

**Special Somers Board of Education Meeting
Teleconferencing on Zoom
July 23, 2020
7:00 PM**

Video of this meeting may be accessed at:
www.somers.k12.ct.us

Attendance Taken at 7:00 PM:

Present Board Members: Bruce Devlin, David Palmer, Jan Martin, Anne Kirkpatrick, Sarah Bollinger, Jeremy Anderson, Marissa Marks, Kate McLellan, Krista Cherry

Others: Brian Czapla, Bill Boutwell, Margot Martello, Dr. Denise Messina, Michael McDonnell, Gary Cotzin, Cheryl Gustafson, Dina Senecal, Lynda Thornton, mm75951, Robert's iPhone

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Special Board of Education Meeting via teleconferencing on Zoom was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 7:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. Draft Minutes of Special Board of Education Meeting on July 9, 2020

Rationale: The Board is to review and approve the July 9, 2020 Draft minutes of Special Board of Education Meeting.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the Draft Minutes of the Special BOE Meeting on July 9, 2020 passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

3. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

4.1. Warrant of July 20, 2020

Rationale: The Board will consent to the warrant of July 20, 2020 in the amount of \$264,805.63.

4.2. Warrant of July 27, 2020

Rationale: The Board will review and consent to the July 27, 2020 warrant in the amount of \$403,075.30.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Somers Policy DBS 9321.1 - ByLaws of the Board

Rationale: The Board will review and approve DBS 9321.1 Somers Policy ByLaws of the Board.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve Somers Policy DBS 9321.1 - Bylaws of the Board as presented passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays - 1 Abstained (Jeremy Anderson)**

5.2. Somers Policy DBS 2210.2 - Pandemic Operations

Rationale: The Board will review and approve Somers Policy DBS 2210.2 – Pandemic Operations.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve Somers Policy DBS 2210.2 – Pandemic Operations as presented passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays - 1 Abstained (Jeremy Anderson)**

6. OLD BUSINESS

7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

7.1. Re-Opening Plan of Somers Public Schools

Rationale: The Superintendent is presenting the Re-Opening Plan for Somers Public Schools.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla presented the re-opening plan of Somers Public Schools to the BOE. The current plan is to re-open schools this fall. This was a plan that was put forth to include the requirements and recommendations from the Commissioner of Education. SPS has done a very good job of meeting all requirements and guidelines. The components of the re-opening plan include reopening models, operations plan, health practices and protocols to follow, containment plan, cancellation of classes, maintaining family and student engagement, career and technical education, and protocols for staffing and personnel. Protocols for electives need to be made.

There are three learning plan models: On-Campus, Blended, and Remote. These may shift at any time. Currently, SPS is to go forward with the On-Campus plan. There will be more guidance from the CDC and State Department. Students starting off in a remote learning program may choose to attend school at any time and vice versa.

1. **On-Campus Plan:** This plan is classified as a low-transmission risk. SPS will operate near 100% capacity. There will be staffing and programming adjustments in order to reduce class sizes and promote social distancing. Buses will be running at near capacity. There are a significant number of people choosing not to utilize buses according to a recent survey. This may cause a traffic log jam on campus. SPS must provide a parallel program for students who may temporarily choose not

to come on campus. There are a couple of models and scenarios in play. Superintendent Czaplá is in conversation with SEA to decide what is best for students and staff. After-school clubs/activities may be canceled.

2. **Blended:** This plan is classified as a moderate-transmission risk. SPS will operate near 50% capacity. Students will be organized into cohorts based on last names. Cohort A will consist of students with the last names A-J. Cohort B will consist of students with the last names K-Z. There will be alternating days of on-campus and remote learning. Buses will run at reduced capacity. After-school clubs/activities may be canceled.
3. **Remote:** This plan is classified as a high-transmission risk. All schools will close. Students will engage in remote learning that will look similar but different from last year. Remote learning will be highly structured as compared to the previous school year. One may anticipate that all after-school activities/athletics will be canceled unless they can be done remotely.

Expectations of staff/students include:

- If ill, stay home
- Morning health check--if positive for any symptoms, stay home
- Implementing enhanced facilities sanitizing
- Enforcing strict hygiene protocols (cough/sneeze etiquette, hand washing, etc.)
- Social distancing
- Masks--required of all staff and students within schools. Superintendent Czaplá is requesting parents to provide masks to wear to school and for students to bring a back-up mask. There will be some exceptions to the mask rule with a documented medical reason. Students who do not wear a mask will be removed and placed in remote learning (this is not considered a suspension).

All facilities will be clearing out supplies, books, etc. in order to maximize space to support social distancing. Desks will face in one direction. All classrooms will have PPE and sanitizing supplies. SPS is repurposing space and will utilize larger spaces for classes (i.e. music rooms, gyms, cafeterias when lunch is not occurring). There will be 14 event tents dispersed at all schools to be used for classes and lunch. There will be directional hallway foot traffic with tape in the middle of the hallways and some one-way hallway foot traffic signage. Students will be required to carry their backpacks due to suspension of locker use.

There will be indefinite suspension of community use among facilities in order to keep buildings sanitized.

Containment plans involve protocols revolving around close contact, positive diagnosis of Covid-19 without symptoms, presentation of symptoms, and confirmed cases that have entered the school.

The main goal of staff and program changes is to reduce class size to increase social distancing:

- **SES:** The school will be reallocating staff to lower class sizes. There will be no band/chorus ensembles or lessons. There will be a re-visioning of physical education and art classes (i.e. yoga instead of basketball, individual art supplies). Teaching staff and support staff will continue and enhance social/emotional programming.
- **MBA:** Band will become a general music class. Technical education will transition to more computer-based learning. Science labs may be done virtually or demonstrated by the teacher. There will be a re-visioning of physical education and art classes.
- **SHS:** The school will be reallocating staff to lower class sizes by eliminating lower enrollment courses and assigning those teachers to core academic classes. Some of the AP courses will be online. Seniors who have met all credits and requirements early may be eligible for early graduation. There will be a reduction of credit requirements for one year only. All students with first period or last period study halls may be permitted to arrive late or be dismissed early. There will be a re-visioning of physical education, art classes, and music because those classes require close collaboration with teams/partners. Social/emotional programming will continue throughout the year with enhanced focus at the beginning of the school year.

Transportation: Buses will be running near full capacity. There is a sanitizing program on buses. There can be expected a significant increase in car traffic at SES.

Meals: There will be pre-made lunches in bags which will be delivered to various assigned student spots. Free and reduced lunches will continue to be supported.

There may be heat cancellations at the start of the school year. Masks can be dangerous in hot weather. SES will stagger the first week of school potentially based on last names. Melissa Mucci, SES Principal, is working on a plan.

Superintendent Czapla reviewed Personnel Leave Provisions including the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA), the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA), and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Superintendent Czapla discussed financial expenses. The budget was frozen on 7/2/2020 except for those items that are essential. SPS has already spent \$126,000 for this school year. TBD costs include staffing (substitute teachers and

teachers who have to take leave), technology programming and finalizing the methodology for remote learning, custodial staff, additional PPE, lunch expenses, Special Education, and legal impacts. Superintendent Czapla reported on funding sources including the CARES Act (\$39,000), CIP Discretionary (access to \$25,000 for some improvements), CIP Projects, State of CT, and FEMA (application in process). Funding offsets may include programming delays, resources and supplies (i.e. slating textbooks for the future), and furloughs depending on the learning plan (On-Campus, Blended, or Remote).

Questions and discussions ensued following Superintendent Czapla's presentation. BOE members stated that the Re-Opening Plan was well thought out and very comprehensive. Superintendent Czapla stated that he is very proud of the Response Team and expressed his gratitude for the members who generated a well-written and comprehensive Re-Opening Plan.

Motion Passed: Motion to endorse the Re-Opening Plan of Somers Public Schools as presented and including any outcome of discussions passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1. CURRICULUM

Discussion: Kate McLellan reported that the committee met with Dina Senecal, Director of Curriculum, regarding diversity. SES is going to start a Teacher Book Club. Professional Development has been added for staff, and a website will be developed within the district. Superintendent Czapla will be meeting with a local group who has had concerns over cultural acceptance. He would like to develop a partnership with them and educate them as to some of the things that the school system has been doing with diversity. Jan Martin reported that Mrs. Senecal shared a couple of important articles that she will use with teachers.

8.2. POLICY

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick reported that the committee met on Tuesday evening, 7/21/20 regarding the policies that were presented on the BOE agenda this evening. The committee is currently on hold but is available if Superintendent Czapla needs to add policies.

8.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

Discussion: David Palmer reported that there have been conversations with Attorney Cannon regarding certain bargaining units. The committee is currently on standby but may be asked to convene.

8.4. PLANNING

Discussion: No report.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the Special BOE meeting at 8:20 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by David Palmer. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

Chairperson

Superintendent