

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2020

171 Watson Road, Dover NH: Meeting will be conducted over Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89408180211?pwd=OW5QNmN6NDIVWnNUTmhhRTNjdU9MZz09>

Members Present:

Gretchen Carlson Parent Member, Chair
Briana Moynihan-Sienkiewicz Parent Member, Treasurer
Josh Roberge Parent Member, Vice Chair
Mary Dellea Teacher Member
Kasey Bilodeau Teacher Member
Dan Bromberg Parent Member
Chad Roberge Parent Member
Jessica Foster Parent Member, Secretary
Dennis McCann Community Member
Peter Sweet Community Member
Jessica Pine Head of School, Ex Officio
Meghan Samson Community Member
Theresa Lorvig Facilities Director

6:02 Call to Order

6:02 Receipt of Correspondence and Approval of Minutes

- October 1, minutes
 - Motion to Approve: Dan
 - Seconded by: Jess
 - Roll Call:
 - Gretchen Carlson: Yes
 - Briana Moynihan-Sienkiewicz: Yes
 - Josh Roberge: Yes
 - Mary Dellea: Yes
 - Kasey Bilodeau: Yes
 - Dan Bromberg: Yes
 - Chad Roberge: Yes
 - Jessica Foster: Yes
 - Dennis McCann: Yes
 - Peter Sweet: Yes
 - Meghan Samson: Yes

- Theresa Lorig: Yes
- November 2 minutes
 - Motion to Approve: Dan
 - Seconded by: Jess
 - Roll Call:
 - Gretchen Carlson: Yes
 - Briana Moynihan-Sienkiewicz: Yes
 - Josh Roberge: Yes
 - Mary Dellea: Yes
 - Kasey Bilodeau: Yes
 - Dan Bromberg: Abstained (not present for the full 11/2 meeting)
 - Chad Roberge: Yes
 - Jessica Foster: Yes
 - Dennis McCann: Yes
 - Peter Sweet: Yes
 - Meghan Samson: Yes
 - Theresa Lorig: Yes
- Jess Pine summary:
 - So far, the hybrid model is working well
 - No COVID cases to date
 - We are seeing some strain on staffing. 4-6 teachers out on any given day
 - Concerns about limitations that come with colder weather. E.g. Lack of outdoor classroom and eating space.
 - Reviewed current options on the table:
 - **Scenario 1-** Stay hybrid through December and reevaluate what we want to do mid-December for January/February months
 - **Scenario 2-** Stay hybrid through December and then remote for all grades first 2 weeks in January (through MLK holiday) goal would be to return to hybrid, if possible after that.
 - **Scenario 3-** Stay hybrid through December and then phase targeted learners (PreK, K, ½, targeted students) back into the building in January/February. Back to in-person after Feb vacation.
 - Eight families participated in the Q&A session.
 - Remote option will continue to be an option regardless of which model we go with
 - Hoping to be able to offer 4-days a week kindergarten.
 - Cases in NH are going up
 - With all of this in mind, Jess wants to pose a few items for discussion

- revisit the plan around Thanksgiving and whether we should have a two-week quarantine period after Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays
- Addition of teach workdays into the Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks

6:12 Public Comment

- Gretchen read 2 comments received
- Sarah Quigley email – supportive of continuing hybrid model.
 - Peter made motion to accept into minutes
 - Seconded by Josh
 - Roll Call:
 - Gretchen Carlson: Yes
 - Briana Moynihan-Sienkiewicz: Yes
 - Josh Roberge: Yes
 - Mary Della: Yes
 - Kasey Bilodeau: Yes
 - Dan Bromberg: Yes
 - Chad Roberge: Yes
 - Jessica Foster: Yes
 - Dennis McCann: Yes
 - Peter Sweet: Yes
 - Meghan Samson: Yes
 - Theresa Lorvig: Yes
- Comment from Patrick Moynihan – frustration with closing windows and why isn't air handler doing the work needed to keep windows closed
 - Jess Foster made motion to accept into minutes
 - Seconded by Kasey
 - All approved
- Gretchen opened the floor for public comment
 - Krysten Godfrey Maddox
 - Thrilled that SCS offered hybrid model.
 - Reaction to additional workdays. Any way to split them up among the cohorts.
 - Excited about possible 4-day week with Kindergarten. When would that start?
 - Jess Pine: depending on the model we choose, we may try to start that as soon as possible

- If we go remote for lower grades, will SCS maintain the model of having asynchronous, recorded lessons that give families more time and flexibility as opposed to being on zoom all day.
 - Jess Pine: we will try to do that as much as possible. We do not want to have the students on Zoom all day. Our preference is to have kids in person as much as possible and still be as safe as possible.

6:25 Trimester 2 School Plans

- Chad: related to Patrick Moynihan comment, wanted to verify that Theresa said that the air handler can handle the requirements for air quality while maintaining a sufficient temperature
 - Theresa confirmed that was true
- Josh: if we go remote for 2 weeks after Thanksgiving, then we are only back for a week before going back out for Christmas. Is having that week back with the possibility of having to go remote for that week anyway, going to create a situation that is difficult to plan for? Would it be easier to just make the call to go remote between Thanksgiving and MLK day?
 - Jess Pine: This scenario has been discussed. Trying to balance the need to check in with students versus having a simpler plan.
 - Kasey: Going remote is always a possibility and teachers are already having to prepare themselves to go remote at any time. If we are going to quarantine for one, it makes sense to quarantine after both.
- Peter: Need to consider impact on kids. Research showing negative impact of not being in school is having a real negative impact on social aspects and learning. Larger impact on lower grades.
- Chad: Are we having a mandatory quarantine b/c we are concerned about families not following protocols. Concern about trying to “parent” people.
 - Jess: A lot of things to consider. Not just about quarantining.
- Dennis: data now showing that smaller gatherings are fueling the current increase (not super-spreader events).
- Review of scenarios:
 - **Scenario 1: Go hybrid through December. Assess plan for January in early December**
 - Con: Not a lot of time between having to make decisions.
 - Most people would prefer to do more planning and decision making for a longer time frame.
 - Theresa: for all plans we need to be cognitive of the special needs of targeted students
 - **Scenario 2: Hybrid through December, then remote for all grades in the first 2 weeks of January and then Hybrid again.**
 - Jess: bigger concern now is teacher availability more than concerns over social distancing. Some of those schools with target learnings have had cases recently.
 - Dan: Why two weeks instead of one after Thanksgiving? Also, we need to discuss impact of weather on these plans.

- Jess Pine: Just trying to be extra careful with the increased cases and the increased need for people to quarantine.
 - Peter: should we move the teacher planning days to after those vacation weeks to coincide with time out needed after potential exposures. 2 days after thanksgiving would be for planning without remote learning/independent work.
 - Kasey: when this was discussed the concern was that people would stay longer on their travels
 - Dan we should avoid making decisions about assumptions about people's behavior and focus on data instead. If they go away, they should be following DHHS guidelines
 - Jess Foster: having to support kids being remote for voluntary quarantining in addition to remote and hybrid will be too much for teachers to handle.
 - Josh: are the additional planning days with kids out of school contradictory to the teachers desire to maximize in person time?
 - Mary: The planning days are really to prepare so that we can maximize that in person time.
- Jess: We do not have snow days to play around with b/c teachers said they would like to keep snow days for teachers and students.
- Theresa – effectively creating independent work for kids requires a lot of teacher time to do zoom or create videos to explain the assignment and get them prepared
- **Scenario 3: Hybrid through December then phase targeted learners back in Jan/Feb back to hybrid after Feb vacation**
- Kasey: can we just say remote for the foreseeable future but call it remote if we need to.
- Peter proposes Scenario 2 as written with the following changes
 - 2 days for planning on the 11/ 30th and the 12/1 instead of post-Thanksgiving quarantine
 - Hybrid for kids in lower grades and targeted learners in 3-8 remote until MLK
- Dan: need to be mindful of staff concern about having to accommodate eating indoors
- Theresa: most schools that have gone full in-person are recently having to close and are seeing clusters of cases.
- Theresa: regarding eating in the classroom, we are seeing the air handlers work but there are limitations. Eating in classrooms is a real safety concern especially with masks having to be off and the airborne nature of the illness.
- Brianna: boils down to the fact that the staff doesn't feel comfortable with kids eating in the classroom so we really need to decide when we need to close and when we need to open and then work around than regarding groups of younger kids and targeted learners.
- Jess: Ski program is being set up to create opportunities for social interactions (3rd grade and up)
 - 5 weeks of lessons/skiing at Gunstock
- Discussion of quarantine period:
 - Jess Foster: feel too messy to NOT quarantine for all after Christmas at least
 - Dennis: looking at data, more people will be traveling for Thanksgiving
 - Reopen for Public comment

- Jess read some parent comments
 - Parents
 - Dan asked Board Members not to add to chat
- Gretchen – likes quarantine after Christmas to give us an option to stagger returning
- Theresa – if staffing worked, could we propose to bring back targeted learners back a week early?
 - Jess: staffing would be the main concern with that approach
- Josh: how many kids are we talking about with targeted learners
 - Jess: depends on if we are including the younger grades. What about kids that have other reasons (other than IEPs) to be in school.
- Peter and Chad rescinded their motion
- **Brianna made motion on the revised Scenario 2**
 - **Hybrid except:**
 - **1 remote week with planning days after Thanksgiving**
 - **Back to hybrid for 2 weeks**
 - **Planning days, with Independent Work on 12/21, 12/22**
 - **2 weeks remote after Christmas with target to be back at MLK**
 - **Possibly bring back targeted learners a week early if staffing and other factors align for that**
 - **Meet in early January to discuss MLK day return and possible phase in**
 - Seconded by Chad
 - Roll Call:
 - Gretchen Carlson: Yes
 - Briana Moynihan-Sienkiewicz: Yes
 - Josh Roberge: Yes
 - Mary Dellea: Yes
 - Kasey Bilodeau: Yes
 - Dan Bromberg: Yes
 - Chad Roberge: Yes
 - Jessica Foster: Yes
 - Dennis McCann: Yes
 - Peter Sweet: Yes
 - Meghan Samson: Yes
 - Theresa Lorvig: Yes

- Finance report is similar to last month's
- Jessica comments about additional supplemental funds coming
- Jess would like the Board to vote on staff bonuses for holidays
- Josh Roberge: Motion to support Jess's recommendation for funding staff bonuses, not to exceed \$35,000 total
- Seconded by: Peter Sweet
- All members approved

8:28 Action Items and Next Meeting

- Tuesday, December 8th, 2020
- Thursday, January 7th, 2021

8:32 Adjournment

APPENDIX: Public Comment Submitted Prior to the Meeting

There were 2 comments submitted for public comment tonight. Please see below:

1. To whom it may Concern,

My children attend Seacoast Charter School and are currently doing the Hybrid model. I would like to see the hybrid model continue, if not expand. I understand the rise in COVID in Strafford County and what the potential implications for that are. I also see the decline in my children from being home. The lack of being around peers and social interaction is devastating to watch.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Quigley RN BSN DNS

2. (please note that names were removed from this email and replaced with 'classroom teacher')

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to express several thoughts and concerns that I have the second trimester of this school year.

First, to hear that teachers don't feel safe in the school with kids with the windows closed is frustrating to me. Why is there a concern with closing the windows? How many health care facilities have windows that have to stay open due to COVID? The whole reason to have an air handler and air filtration is it make the air cleaner then the air outside. If the air handler in not being used in the manner in which it was intended- then what was the point?

My concern comes for my son. (I have three children at SCS- A first grader, a fourth grader, and a seventh grader). He has an IEP, and went into this school year- a 4th grader- without a SPED teacher. We were concerned, but he was going to be going to school 4 days a week instead of 2 and the classroom teacher was going to try to fill in the gaps. I will say I have all the confidence in the world in the classroom teacher - she is a truly gifted educator. He is doing better in school then he ever has, and he has a thirst for knowledge that I did not know existed in him. He needs in person instruction- online learning is not a learning platform for him. I have concerns that if we go full remote- all the forward momentum he has experienced- all the confidence he has acquired- will regress. I can recall this past spring and sitting with him- trying desperately to help. I spend 2 days a week with my daughters doing remote learning and I struggle with knowing when to give them an answer and when to let them figure it out on their own. With my son that internal debate will be even more difficult, and it will not set him up for success. How long do I let him struggle, how much detriment is their to giving him the answers when he asks for help. I do not know the answers to that, and that question keeps me up at night.

I can't say that I am fully aware of SCS COVID operations but, I do know a significant amount about Newington Elementary Schools COVID operations. They are back 4 days a week in a smaller building with a similar number of kids in the school at one time with SCS hybrid model. They eat lunch in their classroom and they have not had any issue or concerns. They also do not have a lot of windows that open, but it hasn't seemed to slow them down at all. I can gladly get you more information of what they are doing from the principal if you would like. I do understand that they are 2 different building, but I have a lot of experience with both of them. I can speak to the interior layout and dimensions of the classrooms of SCS better than most since I renovated and built most of them. I spent countless hours working in the building prior to the school opening on Watson Road to ensure it met fire code and the teachers had the space that they needed. With the current school enrollment and numbers in the building at one time I do not understand how interior social distancing is an issue.

I will also say that the communication coming from the school and the board on plans moving forward does not seem transparent. I know there is some different interpretations as to whether a "Task Force" meeting needs to be posted and public or not, but what is the reason to keep it private? The more open and transparent, the less likely it is for something to be misinterpreted. Why are the board meeting not recorded and placed on the website? This school year is no doubt- the most unique any of us has experience. While I understand the value in unilateral decisions within your team- there should be opportunities for others to contribute.

Thank you for your time.

Patrick Moynihan