

Hermon School Committee
 Agenda – Regular Meeting
 Monday, August 17, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.
 Hermon High School Room 167

Providing Leadership to Enhance the Aspirations of our Children

**** Due to Governor Mills' declaration of emergency, this meeting will be closed to public attendance. The public may join the meeting virtually by using the following link:**

meet.google.com/jja-eaqq-ava

Present

Debora Farnham, Vice Chair
 Deborah Langille
 Kristen Shorey
 Debbie CoWallis

Attending Virtually

Ted Harris, Chair
 Scott Hatch

Staff (attending virtually and in person): Cindy Badger, Adam Baker, Stephanie Biberstein, Stephanie Campbell, Jim Chasse, Melissa Davis, Heather Fidler, Kathryn Goodman, Erica Hake, Jesse Hargrove, Heather Haskell, Tiffany Howard, Deanna Leach, Heather McFarlin, Matthew Murray, Jenny Perry, Sue Shapiro, Leslie Smith, Krystal Tracy, Brian Walsh, Jeff Wheeler and Jody White.

Guests: Lisa Chichetto, Alan Darrah, Madison Despault, Brittany Duell, and Cindy Pellet

Item I: Mr. Harris, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Item II: Agenda Adjustments: None

Item III: Proclamations and Presentation

A. Public Comments: None

B. Proclamations

Superintendent Chasse recognized Valley Satellite for a donation of a heat pump to the PADS staff room.

Item IV: Personnel

A. Superintendent Chasse announced the resignations of:

- Adam Gray, HMS Physical Education Teacher
- Malick Kone, HHS Ed Tech III, 1:1 Resource Room

B. Transfer

- Courtney Williams, PADS Grade 2 Teacher to Pre-K Teacher

C. Employment

Mr. Harris moved, seconded by Ms. Langille, to approve the superintendent's recommendation for the employment of Geary Wheeler Student Information System Data Manager Technology Specialist.

Unanimous (6)

Mr. Harris moved, seconded by Ms. Langille, to approve the superintendent's recommendation for the employment of new employee Brittany Duell at HHS, Guidance Secretary/Registrar.

Unanimous (6)

Mr. Harris moved, seconded by Ms. Langille, to approve the superintendent's recommendation for the employment of new employee Lisa Chichetto at PADS, Grade 2 Teacher.

Unanimous (5)

Item VI: Old Business

A. Excused Absence of School Committee Member/s: None

B. Update on School Reopening

Superintendent Chasse mentioned that last week there had been a question and answer session for parents after reviewing the plans with around 160 logged in which was recorded. There have been some adjustments along the way after learning what some of the challenges are for families and students. There is an emphasis on getting K-2 back daily in some fashion. We will have an ad hoc committee to look at that as we progress. The COVID Staff Manual was released as a draft. There were admin team meetings at 9:00 am every day last week to iron out the details from transportation, facilities, changes to the handbook, and planning for inservice time. There is still a lot of work from training substitutes to "what if this". Our nurses have been an outstanding resource to both the school principals and to Superintendent Chasse. Somewhat concerning is the trend across the State for increased homeschool. He has discovered through his PENQUIS Superintendents meeting that it is happening everywhere. There is also a day care challenge in the community. How do we ramp up to add Mondays and how do we put an emphasis on K to 2? We would like to reach out with a remote group with the home school. If any staff have any health issues, they've been asked to notify their immediate supervisor. The law would allow for telework and those employees could work with students that are remote only. He would like to reach out to first time homeschool registrants and see if we can help, and make an alignment with the school and their decisions. He has also sent a request to the State for clarification on the impact of subsidy, given it is a Statewide trend. He would like to bring the larger group together again and look at any gaps in the plan. It was amazingly positive feedback from the question and answer time. He is excited to have student representatives. He did talk with Mackenzie Stepp, who is not here tonight, for the student perspective. Some kids are playing travel sports.

Mr. Harris inquired about student schedules. Superintendent Chasse stated he knew that the elementary schedules had gone out the day before. Mr. Walsh stated that their mailer was ready to go out the next day. The information is posted on the website and social media, too. Students will not get their updated schedule until home room on the first day of school. Mr. Grant stated that their schedule is not up in PowerSchool yet, but he has done it by hand in an Excel spreadsheet. The actual master teacher schedule in PowerSchool is being built. Mr. Grant's Excel sheets will be posted in the building later in the week for parents and/ or students who would like to come in to see it. The spreadsheet is not in a format to mail out individually to each student. Superintendent

Chasse stated he could send out a global message and mention the challenge of regarding the schedule at the middle school.

Mrs. Farnham asked if registrations were about the same. Mr. Walsh replied that he had only one additional home school than a normal year. He had not seen the same number of people registering at this time, but he does know that the number of tuition students is down from what was predicted. Mr. Grant mentioned that his home school numbers are up from normal, but he did register two students on this day. He said they are going to be in the low 330 range, which is up a little from June. Mrs. Perry stated that at the elementary school, they have seen an increase in the number of students registering for homeschooling, and they have a handful of students that require remote learning. As of Friday, August 14th, they had 15 new home school registrations, and others that have told her verbally that is their plan. She did send out a survey to parents, but they only received about $\frac{2}{3}$ of a response to that. She feels like they have a grasp on their numbers, but she does not really know for sure, and doesn't feel they will until probably the second week of school.

Mrs. Farnham also asked about any staff concerns about being in a classroom. Superintendent Chasse stated we had a good idea of how many that would be. She also inquired about transportation routes. Superintendent Chasse stated that is something that still needs to be worked out.

Mrs. Shorey inquired as to whether we were down bus drivers. Superintendent Chasse stated that we are down a driver. We do have someone that can fill in, but it is temporary. In general, we are down drivers and that cadre may not be still driving in 10 years, so we are in need of recruitment. Ms. Langille mentioned that there is a banner by Cyr bus advertising for bus drivers.

Item VII: New Business

A. Student Representative 2020-21

Ms. Langille moved, seconded my Mr. Harris, to approve the recommendation of Madison Despault as Student Representative to the Hermon School Committee

Unanimous (6)

B. Mr. Harris moved, seconded by Mrs. Farnham, to accept the superintendent's recommendation to use CRF (COVID RELIEF FUNDS) to purchase technology for the school system allowing HHS to become 1:1 for remote and hybrid learning, and the Patricia A Duran School 1:1 in grades 3 and 4 for remote and hybrid learning and 2 sets of 20 iPads for each grade K, 1 for remote and hybrid learning.

Unanimous (5)

Mrs. Farnham asked what is the plan if someone tests positive for COVID. What happens to the classroom, what happens to all of the classrooms, the teachers and staff that person has touched? She feels we are at great risk waiting for the State or CDC guidance and feels we should have a plan in place. Tiffany Howard, HMS/HHS school nurse, stated that Dr. Shah, from the Maine CDC just answered this question but very vaguely. She does not feel that they have a solid plan that they can put in black and white right now because it largely depends on the CDC's contact tracing. It would depend on the number of students in the classroom wearing face shields due to medical necessity, how many had masks on, were they all spaced apart, all of this plays into that decision. Mrs. Howard stated that ideally there will not be students in school with face shields. The CDC states they must have a medical note to wear

one, and doctors around the state are not just handing out notes for those. There are some good sheets out there that have been shared for following up with symptoms.

Mrs. Shorey disagreed with that, because if students are deaf or hard of hearing, everyone in the classroom should be wearing a see through mask or that student will not have access to their peers or teacher if they are wearing regular masks. That will be written into IEP's as an accommodation. She also asked about the Northern Lights App, and how does the information get to the nurses for contact tracing? Mrs. Howard stated that the app was a screening tool for parents to use, but that the information entered into the app does not go to the school nurses.

Mr. Harris asked if there was a contract for parents to sign to commit to report if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID? Superintendent Chasse believes that is in the handbook. Superintendent Chasse is concerned about the lag time about finding out that someone has tested positive and what is the responsibility to inform the public about who, what, why, and when. We will notify the CDC, but if we don't have an answer by the next day, we will have a snow day. Mrs. Howard stated that if and when we have a positive case, the CDC will completely guide us on what steps to take, and how quickly to take them based on their part of contract tracing.

Mrs. Farnham still feels that there should be a specific plan in place for what happens when.

Mrs. Shorey stated that she was happy that the special education piece was put into the reopening plan document, but she does think it is vague. She hopes the parents can get the information and support they need individually.

A parent question from the online chat asked how parents would be notified that students have to now wear a mask, and not a face shield, as the reopening plan stated either/or. Mr. Harris asked Mr. Chasse to make sure that it is stated somewhere that a mask must be worn unless you have a medical necessity note or an IEP accommodation to wear a face shield.

Ms. Langille and Mr. Harris gave their thanks to superintendent Chasse, to all the administration and all staff for the immense amount of work to re-open. Mr. Harris asked for an update on sports. Superintendent Chasse stated that there was not an update, but that there had been a significant meeting earlier that afternoon trying to figure that component out. Mr. Harris also asked for a follow-up to solar, a follow-up to the track committee and a follow-up on the budget on the next agenda.

Mr. Harris made a motion, seconded by Ms. Langille, to give Superintendent Chasse the ability to offer a job to a potential candidate between now and our next school committee meeting so that we do not lose the opportunity to hire someone.

Mrs. Farnham stated that the school committee had the legal responsibility to hire and issue contracts. It was stated that voting could not be done via text or email, as was suggested as an option. Mr. Harris mentioned that they could have a Zoom meeting. Mr. Harris asked that Superintendent Chasse follow up with the lawyers to see what is and what isn't black and white.

Mr. Harris made a motion and Ms. Langille seconded, to not have his previous motion.

Item X: Adjournment

Mr. Harris moved, seconded by Ms. Langille, to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Unanimous (6)

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Chasse
Superintendent of Schools

** This is an opportunity for members of the public to comment on agenda items, contribute information that may be of interest to the School Committee or ask clarifying questions. Please wait to be recognized and identify yourself before speaking. This is not the time to register complaints or promote a personal agenda. Please remember that you may **not** identify any person by name or job function.*