



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING NOTICE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Saturday, April 4 2020

Remote Participation Meeting, 11:00a.m.

Minutes

School Committee

Heather Sroka, Chair
Wendy Bertrand, Vice Chair
Brian Lehtinen, Secretary
Carol Archambault
Jim LaVeck

Superintendent

Dr. Kate Burnham

Business Manager/ HR Director

Michael Cassidy

Recording Secretary

Susan Somers

Student Representative

Claire Delaney- Absent

Guests:

In accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, please be advised that this meeting is being recorded and broadcast over the Lunenburg Public Access channel.

The Town of Lunenburg, in response to the COVID-19 (CoronaVirus) is currently following the guidance from the Lunenburg Board of Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC regarding the virus and steps communities can take to prevent the spread and all town facilities are currently closed to the public. In accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, all public meetings are being conducted remotely. **This meeting will be broadcast live through local access cable, on FacebookLive on the Public Access Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Lunenburg-Public-Access-Cable-157427270975305/>) and will be able to be found on the LunenburgAccess YouTube channel within 24 hours after the meeting.**

The following information is also provided for members of the public that would like to participate in the meeting remotely: To Participate Remotely: From a computer, please use the link below to join the public meeting webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/7663167607> **From a telephone, dial the toll free number (888) 475-4499 or (877) 853-5257 and enter Meeting ID: 766 316 7607** If you have not registered with Zoom you will be asked for your name and an e-mail address. **Note: No participant ID is needed, just press # when asked. Telephone users may dial *9 to request to speak after joining the meeting. Computer and app users may use the "raise hand" feature to request to speak.**

The agenda lists all the topics which may be discussed at the meeting and are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Votes may be taken as a result of these discussions. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by Open Meeting Law.

1. **Call to Order** - 11:00am by Ms. Sroka
2. **Chair's Report** - moved directly to public comment.
3. **Public Comment-Agenda Items** - The committee heard a brief thank you from Lisa LeBlanc on behalf of the teachers and acknowledging that everyone has been working very hard.
4. **Superintendent's Report** - Budget timeline. Covid19 is obviously going to have an impact on revenues. Food insecurity issue: All districts are now eligible for USDA reimbursement. We have been serving an average of 90-100 on Mondays and Wednesdays and 125 on Fridays. There has been no new guidance on MCAS or the Student Opportunity Act plans. Dr. Burnham acknowledged and thanked families for their patience during the transition to remote learning. Dr. Burnham also thanked the staff for their investment and commitment to this transition. It is inspiring! The focus is obviously on the students and everyone's well-being. Mr. Cassidy spoke regarding the business office and reminded everyone that no one is allowed in the building except custodial staff. The TCP building is being used for business only. Staff are reporting to the high school for creating the grab and go meals. The central office is meeting

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regularly. Any illnesses non-Covid 19 related, employees should still be calling in sick. Mr. Cassidy noted that Grab and Go costs are currently projected out to \$36,300 through the end of the school year. (100 meals/day). These figures will change with changes in the duration of the school closures. The Dee busing contract will be looked at, but there are no recommendations at this time. Discuss next meeting. Hiring freeze continues. Purchasing freeze except for items pertaining to grab and go meals, online learning or health and safety. FY21 Budget Process - Town Manager - there will be a public hearing May 7th.

5. New Business

Action

a. *Suspension of Policy #3701.01*- This policy is regarding the sending of notices of negative balances for lunches. Feeling that it is insensitive during this time, we are recommending the suspension of this policy during the duration of the school closures. Mr. LaVeck commented that perhaps we could organize information about how to donate to overdrawn accounts? (Graduating Seniors with a positive balance, as one example.). Dr. Burnham noted that staff are looking into how to organize a gift card drive for affected families, similar to what we do around the holidays. Ms. Archambault made a motion to suspend the policy, seconded by Mr. LaVeck. All agreed during a roll call vote.

6. Old Business

Discussion

b. *Transition from Enrichment to Remote Learning* - Dr. Burnham noted that a letter has been sent to families detailing the transition. Care has been taken to make sure that the remote learning is equitable to all families. It took time to send out a survey to obtain information. Media carts at the school were taken apart, and chrome books and other equipment cleaned and sanitized for distribution to families who might not otherwise have access. Unfortunately we did not get 100% participation in the survey. Devices have been picked up at certain times (like grab and go meal pickup) or in some instances have even been delivered by staff. There are still around 50 or so devices left to go. The Commissioner of Education asked that schools be on an enrichment program for three weeks. We then started looking at platforms. Many teachers already used Google Classroom. We looked at Google Meet for real time learning... everything has to be tested for the safeguards in place for kids on the Internet. Zoom has been providing their service for free for educators. However they are juggling the high demand, and the FBI has issued a warning about "Zoombombing" where unauthorized users have been able to access and disrupt specific meetings. Safety is obviously a concern. We have gone forward with using Zoom for IEP meetings, Leadership Team meetings, Faculty meetings, etc. Zoom is OK for adults. Currently it is recommended that teachers record and post videos rather than live interaction, which can be visited at a later time. Our teachers have really stepped up with training. We are all novices at using this technology. Some teachers are more familiar/comfortable with the tech and some less so - this whole process is a learning curve for us all. We ask that you please be patient. From Day 1 we have been operating under the direction of the Commissioner and the Department of Education. The Commissioner has been very equity-driven in his directives and has been giving guidance to the whole state. We are all on the same page, unsure of the duration of the closure. We are currently looking to return on May 4th - But we wanted to roll out remote learning with the long view - with the idea that we may have to go to June. We want students to be excited to log on! As we move forward with this new instruction, we need to consider the pace.

Expectations: Teachers will be posting work, some daily, some to be completed over several days. Students will be expected to log on daily and do the assignments posted. Three hours a day is expected. We will not likely complete this year's curriculum. Teachers are working to adapt so kids get to standards for next year. It is important to move forward/through as much as we can.

Challenge as to how to grade? How does this affect Juniors/Seniors as they transition to college? Colleges/universities have to know that this will be a national problem/effect.

Special Education: We have been advised that we can't change IEPs. Guidance needs to make our best faith effort to keep services and do the paperwork to document. The committee heard from Julianna Hanscomb that the staff has been very busy, and using all our paraprofessionals to do small group and one-to-one services. We are all sharing resources. Dr. Burnham noted that the social/emotional/mental health piece is very important. This is a very challenging time for all, with a lot of stress on parents and staff. It is natural to feel disconnected, isolated, worried. Social Worker Jamie Millet concurred that this situation has many moving pieces, and it takes a village. Their staff has been meeting weekly, and brainstorming ways to help students feel connected, including outreach to at-risk students.

Work is being done to help make sure that staff feel connected and have supports as well: Coffee chats on Zoom, weekly newsletters with tips, staff resource website and social media.

Families need to know that we are here for their support. Kinship Care Group is moving to a virtual platform. Grab and Go lunches, Kylee's Kare Kits, etc.

Dr. Burnham added that there are SO many decisions and such a fluid nature to this situation. It was important to move forward in a thoughtful way. We were not in a position to roll right into remote learning.

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Ms. Sroka added that parents are looking for structure. That is probably different, for different grade levels. Not having kids at devices for huge periods of time a day is also a factor. The question was posed as to whether we would consider lengthening school, and no spring break.

Dr. Burnham noted that the structure for the day is not the same as a one-to-one model as students may not have access to devices all the time. Not having the day as structured as being on campus was felt to be better moving forward. Extending the school year would mean paying the teachers per diem. Is April break necessary? Is it best to keep the momentum? Better to pause and examine how we are doing? This would give staff a breather. Teachers have been working all along. They hit the ground running on March 16th. And they are juggling their own families as well. The flow of information is nonstop, and the entire staff has been nonstop for three weeks. Superintendents are wrestling with what to do? Are we coming back in May?

Mr. LaVeck noted that he had seen some social media posts that some teachers are not as engaged. I don't think people have seen behind the scenes. He thanked the staff and administration for the hard work that has been done. Dr. Burnham added that the teachers were given guidance to work together as a team/unit. Teachers are to be available to parents during school hours via email. Again, the teachers are learning new platforms, and not all are comfortable with the technology. This has forced us to think about teaching in a different way. This has changed the landscape. Even administration is learning/considering new things like DocuSign to improve efficiencies.

- Google Classroom is required.
- Google Meet can be added as people are comfortable - not required out of the gate. There are equity issues - not everyone might have access at the required time. Ms. Sroka asked if the closure continues, perhaps this will change? For some classes discussion is crucial. Dr. Burnham noted that administration will be added as a "teacher" to classrooms.

Ms. Sroka asked about kids with "perfect attendance." How will this be handled? Judged through March 13th?

7. **Public Comment-Open** - The committee heard from Dave Passios. Mr. Passios asked of Mr. Cassidy if the numbers discussed regarding the Grab and Go meals are within budget. Mr. Cassidy answered that waivers for lunches will offset costs. We are maintaining systems to track for reimbursement. Mr. Beardmore suggested a public/transparent ledger and anticipated reimbursement. Mr. Lehtinen noted that Senator Tran may be requesting a cancellation of MCAS. Dr. Burnham replied that there will be a waiver at the Federal level. But the state has not received anything yet. Dr. Burnham thanked everyone for their thoughtful discussion on this. Parents with questions should start by emailing teachers. Plans need to move forward to update the FAQ sheet (perhaps FAQ2). Ms. Sroka added that perhaps expectations and policies should be included.

8. **Adjournment** - Mr. Lehtinen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. LaVeck. All in agreement by roll call vote. Adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Somers
Recording Secretary