

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: March 10, 2020

Location: 155 Aspley Street

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

Members absent: none

Others present: Dr. Marco C. Rodrigues, Superintendent
Annamarie O'Donnell, Recording Secretary
Caitlin Reagan, Student Representative

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

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

II. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting: February 25, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of February 25, 2020 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

III. Public Participation:

Ms. Beth Langlois, parent of students at Quinn Middle School and Forest Avenue Elementary School, voiced her concern about the proposed 2020-2021 calendar and the change of the day before Thanksgiving to a full day of school. She expressed her concern about attendance.

Ms. Lisa Lewis, parent of a student at Forest Elementary School, expressed her concern over not having the day off before Thanksgiving and the effect it would have on families that travel.

Ms. Karen Calnan, retired school secretary and grandparent of 4 students in the district, stated that until recently the day before Thanksgiving had been a half day of school. Recently, it had been changed to a full day off. She expressed her concern about the proposed calendar for next year and the change to having a full day of school on the day before Thanksgiving. She went on to say families travel and there could be an attendance issue.

Ben Carme a senior at Hudson High School, stated he had questions and concerns regarding the corona virus. He stated he appreciated the memo of March 4 and asked for another memo detailing what the plan would look like should the virus rapidly spread through Hudson. He expressed concern about the availability of hand sanitizer and wipes and if the district will be providing these products.

Ilan Levine, a junior at Hudson High School, taking 3 Advanced Placement classes spoke about the college credit that can be obtained by achieving a certain score on the AP test in May. He brought up pacing and the effect of snow days and fitting all the material into a shortened year. He stated some schools in Georgia start 2 ½ weeks earlier than our schools and questioned if the Hudson Public Schools are at a disadvantage.

IV. Reports and Presentations

Report of the Superintendent: Graduation/Dropout Rates

Dr. Rodrigues stated that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently provided Graduation and Dropout rates for the prior year. He stated that the Hudson rates are very much like last year. The numbers have been flat in terms in graduation and dropout rates. There are some variations in subgroups, primarily students with disabilities, English Language Learners and students with low socio- economic status. He noted that those who dropped out are a small percentage. He stated that the district would be creating a comprehensive plan to address graduation rates and credit recovery. A plan for approval of Student Opportunity Act by the School Committee will be on the agenda for March 24. This is related to Chapter 78 funds. We are required to create a plan for how this money will be utilized. Dr. Rodrigues stated he had worked with Ms. Cathy Kilcoyne, Director of Student Services, and Mr. Jason Medeiros, Hudson High School Principal and identified two areas for focus. This past year we were able to create a new way for credit recovery through online courses. This has a wide range of benefits and the district will be looking to enhance this.

Dr. Weksner asked if we had a sense of the attrition rate due to students moving. Dr. Rodrigues stated that the dropouts include those who left the country or state and therefore our true dropout rate is lower.

Mr. Tracy asked if we had any sense of students dropped out who are under or over 18. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we always have students who are over age but under credited. Sometimes these are newcomers to the country having gaps in education. They could also be leaving school to seek employment to help support the family.

Mr. Smith made note of the 5-year rates trending up. Discussion ensued about the percentages and how one student can affect this rate.

Mr. Tracy asked if we track the number of students who move from a four-year track to a five-year track. Discussion ensued about supporting students so they do not end up in a five-year track.

Mr. Maston asked how DESE incorporates the five-year cohort into the accountability system. Dr. Rodrigues stated that this cohort is not counted. Discussion ensued.

Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee

none

Policy Subcommittee

Mr. Smith stated that this subcommittee had met and there will be some student attendance policies in next packet.

Strategic Goals Subcommittee

none

Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

none

Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee

none

Student Report

Caitlin Reagan, Student Representative, presented the student report with the following highlights:

- Community Council is hosting Spring Fling April 17
- Community Council is creating posters for a virtual suggestion box with a QR code
- There will be Principal coffees on 3/11 and 4/16

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- Parent teacher conferences will be 3/12
- Hudson High School Drama is performing Peter Pan 3/13-3/15. There will be 4 performances
- The spring sports meeting will be on 3/11. Practices will begin on 3/16.

Dr. Rodrigues gave an update on COVID19. He stated that issues around the virus are evolving daily. The district is looking for guidance from local and state Departments of Public Health, CDC, and DESE.

The custodial staff continues to deep clean each school every night with the GenEon system. All high touch surfaces are sprayed as well.

Last Friday, there was a conference call with the Commissioner of Education and the Deputy Director of the State Department of Public Health. Discussion included make up days and MCAS. As of last Friday, the 180 day requirement had to be met for days missed until 3/31, from 4/1- 5/31 up to 5 days need to be made up and days missed after 6/1 do not need to be made up. At this time there is no information on MCAS, AP exams etc.

He reported that earlier in the day he attended a meeting with Metrowest Public Health Departments and Superintendents. In the governor's press conference, a state of emergency was ordered and Executive Branch restrictions were put in place. MEMA is suggesting that business' follow this example to minimize the outbreak.

There are 92 presumptive positive tests by the state. There are 41 cases in Middlesex county with 70 out of the 92 cases linked to Biogen.

Dr. Rodrigues went on to say that he had met twice earlier today with administrators and principals and the team is looking at scenarios for schools, central office, payroll, and other essential functions should there be disruption.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that the "blizzard bags" are not an option as the pilot previously held did not yield positive results. One primary factor is equity for the students. Students with disabilities and English Language Learners will not receive services while school is closed. The district is now looking at possibilities for what education will look like in Hudson should we have to do something.

Mr. Maston asked if there had been discussion concerning interscholastic sports and other extracurricular activities. Dr. Rodrigues stated that as of Friday, there is a recommendation of no travel outside the state.

Dr. Weksner asked if there are options for funding of supplies to sanitize with the state of emergency. Dr. Rodrigues stated that it has been difficult to find supplies. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour asked if there would be any changes with the play going on this weekend in terms of sanitizing. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we are being proactive with any events happening.

Mr. Maston clarified that the DC trip is not cancelled at this point. There have been conversations with the trip provider about insurance and refunds.

Discussion ensued about hand hygiene education and resources available.

V. **Matters for Discussion:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. Kindergarten Registration/Dual Language Update

Dr. Rodrigues gave an update on Kindergarten registration which

started on February 25. There have been 68 students registered. Out of the 68 registrations, 18 families have opted for the dual language program. There are 49 additional families with scheduled appointments.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour asked if we were seeing more English speakers or Portuguese speakers. Dr. Rodrigues said it was a good mix.

Dr. Weksner asked what happens if we go over the target for sign-ups for the dual language program. Dr. Rodrigues described the distribution buckets for this program. Each bucket will have a lottery if there are more applications than the target number of students.

Mr. Tracy asked what the scenario for classes is should a disproportionate number of students transfer into Farley with this program. Dr. Rodrigues stated that he did not see a problem but we would reevaluate things if needed.

VI. **Matters for Action:**

a) Old Business

1. **Second Reading and Approval of Proposed Revisions and Additions to J Policy Manual: Student Athletics, Fundraising, Student Activities**

Dr. Rodrigues stated he had received feedback and added Marching before band in policy JJIF-R page 46 section 11. A motion to approve the amended proposed revisions and additions to the J Policy Manual: Student Athletics, Fundraising, and Students Activities was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

b) New Business

1. **Approval of 2020-2021 School Calendar**

Dr. Rodrigues stated that this has been a very difficult calendar to put together due to Labor Day occurring late, an election on September 1, and a Presidential election in November. The last day of school without snow days would be June 18 and with 5 snow days June 25. If there are more than 5 snow days, we are in jeopardy as we only have 3 additional days in the fiscal year. He went on to say if there is indication in weather trends that we could use more than 5 snow days, we will make provisions to make up days even before we have used them.

The first Professional Development day is September 1, the day of the election. If we have November 3 as another full professional development day, we would not have a full professional development day in the second half of the year. Dr. Rodrigues said that he had met with the principals and all agreed that with the Instructional Leadership teams work and the work on the District Improvement Plan it would be a detriment not to have a full professional development day in the spring. Dr. Rodrigues stated the only day available for changing in order to make November 3 a

non-school day is the day before Thanksgiving. All other days off have contractual ramifications.

Ms. Ryan stated that many people had reached out to her and presented some ideas given to her to rearrange the half days. Discussion ensued about a half-day professional day on the day before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Tracy asked if there were conversations with HEA to bring the calendar forward a week in August to free up some days. Dr. Rodrigues stated that he reached out to HEA in January to discuss the possibility of a one-year differential on the start date of school. He went on to say he asked HEA if they would be willing to start on August 24. Dr. Rodrigues stated that he went back to them after looking again at the calendar with the principals.

Mr. Tracy asked what we would do with the scenario of a large snow. Dr. Rodrigues stated that probably February or April vacation would be affected. He acknowledged that these are difficult decisions.

Ms. Ryan asked if employees would rather have a half day of school and stay for half day professional development the day before Thanksgiving. Dr. Rodrigues stated he was concerned about the number of half days and the impact on student learning and the number of hours. Discussion ensued about the half-day professional development days.

Mr. Tracy asked if this would be a precedent for not having the Wednesday before Thanksgiving off. Dr. Rodrigues stated that this is one time due to the complexities in this year's calendar.

Discussion ensued about the December 9 ½ day being moved to November and having teachers stay a full day. Discussion ensued about concern for morale and interpretation as punishment. Dr. Rodrigues stated that that is not the intent.

Mr. Maston noted that any decisions made tonight can be modified if someone comes up with a creative solution and the committee votes on it.

Mr. Tracy stated that it was worth it to continue to explore the start date of school into August. Discussion ensued.

A motion to approve the 2020-2021 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 6-1, with Ms. Ryan voting against, the motion passed.

2. **Approval of contract with N&T Mechanical Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$19,000 for hot water heater replacement at Quinn Middle School.**

A motion to approve the contract with N & T Mechanical Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$19,000 for the hot water heater replacement at Quinn Middle School was made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motioned passed.

Approved

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

Mr. Smith asked if there will be an update on the conversation with selectmen on the Administration Building. Mr. Maston stated that they would be pulling together a Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee.

VIII. **Executive Session**

Not needed

Adjournment

IX. At 8:41 pm, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Ryan. .

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

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tousignant Dufour, Secretary
Hudson School Committee