

Education Committee Minutes

Tuesday, September 1, 2020, 6:30 PM

Virtual/In person Meeting

Members Present: Ken Sands, Mark Guzzi, Robin McNeil, Ryan Parker, Chad Stratton, Leland Youngberg, Jenny Watson

Members Excused: St. Albans Vacancy

Members Absent:

Others Present: Lori Merrow, Laura Donahue, Ken Keliher, Maxine Pare, Mike Hammer, Scott Finemore, Angela Brown, Melony Fitts

I. Public Comment - None

- II. Special Education and Covid-19** - Liz Mares presented the current planning for special education in the district under the Covid-19 guidelines. She presented the percentage of students who are choosing to go remote which is approximately 20%. She mentioned IEP meetings are still being held remotely, and that Child Find will continue with any necessary individual cognitive or achievement testing administered in person following social distancing and health and safety guidelines. She described what special education programming will look like for both in school and remote students, and how they will be assessed to determine new benchmarks in comparison with where they were when we stopped in school programming back in mid March, and that those students with significant regression may need extra programming to regain lost skills. Liz also described extra safety precautions that will be taken to reduce risk from COVID 19 exposure to staff during responses to students experiencing behavioral escalations. She mentioned the new recommendation from the Department of Education to create Individual Remote Learning Plans for students, which document what the remote students will receive, as this will differ from their IEP, which represents what a student will receive if it were normal, in person programming. This is recommended to enhance transparency and communication between the school and parents, but also is time consuming and increases paperwork on top of the usual IEP related paperwork.

We have hired a full time behavior specialist with an extensive background in supporting students with behavior challenges. Her name is Kate Maccarone and she is joining us from Florida.

- III. Update on Plan for 2020-21 School Year** - Mike presented an update on current activities surrounding the plan for return to school. We continue to receive updated information from the DOE, specifically a Standard Operating Procedure which Mike will share with the full board. Teachers are busy planning remote and in person instructional materials. It was noted by Mark Guzzi that it will be a lot of work to teach in person and take care of the remote learners. Angela and Laura gave some details on how the remote instruction planning is being delivered by multiple teachers at a grade level to balance some of the load while having one teacher to support each student. At the high school Mary is balancing more synchronous learning within each content. We will continue to enrich our remote learning over the remaining professional development days and provide more detail on what will be happening on Wednesdays for our learners.

Extra curricular activities and fall sports were discussed in light of the letter from DHHS and the Department of Education to the Maine Principals Association. We will convene the ad hoc extracurricular committee to discuss this in the near future.

- IV. Future Agenda Items** - Assessment of outdoor learning opportunities in the system, how the performing arts are supporting students under the Covid-19 guidelines

- V.** The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Hammer, Superintendent