

ROCKPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

Wednesday May 6, 2020

Via Zoom

Chairperson Michael Kelley called the regular meeting of the Rockport School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Present were Nicole Altieri, Colleen Coogan, Richard Drost, Michael Kelley, and Cathy Reilly. Also, present were Superintendent Robert Liebow and Recording Secretary Ingrid Keating.

I. Opening of Regular Meeting

To the Teachers of the Rockport Public Schools,

The Rockport School Committee would like to take a moment during this Teacher Appreciation Week to to sincerely express our appreciation and thanks to our teachers for all that you do this week and every week. The individual care and attention that the teachers in our schools give to support the development of the whole child is a large part of what makes our school system so special.

It has been an unusually challenging year for the children in our school district, made easier by the dedication, flexibility and creativity you have shown in this “new normal”. Your professionalism and collaboration in supporting our students, all while dealing with the challenges of this situation in your own lives and families, is admirable and much appreciated by not only the committee but by students, parents and our community.

Whether it is a Zoom meeting with kindergarteners, an art project or obstacle course with third graders, an online orchestra class with middle schoolers or engaging seniors in academics while supporting them through a time of grieving milestones lost, we value all the ways that you give our students support in continuing to grow, security in an uncertain time and a reason to show up to virtual class every morning with excitement, interest and hope.

Although this is Teacher Appreciation week, the School Committee would also like to take a moment to thank the support staff and administration. They are an integral part of the team providing the support and infrastructure that allows teachers to focus on what is so important.

A simple “thank you” is not enough to acknowledge all that you do, but in this time of social distancing, know that we are truly grateful to all of you for the pivotal role you play in our children’s lives and in our community. We are lucky to have you.

Sincerely,

The Rockport School Committee

Michael Kelley

Nicole Altieri

Colleen Coogan

Cathy Reilly

Rick Drost

A. Approval of Minutes N/A

B. Personnel Actions N/A

II. Community Participation

A. Student Advisory Representative

Student Advisory Representative Nathaniel Kirby provided suggestions for virtual class structure. The students would like classes to meet at least once a week via Zoom and recorded and posted for students who could not attend. Access to materials should be provided through video, articles, and readings and should allow for multiple options to practice and demonstrate understanding through a wide range of options for their work. They think Google Classroom is the best tool for posting resources and assignments. Students would also like to see enrichment opportunities offered during lunches or after school hours, focusing on interests of teachers and staff outside of the traditional academic disciplines. The representatives would also

like time to review the policies that are currently being reviewed and/or revised. They presented one of the videos that the band class has produced.

B. Public Participation

Elizabeth Malcomson asked if the teachers would put out at the beginning of the week what the lessons are actually going to be taught, along with assignments, so that the parents/guardians know what the expectations are for the coming week.

Sarah Wilkinson stated that the middle school schedule and settling in has gone very well. We on a great roll with the teachers setting the expectations for the week and is going super smooth now that we're in the rhythm. Spring break went well too, having a fresh start since the teachers have already started to introduce new material. She said it's a huge win for us that the teachers were on it switching gears so quickly and thanked everybody to make that happen.

III. Discussion and Recommended Action

A. Update on remote learning and communications with families

Mr. Liebow stated he is so proud working with everyone and how they pulled it all together. The closure is having an effect on families and we need to be careful with our safety nets and not just focus on certain groups.

Director of I.S. & Technologies Monty Hitschler reported that the department continues to deliver Chromebook as needed, is looking into the cost of providing 1 on 1 Chromebook next year and they have provided hotspots to families that needed them. Aspen is moving forward and should be going live around July 20.

IT Support Technician/Technology Integration Specialist Mike Montgomery reported that everything is going smoothly and Aspen is moving forward little by little every day.

Elementary Principal Todd Simendinger reported Heather Castonguay and the curriculum team have implemented the Power Standards. He is working toward a 5th grade recognition, Tina Lamond is painting a shoe for 5th grade students to sign and they are working with the town and police chief to organize some kind of car parade. The next big step is to look at placement for next year and working with the possible restrictions that may be in place from the DESE.

Assistant Principal/Curriculum Coordinator Heather Castonguay wanted to thank the curriculum team, Julie Raftelis, Robyn Tibert, Stacey Twombly and Jodi Goodhue for working around the clock to implement the online learning and mapping out the remainder of the year for teachers.

Middle School Principal Amanda LaMantia will pass feedback, from Mrs. Wilkinson and Mrs. Malcomson, along to teachers. Everybody's wish is to be back in the school. Overall everything is going well, has received feedback from the teacher survey and will incorporate their suggestions into the plan for a return in the fall, an additional Spanish option for 7th grade has been added.

High School Principal Amy Rose reported that faculty has been discussing the difficulties of planning a week in advance since teachers teach multiple levels and there aren't any specific teams by grade level. We're trying to get teachers to send out an email a week ahead to frame the week and use Midas to document what work is complete or incomplete. Some students are looking for rigor to prepare them to move on to the next grade level, but there are other students who are struggling to keep up and function with the new form of learning. Counseling staff along with Dean Luster have been doing an amazing job keeping in touch with the teachers weekly, honing in on the students who are at risk. The parent survey proved that there are so many different needs for families and students. Mrs. Rose has built the schedule for next year and counseling staff will start to work with schedule transitions meetings and begin streamlining assessments and curriculum knowing that there will be readjustments to catch kids up. They made the AP exams optional since it wasn't fair to make the student pay for the exams that were significantly changed. Mrs. Rose is still waiting to receive guidance at the state and local level regarding plans for graduation.

Director of Student Services Martha reported that they will move into a new phase with remote learning plans for individual students beginning next week and will revisit on a three week cycle. The faculty and the department have done an amazing job pulling those together in a wonderful and collaborative way. Director Wright is moving forward with remote services, for approximately 50 students, this summer. If she can provide some services on site she will make arrangements to do that safely. US Secretary of Education Beth DeVos sent a letter to congress to endorse not relaxing any of the IDEA. Director Wright had been hoping for some latitude, she and her staff will move forward as best they can. She acknowledged the work that Financial Assistant June Sanfilippo and Administrative Assistant Cheryl Keating have done to reduce contracts with out of district transportation companies including one company giving back 100% of the remainder of the year costs.

Rockport Teachers Association President (RTA) Whitney Day reported that things are going pretty smoothly and the staff feels supported by the administration and is getting the answers they need moving forward with remote learning and implementing the new standards.

RTA Negotiator Jodi Goodhue thanked the student representatives for taking the time to read the guidelines and come up with some recommendation. Ms. Goodhue wanted to assure them that in terms of the guidance recommendations have been put in place, and with the increased social/emotional needs of the students and a significant increase in executive functioning the teachers need some autonomy with how they run Zoom meetings to meet those needs.

B. FY21 Math Curriculum Proposal

PreK-12 Math Specialist Jodi Goodhue reported that the program review with DESE and the DM Group came to a halt, but came up with a goal that students should demonstrate proficiency in grade level mathematics as evidence by 75% of the students attaining a compost average of 75% or above in all our bench mark testing. They have decided to continue with Envisions 2015 (at a 33% discount) since they are unable to complete the review, research new products, have no way to introduce new products and teachers will have to incorporate two grade levels, of learning, into one in the next school year. They will start the program review process again next year.

C. EL/MS Joint Science Curriculum Review

Mr. Liebow stated that the elementary school science review will happen sometime next year. Elementary Principal Simendinger reported that a lot of curriculum alignment had been done preparing for the review so he feels a lot of work has already been done.

Middle School Principal Amanda LaMantia reported that the Science Curriculum Review for the middle school went well. Mrs. LaMantia stated that the science department continues curriculum writing, monthly department time, MCAS analysis and participates in professional development. Consultant Sandra Locke was impressed with the middle school science program after her review of the units. Ms. Locke did not feel it necessary to come in again but would connect with teachers and share ideas. Her conclusions are that the units are in great shape, curriculum writing and delivery are strong, well aligned with state standards and that units focused on what the students will learn. Next potential steps would continue to review data and refine as needed, and utilize Ms. Locke if teachers are interested.

D. Out of District Cost Review

Superintendent Liebow gave Financial Assistant June Sanfilippo for reaching out the transportation companies and negotiating reductions in contract for the remainder of the year. Mrs. Sanfilippo presented and explained the spreadsheet of the savings, which could total close to \$60,000.

E. RTA MOA's

Motion: Nicole Altieri motioned to approve the RTA MOA regarding extending the reduction in force notice to teachers to June 15, 2020, valid for just the 2019-2020 school year.

Seconded: Colleen Coogan seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

F. School Committee Self Evaluation

Nicole Altieri presented and explained the self-evaluation. Generally everyone feels things are moving along smoothly and she will write up some of the areas of focus to be considered in their next creation of goals.

G. Policy revise/review

First reading for revision: File JB: Equal Educational Opportunities

First reading for revision: File JEB: Entrance Age

First reading for revision: File JF: School Admissions

First reading for revision: File JH: Student Absences and Excuses

First reading for revision: File JHD: Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance

Second reading for revision: File ID: School Day

Second Reading for adoption: File IE Organization of Instruction

Second Reading for revision: File IGA: Curriculum Development

Second Reading for revision: File IGB: Support Services Programs

Second Reading for revision: File IGD: Curriculum Adoption

Second Reading for revision: File IHAM: Health Education

Second Reading for revision: File IHB: Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations (Programs for Children with Special Needs)

Second Reading for revision: File IHBEA: English Language Learners

Motion: Colleen Coogan motioned to approve the revisions to File BEDH Public Participation at School Committee Meetings and File IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar as presented and the removal of File IHA Basic Instructional Program, File JLA Student Insurance Program, File JLD Guidance Program and File JP: Student Gifts and Solicitations

Seconded: Cathy Reilly seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

H. Warrants and Payroll

IV. Information and proposals

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| A. School Council Update | N/A |
| B. Donations | N/A |
| C. Updates | N/A |
| D. Other Business | N/A |

V. Correspondence

VI. Future Agenda Items

- A. Technology FY21 (5/20)
- B. School Improvement Plans (6/17)
- C. School Handbooks (6/17)
- D. School Start Times Recommendation (TBD)
- E. Superintendent's Report/FundFlow

VII. Calendar

- A. May 20, 2020, Regular Meeting
- B. June 3, 2020, Regular Meeting
- C. June 17, 2020, Regular Meeting
- D. TBD, Town Meet

. Executive Session

Motion: At 10:38pm Cathy Reilly motioned to adjourn the regular meeting.
Seconded: Richard Drost seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Liebow
Superintendent of Schools