

GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – February 8, 2021
Zoom Meeting (due to COVID-19 pandemic)

Members present on Zoom: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson; Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson; Rachel Cormier, Secretary; James Abare, Anne Hurst, John LaFreniere, and Robert Swartz

School Personnel present on Zoom: Dr. Mark J. Pellegrino, Superintendent
Ms. Brenda Smith, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Mgr.
Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel
Ms. April Yu, Business Manager
Mrs. Rebecca McCaffrey, Gardner School Nurse Leader

Call to Order

Mayor Nicholson called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8, Gardner Educational Television station, Gardner YouTube, and recorded by Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary.

Mayor Nicholson announced that this public meeting is being conducted “virtually” pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Gardner School Committee is being conducted via remote participation. All votes taken at this meeting will be by roll call.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Nicholson asked if Item #3242 GHS/Galt Program of Studies could be taken out of order. School Committee members agreed.

Item #3242 – 2021-2022 GHS/Galt Program of Studies

Ms. Paula Bolger, Principal, Gardner High School, presented the 2021-2022 Program of Studies for GHS and for GALT. This was for information and the School Committee will vote on the Program of Studies at the March School Committee meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Swartz moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- **Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 5, 2021 as recommended by the School Committee Chairperson.**
- **Approval of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
 - **Warrant #21-28 dated 01/07/21 in the amount of \$357,182.56**
 - **Warrant #21-29 dated 01/14/21 in the amount of \$124,561.77**
 - **Warrant #21-30 dated 01/21/21 in the amount of \$55,731.31**
 - **Warrant #21-31 dated 01/28/21 in the amount of \$1,098,092.60**
- **Donation of \$125 for the Gardner High Food Pantry from Mary A. Delaney, 127 Temple Street, Gardner.**

Seconded by Mr. Abare.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

COVID-19 Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Mrs. Pelavin, Chairperson, said that the Covid-19 Ad Hoc Subcommittee met on January 25, 2019. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

Mrs. McCaffrey, Nurse Leader, presented the graphs/charts she has developed and they were reviewed. She reported that the numbers from the outbreak at the prison have been pulled out of the total previously reported and community cases are now back down to what they were in December. She provided the number of staff members testing positive, the number quarantining and those symptomatic at this point. She provided similar information for the students. Based on the numbers and the community cases numbers being lower, a transition back to hybrid in person learning could be made. She regularly speaks with the Board of Health member and Dr. Sweeney regarding the community numbers.

Vaccinations were discussed regarding timing and planning to make the process easier for teachers and staff. Teachers are included in Phase 2 which was scheduled to begin on February 1, 2021.

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Swartz, Chairperson, said that the Subcommittee met on January 19, 2021. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

Mr. Anderson, Facilities Director, and Ms. Yu, Business Administrator, gave an update on Moura's Cleaning Services. In December, the GHS small gym heating coil broke down and Moura's staff was called into help with cleaning up.

The Facilities team members have been working on the Elm Street School Special ED projects to meet DESE's standards. The project will provide separate private and secure areas for Special Needs students.

Mr. Anderson presented pictures on the progress of the project and also pictures of the Central Office project at the Helen Mae Sauter building. This project is on hold pending a building permit from the City Building Commissioner.

The Rockwell Foundation has given GHS a grant of \$100K for renovation of the auditorium – seats and carpets will be replaced. The total estimated cost will \$185K so the District will need to provide extra funding.

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, said that the Subcommittee met on January 11, 2021 and February 1, 2021. Minutes of the meetings were presented.

At the January 11 meeting the Subcommittee reviewed the Finance packet for December 2020. Questions were asked regarding the copier lease line, the district insurance line, the format of the spreadsheets to give explanations of the grants and revolving accounts. Ms. Yu will look into these questions and update the packets for future meetings.

NRT has added about 30 Middle School students to the bus list when capacity allows in keeping with the vote taken by the School Committee at the January 5, 2021 meeting.

A donation of \$125 from Mrs. Mary Delaney for the GHS Food Pantry was accepted and will be presented to the full School Committee for acceptance. (See Consent Agenda.)

At the February 1, meeting the Subcommittee reviewed the Finance packet for January 2021.

Ms. Yu is working on the Special Ed in-district and out-of-district transportation agreement with NRT/Vanpool, City Purchasing Department and the Special Ed office.

Ms. Yu gave an update on the Governor's FY22 Chapter 70 aid, and the ESSER 2 Federal grant. District budget meetings are scheduled for February.

The Food Services staff have boosted participation in the breakfast and lunch programs and are keeping the GHS pickup and van delivery meal service.

Policy Subcommittee

Mrs. Hurst, Chairperson, said the the Policy Subcommittee met on January 21, 2021. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

Policies were approved for a first reading and are listed on the Agenda – Item #3236 – First Reading of Policies.

Two policies were approved for removal and will be sent to the full Committee for a vote.

- Policy EFDA – School Food Service Department Policy. Policy EFD – Meal Charge Policy was adopted in November 2018 to replace this policy so it is now redundant.
- Policy JICCA-HIV is redundant as the information is contained in Policy JLCC – Communicable Diseases.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3236 – First Reading of Policies

Mrs. Hurst presented the following policies for a first reading as approved by the Policy Subcommittee:

- BDEE Athletic Council
- BDE Subcommittees of the School Committee
- BEDB Agenda
- BE School Committee Meetings
- CM School District Annual Report
- EBCD Emergency Closings
- JICFB Bullying
- JL Student Welfare
- JLCA-E Position Description – School Physician

Item #3237 - Second Reading of Policies

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee approve the following policies for a second reading as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- BEC Executive Sessions
- GCF Professional Staff Hiring
- IJ Instructional Materials
- IJOA Field Trips
- JFBC Pre-School Tuition Policy
- JIC Student Conduct
- JK Student Discipline

Seconded by Mrs. Cormier.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3238 – Removal of Policies

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to remove the following policies from the Policy Manual as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- EFDA School Food Service Department Policy
- JLCCA-HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Aids and other Blood-Borne Infections

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3239 – COVID Tracking Update

Mrs. Rebecca McCaffrey, Gardner School Nurse Leader, presented charts showing the Gardner Public Schools Staff Data, Gardner Public Schools Student Data, Gardner Community Data, and Massachusetts State Data as of 1/28/2021. She also presented a report on Binax Now Rapid Antigen Test administered in the school as of 1/29/2021.

Mrs. McCaffrey is working to prioritize a list of staff to receive vaccinations when the vaccine is received.

Item #3240 – Update on Hybrid vs Remote Attendance

Dr. Pellegrino presented a chart updating attendance by classes of full remote (1050 students) and hybrid learning (1058 students) as of January 29, 2021.

Elm Street School has started to maintain Attendance Logs to make sure that families are aware when their students(s) are not attending online classes. The MTSS Tier 1 Team is disseminating the attendance data and looking for ways to improve attendance.

Item #3241– Vaccine Update

Mayor Nicholson reported that the vaccination program is in Phase 2a as of February 1, 2021 which is for residents 75 years of age or older.

Item #3243 – School Choice Acceptance

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve acceptance of School Choice for the 2021-2022 school year.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3244 – Annual School Calendar

Dr. Pellegrino presented the survey options results for the 2021-2022 School Calendar. The survey was done through One-Call and Google Forms Survey to parents and staff. Version 2 received 67% of the votes. Faculty and staff would return for three days of professional development on August 25 through August 27, 2021. Students would begin school on August 10, 2021 and the 180th day of school would be June 10, 2022.

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve Version 2 of the School Calendar for the 2021-2022 school year as presented.

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3245 – Annual School Committee Schedule of Meetings

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the School Committee Schedule of Meetings from September 2021 – June 2022 as presented.

Seconded by Mr. Abare.

Roll Call Vote – Abare, yes; Cormier, yes; Hurst, yes; LaFreniere, yes; Pelavin, yes; and Swartz, yes. Count – 6 yes.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3246 – Superintendent's Mid-Year Progress Updates

Dr. Pellegrino presented a mid-year report on his goals for 2021-2022.

District Improvement Goals

Goal 1 – Develop a Leadership Pipeline

- Have applied for Barr Implementation Grant
- Created leadership curriculum with Lynch Leadership Academy for current administrators and teacher leaders
- Designing distributed leadership model of support within MTSS with whole-district Administrative Team
- Working with LLA to recruit a more diverse pool of leaders and teachers

Goal 2 - Rigor of Student Task

- Completed first learning walk for 2020-2021. District ratings were given.

Student Learning Goals

Goal 1 – Implement Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) District Wide

- Meeting weekly with district-level admin to design and roll out the system
- Created SEL Core Building Teams and District Team
- Working on Academic Leg: Writing manual

Goal 2 – Implement Transparent, Standards-based Grading Systems

- The MTSS team will monitor student progress and develop appropriate supports and interventions

Educator's Professional Practice

Goal 1 – Manage Multiple Forms of Educational Delivery

- Have had only four weeks of remote instruction since beginning hybrid instructional
- Our Student Learning Time is on Target
- Management of Budget, Resources, and COVID Response have not had difficulties

Item #3247 - Curriculum Coordinator Update

Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer, reported the Curriculum Coordinator's Updates to the School Committee via Zoom. A hard copy was included in the member's packets.

Item #3248– Special Education Update

Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel, reported Special Education Updates to the School Committee via Zoom. A hard copy was included in the members' packets.

Item #3249– Grants Administrator's Update

Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Manager, reported Grants, Communications & Compliance Updates to the School Committee via Zoom. A hard copy was included in the members' packets.

Item #3250 – MSBA – New Building Project

Dr. Pellegrino reported that progress is being made on the new school building. He plans to have pictures for the School Committee.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Nicholson spoke about the GHS hockey team and their wins to date.

He reported on working with the FBI regarding the inappropriate material recently sent to students, staff and parents. He is planning to host a forum after the February vacation to discuss equity, racism, bias which will involve students, parents, staff and Gardner residents.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mr. Swartz thanked Dr. Goguen, Ms. West and Ms. Dunn for their presentations this evening.

Mrs. Hurst said that a lot of work goes one behind the scenes and she is proud of the District and what is happening.

Mrs. Pelavin commented on the virtual senior class meeting on January 12 to begin planning for possible senior activities and for their graduation in June. This has been a difficult year and it will be interesting to see what they plan.

Mr. Abare said Mrs. McCaffrey should be on the CDC and thanked her for all the information she provided.

Mr. LaFreniere thanked Mrs. McCaffrey and the administrative staff for their reports tonight. He appreciates all the work they do.

Mrs. Cormier appreciated all the reports given tonight and all the work being done.

Mayor Nicholson spoke about receiving funds from the Rockwell Grant which will allow for a major renovation for Landry Auditorium - new seating and new carpeting. He talked about funds being received from FEMA and the CARES Act.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Swartz moved to adjourn.

Seconded by Mr. Abare.

All members in favor - roll call not required for adjournment.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary

Rachel A. Cormier, Secretary