

**Leicester Public Schools
School Committee Minutes
January 6, 2021 @ 5:30 PM**

Location: Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A sec. 20, the meeting was held via online:

Meeting ID

meet.google.com/uwg-pnst-pbn

Phone Numbers

[\(US\)+1 208-843-1278](tel:+12088431278)

PIN: 172 449 601#

Call to order- 5:30

Roll Call:

Nathan Hagglund Present

Scott Francis Present

Tom Lauder Present

Stella Richard Present

Donna McCance Present

Also, in attendance were Dr. Marilyn Tencza, Superintendent of Schools
Cady Maynard, Director of Finance and Operations

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Hagglund asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

School Committee Chair Report

Open Meeting Law and Public Participation Presentation

Chairperson Nate Hagglund reviewed Mass Open Laws and the School Committee's policy on public comment.

Superintendent Mid-Cycle Goals Update

Dr. Tencza discussed her progress with SY 20-21 Mid-Cycle Evaluation goals. She provided a presentation listing which goals have been met and those that she continues to work on.

School Committee Mid-Cycle Goals Update

Member Donna McCance discussed the School Committee progress on each of their SY20-21 goals. A new School Committee Website is under development and will soon be available to the public. In order to communicate with the public, a monthly newsletter will be posted to the website. The committee continues to review sections of the School Committee policy book for review and revisions.

Winter Concert

Member Scott Francis asked for the reasons behind the changes to the High School Winter Concert. Dr. Tencza stated that we needed to be more inclusive in our song choices. The students chose the songs and not enough time was allowed to have the principal review the program. The committee stated that moving forward song selections should be discussed and approved well before concert time.

CDC Covid19 Guidance

Dr. Tencza recommended that the district reopen schools to hybrid learning on January 11, 2021. She believes that it is in the best interest of the students to be in school. The metric that we should use is whether we can staff classrooms rather than number of Covid in the community. The numbers in the community may not directly affect the students in school. Diane Moffat, Lead School Nurse, said currently there are 7 students and 1 staff member that are positive. More students are in quarantine due to close contact and travel restrictions. Ms. Moffat predicts the case number will increase in the next few days. Chris Monterverdi, Chair of the Board of Health, agrees that the trends show the numbers may increase. Dr. Tencza stated that the district is equipped to change to remote learning when it is necessary.

Member Donna McCance expressed her concerns about returning to school and feels we should follow the recommendation of Diane Moffat. Stella Richard asked if the students with higher needs have been brought back into school. Dr. Tencza stated that the students with higher needs have not been attending school.

Member Tom Lauder believes the safe guards in place are sufficient to keep all safe and that the students should be brought back into school.

Member Stella Richard stated that the pandemic is have a negative effect on the physical and mental health of our students. Many students rely on school services for their nutritional, physical and mental health/emotional needs. Prolonged exposure to the computer screen (blue light) is effecting sleep cycles and causing attention difficulties in children. There has an increase in childhood anxiety and depression. Ms. Richard believes that the children should be in school for these reasons.

Chairperson Nate Hagglund stated though staff have done a phenomenal job teaching remotely, students are better taught in person. Mr. Hagglund recognizes that numbers may go up but believes the district can and will change to remote learning as soon as necessary.

Ms. Kim Ferdella, Middle School Teacher and Vice President of EAL, would like the committee to follow the recommendation of Diane Moffat and stay remote the full 14 days after the New Year holiday. She states the teachers want to be back in the classrooms with the students but does feel returning to school too early is taking an unnecessary risk.

The Board of Health has not taken a vote to recommend or not recommend the return of school.

Dr. Tencza asked Mr. Monterverdi for clarification on CDC guidelines regarding the number of days required for quarantining. The Board of Health voted at their December meeting to follow the earlier CDC guidance of a 14-day quarantine or a negative test on day 8 with quarantine to day 10, return to work/school will be allowed.

Member Stella Richard made a motion to resume school in the hybrid model on January 11, 2021.
Member Scott Francis made a second.

Roll Call vote- Mr. Hagglund-Yes, Mr. Francis-Yes, Mr. Lauder- Yes, Ms. Richard- Yes, Ms. McCance-No. The motion passed (4-1).

Graduation Requirements

Dr. Tencza discussed the technology requirement for graduation. The High School will be offering more choices to meet the requirement.

Reading of Policies

Section E

Dr. Tencza has ask the administrators to review the changes to the policies before the committee has their discussions.

Member Stella Richard made a motion to table the discussion of Section E Policies. Member Tom Lauder made a second.

Roll Call vote- Mr. Hagglund-Yes, Mr. Francis-Yes, Mr. Lauder- Yes, Ms. Richard- Yes, Ms. McCance-Yes. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Upcoming Meeting(s)

January 12, 2021 @ 6:30 - Open Session Meeting

Items for Next Meeting

No new items

Public Comment

Harry Brooks commented on the School Committee's policy on public comment. He suggested that Public Comment should be available at the beginning of the School Committee Meeting; the public could then ask questions, get answers and have the committee hear opinions or concerns about agenda items. Mr. Brooks feels that this would allow for more transparency during the School Committee meetings.

Jacob Stolberg, High School student, stated that it is better for students to be in school even if only in a hybrid model.

Parents from the FVLS, asked if the new DESE student learning times would affect their children. Dr. Tencza stated that families that opted Cohort D would not need to be held to the DESE guidelines.

Executive Session- 6:55 pm

M.G.L. Chapter 30 (A) Section 21 (a)(2) Convene in Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with EAL and Paraprofessionals, not to reconvene in open session.

Member Stella Richard made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Member Tom Lauder made a second.

Roll Call vote- Mr. Hagglund-Yes, Mr. Francis-Yes, Mr. Lauder- Yes, Ms. Richard- Yes, Ms. McCance- Yes. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Adjournment

List of Documents

LPS-Section E-Revised