

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Remote Meeting

Tuesday, April 7, 2020
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Governor Scott signed H.681 into law, making temporary changes to Vermont's Open Meeting Law. Part of those changes allow school districts to hold school board meetings remotely with no designated meeting location. LCATV provided coverage through a live stream and citizens were provided online and telephone options to participate in the meeting. Those in attendance were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Lindsey Cox, Curt Taylor, and Nic Longo; Superintendent Amy Minor; Business and Operations Manager George Trieb; Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli; Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz; and Principals: Heather Baron, Michele Cote, Jordan Burke, Carolyn Millham, and Chris Antonicci.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Update on Emergency School Closure due to COVID-19

Action

Superintendent Amy Minor provided the board with an update to the actions the district has taken in response to the school closure order from Governor Scott amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The meal program is going very well. Since the closure, the district has prepared over 21,000 meals for students. Meals are distributed through five stationary locations and are also delivered using bus routes around the town. Secretary Dan French directed schools to follow their approved calendars which means April Vacation will stand as previously scheduled. Since the last board meeting, the district is in the process of transitioning student learning from the maintenance of concepts and skills to continuity, meaning teachers are now introducing new curriculum. The district is continuing with an asynchronous learning approach which means teachers are recording instructional videos for students that can be viewed at their convince. Given the current landscape of family schedules across the district, students are completing their learning at different times. Asynchronous learning allows families to have flexibility with when their students are learning. Regardless of when they access the instruction, each student receives the same material from the teacher. To maintain student connections and relationships with their teachers, peers, and the school community in general, the district is using a synchronous approach, meaning real-time or live communication through a phone call, Google Meet, or Zoom. There have been many logistics executed to carry out the transition to a remote learning environment including adding online platforms like Seesaw and Google Classroom at the elementary level and a recent device distribution rollout for families who do not have a device at home.

Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli further explained the complexity of the transition of student learning to the continuity phase. The district is required to submit a Continuity of Learning Plan to

the Agency of Education which follows four guiding principles: healthy and safety, equity, relationships, and remote learning. The district's learning plan and the sub-plans for each building were built with those components in mind. Within those plans are weekly work assignments for students which include individual assignments for various subjects and classes. Director Taylor asked how students and families were receiving their assignments. Ms. Carmolli stated that the assignments are sent out via email, Seesaw, Google Classroom, they are also posted on the school's websites and some families have chosen to receive paper copies. Both Director Taylor and Board Chair Rogers shared concerns for families who do not have internet access. Superintendent Minor stated that a survey to collect that information has been sent out at the district and school levels several times. Teachers, social workers, and building administrators are working with individual families and the district is continuing to research additional options.

Director Kieny asked for an overview of what a typical day is like for a teacher and a principal. Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli and Colchester High School Principal Heather Baron stated that overall, it is very similar to when the schools are open. On a building level, they still hold faculty and department meetings. The administrators are working to rethink the curriculum and how to assess learning in a remote environment. On a faculty level, the teachers have virtual collaboration meetings with colleagues to develop and roll out curriculum, they are recording direct instruction for different content areas of their classes, assessing assignments that have been submitted, holding virtual meetings with students, and responding to student and family emails. Porters Point Principal Carolyn Millham noted that doing all of these things virtually takes an amazing amount of time and effort. Although she shared that it has been a rich and collaborative time, it has ultimately been very time-consuming.

Director Cox asked how schools are ensuring that every student has someone checking in with them. She noted that it is a bit easier at the elementary level since students report to a single teacher and that she was more curious about students in grades 6-12. Colchester Middle School Principal Michele Cote shared that connecting with students has been a priority and they have made contact with every student in the school. Moving forward, they are aiming to provide more opportunities for student connections, not only with their teachers but also their peers. Each student is already assigned to a Teacher Advisory (TA) class which is structured similarly to a traditional homeroom class. TA meets every morning and afternoon when the buildings are open. Starting next week, TA will become a synchronous event where students can log on to connect with their TA teacher and fellow TA classmates each day, Monday through Friday, at 8:00 am. Colchester High School Principal Heather Baron added that they also have a system in place for teachers so they know who to notify if they are not hearing from a student.

Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz shared that her departments are providing services by offering small groups or individual live instruction. They are connecting with several outside contractors such as occupational therapists and physical therapists to facilitate getting these services to students remotely through teletherapy. Director Cox asked about supports for English learners and Ms. Lutz assured the board that the EL faculty has been connecting with their families to assess their needs. They have been helping to translate emails containing updates and information from the school, facilitating logistics such as where to pick up district lunches and how to request a district device, and at their core, they continue to provide instruction and support to students with their learning.

Director Longo, who has young children in the district, expressed gratitude on behalf of his family. He said he has had a great experience so far and has heard similar commendations from people in his neighborhood.

IV. First Reading of Fraud Policy: E9

Action

This is a new policy that was recommended by the district's auditor. The draft policy was reviewed by the auditor, the Vermont School Board Association, and the district's legal counsel. The board asked a few clarifying questions and Director Taylor requested extensive edits. Avalon Ashley, a reporter with the Colchester Sun, asked why the district's auditor recommended creating a fraud policy and why no other districts in Vermont currently have a fraud policy. Business and Operations Manager George Trieb stated that the auditor recommended the policy based on new requirements. He predicted that within the next few years, every school district in Vermont will adopt a similar policy.

Director Cox moved to approve the first reading of the Fraud Policy: E9, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

V. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda

Action

The following agenda was presented to the school board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA**Board Date: April 7, 2020****REVISED****Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)**

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Emily	Cooke	New Hire	Speech and Language Pathologist	1.0 FTE	PPS	Notice of Hire	Deborah Kalamasz	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Amber	Fitzgerald	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	Marianne Nealy	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Ian	Parker	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Emma	Pedrin	Transfer	Spanish Teacher	.20 FTE	CHS	Request to Transfer	Carolyn Robinson	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Emma	Miller	New Hire	Speech and Language Pathologist	1.0 FTE	UMS	Notice of Hire	Judith Hillis	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Rachael	Sherman	New Hire	High School Band Teacher, Long Term Substitute	1.0 FTE	CHS	Request to Hire	Evan Peltier	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Moriah	McCullagh	New Hire	Elementary School Nurse	1.0 FTE	PPS	Notice of Hire	Mary Axworthy	Yes	Yes

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), *Informational*

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Jennifer	Berard	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	UMS	Notice of Hire	Jacy Hagy	Yes	Yes

Director Cox moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda as provided, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VI. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: March 17, 2020 Action

A handful of typos were found and fixed.

Director Cox moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 17, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports Informational

Director Taylor asked if the lead results have come back yet. Superintendent Minor stated they have not and that the Vermont Department of Health will notify the district when the results have been posted.

Director Cox asked the Business and Operations Manager if it was possible to get a jump on summer construction projects since the buildings are empty. Manager Trieb stated that most projects have stalled because work is restricted to essential projects so they are unable to do walkthroughs and other required planning.

Given the current situation with COVID-19, Director Taylor thanked the community for supporting the proposed budget for next school year on Town Meeting Day. He voiced empathy for districts that did not pass their budgets.

VIII. Future Agenda Items Informational

- COVID-19 Update
- CSD Continuity of Learning Plan
- Lead Testing Results
- Early Education Center Update
- Rachel Cohen, Rowland Fellow
- CSD Safety Planning
- MBS/CHS Bathroom Renovation Project
- Policies: Fraud, Truancy & Attendance
- Future Facilities Needs Presentation

IX. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations Action

Director Kieny made a motion to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations at 8:27 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Director Taylor made a motion to exit executive session at 9:35 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

X. Adjournment

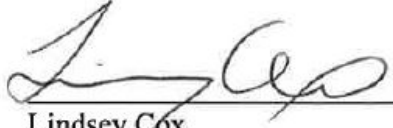
Director Taylor made a motion to adjourn at 9:40 p.m., seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:



Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:



Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk