

Carlisle School Committee

Minutes

April 10, 2020

8:30-9:45 a.m.

Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Present Via Zoom – School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, David Model, Eva Mostoufi, Sara Wilson, Shannon May Lavery.

Present Via Zoom – School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal; Dennet Sidell, Elementary Principal; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Susan Pray, Business Manager; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Meeting Documents:

Minutes of April 3, 2020		
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Note: Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, the public was not allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting. Members of the Public were able to access this meeting via live stream at

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/321756655> Meeting ID: 321 756 655

Public comments were posted via the chat box. Questions/Comments were read and answered by the School Committee via live stream.

I. Call to Order

Chair Christine Lear called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Ms. Lear announced that the meeting is being recorded.

II. Review/Approve Minutes

Mr. Model made a motion to approve the minutes of the meetings of April 3, 2020; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The following vote was taken in Roll Call: Lear, aye; Model, aye; Lavery, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson aye.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. Student Presentations. Dr. Sidell introduced School Psychologist Katie Rupprecht. She explained that the teachers and staff are not only doing academics with students, but also social emotional work. Ms. Rupprecht created “Friendship Zoomers” where she invites all students from an elementary grade to engage in social emotional learning. During the first week, the talk was about feelings, and what tools can be used to bring children back to a regulated state. Ms. Rupprecht presented a Relaxation Station that can be created at home. It is a space where kids can go, and it can have posted rules, posted feel-good sayings like “treat yourself with kindness,” coping strategies (such as doing exercise), and a check-in sheet to indicate how a child is feeling. There can also be a gratitude

worksheet where kids think about and list things they are good at. Ms. Rupprecht asked students to build a Relaxation Station, and take a picture of it. She then created a slideshow that she shared with the students, encouraging them to be inspired by others' ideas. Ms. Rupprecht received parent permission to share pictures of the students' work. The following student Relaxation Stations were shared via a slideshow: Lucas Floyd, Thomas Mackintosh, Vivienne Wells, Gracyn Smith, Kira Walia, Victoria Molten, Grace Miller, Louisa Deignan,, Amara Mazzola, Ava Grynewicz, Otto Smith, Armaan Hundal, and Will Fardig. Ms. Lear commented that Ms. Rupprecht made this activity fun for the children, and asked how many students came to the grade-level sessions. Ms. Rupprecht answered that an average of about 20 kids per grade came to each session. Ms. Lavery asked if the guidelines for these stations could be posted; Ms. Rupprecht will post them on the website. Lori Bruce followed with some Special Education updates. She has weekly calls with the DESE, and was asked to create individual remote learning plans for Special Education students. In these plans, families receive a sheet with customized information about their children. Examples of information are lists of words for a child to practice, a schedule of weekly meetings, and important links for resources. Special Educator Maddie Lydon talked about teaching phonics through remote learning. She built a replicate of a letter tile board that she shared with students through google slides, through which she can build words in real time with students. She also practices reading and spelling "trick words" that don't follow phonetic rules. Students can then practice writing the words themselves. This is a hands on method for writing practice that involves no screen time, as students can use rice, shaving cream, and other fun tools in which they can write words. Ms. Bruce added that different educational platforms are constantly being researched by teachers. Pencil and crayon work has been sent home to families. Students have been given pre-recorded books to read. Educators send home articles for parents along with remote learning plans. Ms. Bruce shared that middle school teachers give reading lessons and have posted office hours. Both general education and special education are built into the middle school schedule. IEP meetings have gone well. Ms. Bruce is working with CCHS on 8th grade transition plans. She is also working on the summer school program. Dr. Mehler shared that middle school teachers are collaborating on Zoom, and attending both department meetings and faculty meetings. There is ongoing communication and coordination to figure out how to best implement teaching strategies. Free Professional Development is being offered to staff; a session on Project Based Learning takes place next week. Dr. Mehler introduced the 7th grade to showcase some of their work. Cheryl Hay, 7th grade ELA teacher, spoke of a lesson on process over product involving creating a doll and a movie. 7th grade student Ada Sprong shared that she created a doll from recycled materials. The doll likes to sing and dance, and starred in a movie. The goal of this lesson was to inform, entertain and educate. Ada shared her movie, and something she learned; Broadway theatres have 500 or more sets, theatres with less seating capacity are considered Off-Broadway. Ada said it was fun to make her movie and see her classmates' movies. Brad Cranston, 7th grade Science teacher, spoke of the challenge of finding science activities that can be done at home. One challenge that was presented to students was to create an object that is neutrally buoyant; not floating, not sinking. Student Sam Snell combined oil and salt, and discovered when salt hit oil, a bubble would be created and would be neutrally buoyant in the middle for a few seconds. Priya Lennox filled lead with paper clips, and

discovered the item also hovered. Ms. Lear and Mr. O'Shea thanked the students, teachers and staff for sharing.

- B. Update on School Closure. Mr. O'Shea shared a PowerPoint presentation. School remains closed, the main office is open Tuesday through Thursday from 8-11 a.m., CCHS is offering takeaway breakfast and lunch, Carlisle neighbors have stepped up to help those in need, the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is meeting regularly, and social distancing is in place. The School started Phase 2 of remote educational instruction on April 6. It is recognized that equity is an issue. Mr. O'Shea said communication is important, and asked if families are struggling, please reach out to faculty. Dr. Sidell added that he and his faculty spent a lot of time talking about balance, as many elementary students require adult assistance to complete activities. In Phase 2 in elementary, there has been an increase in live Zoom meetings and read-alouds. Teachers feel that if their students see them it allows some normalcy. Some parents want more work, some feel the work is too much. Some families can only help their kids at certain times of the day. The teachers are being flexible. The School is also working to minimize the amount of communication sent to families. Nick Greenwood has been amazing; Nick helped create a week-long calendar that includes Zoom information and links. Parents receive it on Sunday. Nick will create this weekly for every teacher. Dennet applauds his teachers for their hard work and flexibility, and for continuing to look at multiple ways to keep kids engaged. Dr. Mehler gave an update on Middle School, where there is an emphasis on flexibility and communication. Students are provided 3-4 hours of school work per school day. If kids and families are experiencing stress, the teachers want to know about it. The School is implementing a Pass or Incomplete for term 3 grading. Over April vacation, there will be no live learning; teachers and families can catch their breath, but families can also do catch-up work if they desire. Interim reports will come out in May. The intent is for students to be productive and engaged, not stressed. Middle School students should be able to accomplish work independently. Ms. Wilson voiced admiration for how proactive our faculty and administrators are, and said the families are very lucky. Ms. Mostoufi also appreciates the work that teachers have done and asked how long it takes teachers to put lessons online. Dr. Sidell said it takes teachers a long time. Teachers have to look and decide what's important and how to provide lessons to students. Teachers routinely give more of their time beyond office hours. Dr. Mehler said that we are asking teachers to change how instruction is delivered. The methodology is completely different, teachers are learning new technology on the fly, striving to meet social emotional needs of students and support families, in addition to having challenges with their own families. Dr. Mehler strongly supports our educators. Mr. O'Shea summarized that we transitioned into phase 2 smoothly, and gave kudos to the faculty and staff. He added that the School is gathering data on what we are doing and we will share the data. We are also monitoring student participation, will share best practices, and continue to modify approaches. Zoom licenses are being distributed; Mr. O'Shea thanked the CEF for purchasing some of these licenses. Reopening schools is still a question, and the closure may be extended. Mr. O'Shea closed with thanking everyone for the support, patience, and for doing an outstanding job. It was noted that the Town also sent a message to the School to stop all non-essential spending.

- C. Planning for 2020-2021 School Year. Mr. O'Shea acknowledged that the School is continuing to plan for next year. Dr. Sidell added that parents might be surprised at how early the planning starts. After winter break, administrators start to think about class configurations and size of classes. This year the extensive visioning work that has been done was also considered. Yesterday, Dr. Sidell checked with Amy Smack about new family registrations. Understanding that class size is important for the success of teaching and learning, all elementary classes will be less than 18 students, with one class of 19. One first and second grade class will be combined next year; Katie Casazza will be the teacher. The first graders will have Ms. Casazza for their 2nd grade teacher the following year. Dr. Sidell will communicate with parents on how this classroom will function. Mr. Model commended the creativity in this new model. He added that ideas like this make our school different from others.
- D. School Choice Discussion. Mr. O'Shea shared the presentation on School Choice that he reviewed at the December School Committee meeting. School Choice has been in place since 1991, and it allows parents to have a choice on where to send their children to school. The default is that every town participates, and schools have to have a Hearing to opt out. Districts can identify a grade level or levels to which they accept students, and receive about \$5000 per student to help defer costs. It is an opportunity to increase enrollment. If Carlisle accepts a student, the student would be enrolled through 8th grade. It was noted that if schools accept students at younger grades, it could cost the School more over the years. Ms. Mostoufi asked Mr. O'Shea to reiterate the scenario of considering this option for a middle school class. Mr. O'Shea said that if Carlisle wanted to pilot School Choice for next year, we would look at our 6th grade numbers which are on the lower side and we'd have these students in Carlisle for their 6th, 7th and 8th grade years. Mr. Model asked what the expectation was for 8th grade School Choice students from Carlisle being admitted to CCHS. Mr. O'Shea answered that there are no expectations right now, as Concord does not currently accept School Choice students. There was concern about students returning to their home districts for high school after attending the Carlisle Schools. Ms. Mostoufi confirmed that the receiving district is not responsible for transportation for School Choice students. Mr. O'Shea shared that in his past districts, School Choice students came from a variety of communities. Ms. Lear asked what the thoughts were from the Visioning Committee. Ms. Lavery answered that accepting School Choice students is not viewed as a fiscal solution. Participating in METCO could contribute to economic and ethnic diversity in the student population. Ms. Wilson acknowledged that the reliance on parent transportation for School Choice students limits socio-economic diversity because there is no public transportation option to Carlisle. Ms. Mostoufi advocates creating increasing diversity opportunities for our school children through the METCO program or opening our doors for tuitioned-in students. Mr. Model supports the comments of the members and suggested the Committee identify goals; whether they are social, economics, diversity or a combination. The following Public Comments were made in relation to the School Choice conversation. Camelia Rosca addressed the School Choice cost issue. She said we live in affluent area, but acknowledged that some surrounding towns are not as affluent. Billerica families might send kids. She added that if she lived in Lowell she would wake up early to send her kids to school in Carlisle. She said Carlisle has no cost associated with this as transportation and the cost of special education is the sending district's

responsibility. Mr. Model said that special education is Carlisle's responsibility; the school gets some compensation but the special education cost has to meet a certain threshold. He added that since School Choice is a lottery, there is no bias on who is admitted. Ms. Wilson pointed out that the FAQ section of the School Choice presentation addressed a lot of the cost issues. Ms. Rosca proposed that the administration connect with DESE about the quote within Chapter 70 referencing that the sending district pays IEP costs. Ms. Lear wants to consider the Visioning Committee work in the decision. New parent of a second grader, Panos Bethanis, commented that if you have an objective of diversity and have a random sample, you cannot try to predict the randomness into that sample. He asked if Carlisle has reached out to districts who have done it, asked if they are satisfied, and also wondered why CCHS is rejecting it. Mr. O'Shea answered that his previous district, Harvard, fluctuated on accepting and not accepting School Choice. He agreed that the selection is random and added that Districts also cannot reject children for any reason.

IV. Members'/Committee Reports

Municipal facilities: Ms. Lear reported that Rob Fortado has been helping disinfect at the Fire and Police stations and other areas of Town.

Visioning: Ms. Lavery reported that Visioning meetings and work are continuing.

Concord-Carlisle Region: Mr. Model reported that the Region has not met much lately.

There is a daily communication sent from the Superintendent in Concord to families.

Outreach has been strong on free lunch and donations for the program are still being accepted.

V. Warrants

A. Payroll Warrant #7420; \$372,121.63

B. Accounts Payable Warrant #7620; \$9,022.21*

*It was noted that a change was made to Warrant #7620; the new amount is \$42,931.90

VI. Public Comments.

Carrie Patel spoke in support of creating a relationship with Lowell with the goal of participating in a METCO program with a District that is closer than Boston. Mr. Model asked that the Committee evaluate what its goals are and ensure that the effort is working toward the goals. METCO currently places student from only Boston and Springfield. Carlisle could be a leader to help introduce a new sending program in Lowell.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Model made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Lear, aye; Wilson, aye; Model, aye; Mostoufi, aye. Ms. Lavery had left the meeting. The public meeting was adjourned 10:19 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Anderson".

Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent