Discussion:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. **Discussion of Finance and Operations**

Ms. Patricia Lange, Executive Director of Finance and Operations gave the following updates:

**Food Service Program**

- Week 1 42 breakfast and lunches picked up
- Week 2 141
- Week 3 258
- Week 4 expecting over 650

Last week, the district changed the food delivery schedule. We will now deliver 2 days of meals on each Monday and Wednesday and 3 days of meals on each Friday. She noted that a big change happened when DESE approved reimbursement. The district can now feed any child in the district, ages 0-18, regardless of whether they attend Hudson Public Schools or not.

**Payments to Vendors**

Ms. Lange stated she has been meeting with her counterparts at MASBO and there has been a lot of discussion about payments to our vendors in particular transportation. The goal is to keep the transportation vendors viable so that when we return to school they

will be available for us. There is a conflict with Massachusetts General Law 41:56, which states that the school committee or town accountant has to state that services have been rendered. There is language in the Education Stabilization bill that encourages us to pay our vendors and provides relief to help pay for transportation. Currently within the MASBO group, all districts that use the same vendor are trying to make a cooperative decision on whether and what to pay the vendor. There are 40 districts using First Student Transportation. The guidance from the Department of Revenue advises districts to look at their contracts. If we negotiate an amendment to our contract, we will comply with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

Mr. Tracy asked if we anticipate a district to district negotiation or one negotiation with all 40 districts that have First Student. Ms. Lange said two of the larger districts have offered to get more information. Discussion ensued about the percentage to be paid and having language in the amendment that the drivers continue to be paid.

Mr. McDowell asked if we have an understanding of the breakdown between personnel and equipment costs. Ms. Lange stated that they have told her that the variable costs are 20% and fixed costs are 80%. Discussion ensued. Ms. Lange stated that we need more information and financial statements.

Ms. Lange stated that we continue to pay Collaborative Tuitions. The guidance is that these are an extension of the school district. We are waiting on more guidance for the private day tuitions. We do not have any issues with contracted services, as these are pay as services are rendered.

Mr. Maston was asked if it was necessary to discuss Chartwells. Ms. Lange stated we do not and their employees have been furloughed.

VI. **Matters for Action:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. **Approval to negotiate a temporary contract amendment with First Student Transportation due to the COVID 19 school closure**

Dr. Rodrigues confirmed that any negotiation would be brought back to the committee for approval.

A motion to approve the negotiation of a temporary contract amendment with First Student Transportation due to the COVID 19 school closure was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Tracy.

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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
Dr. Weksner	yes

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

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

none

VIII. **Executive Session**

At 8:24 pm Mr. Maston stated that Executive Session was needed for the following :

1. To discuss selection of candidate for the position of Executive Director of Finance and Operations because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the Committee.
2. To discuss potential Memorandum of Agreements with union personnel (Hudson Education Association, Hudson School Secretarial Association and Hudson Paraeducator Association) because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the Committee.

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
Dr. Weksner	yes

On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed

IX. **Adjournment**

At 8:25 pm, Committee Chair, Glenn Maston announced that the Committee would enter Executive Session and not return to public session.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tousignant Dufour, Secretary  
Hudson School Committee