

# COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting  
Remote Meeting

Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
7:00 p.m.

## MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2020. Governor Scott signed H.681 into law, making temporary changes to Vermont's Open Meeting Law. Part of those changes allows 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; Student Board Member Mitch Gadapee; Superintendent Amy Minor; Business and Operations Manager George Trieb; Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli; and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz.

### I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 of the actions the district has taken in response to the school closure order from Governor Scott amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The district is waiting for official announcements from state agencies regarding the spring sports season and end-of-year gatherings and celebrations. She stated they are anticipating an announcement with accompanying guidance regarding social distancing from the Governor's Office on May 8. The district has been brainstorming ideas and possibilities for these important end-of-year events but will ultimately wait for more direction before putting firm plans into place.

The meal delivery program is continuing to thrive thanks to many dedicated staff members. The district has been able to continue to deliver over April Vacation, which is not normally a time when food is provided to families by the district. They are averaging 850 meal bags a day which includes breakfast and lunch. Since the closure, the buses have delivered nearly 20,000 meal bags.

To ensure that every student can access remote learning, the Technology Department has distributed 376 devices to students in grades K-5. Students in grades 6-12 already have assigned devices. Superintendent Minor stated that the Technology Department is continuing to field device requests from K-5 families and encouraged any family who needs a device to call them directly at (802) 264-5727. She noted that the Help Desk is open daily for employees, students, and families and they have set up a process for triaging malfunctioning devices. The department has been very busy since the closure, updating the website, helping with technical issues, and assisting teachers to implement many new products and software used to connect with students. She noted that the district is working to get several families online who did not previously have internet.

Superintendent Minor shared that the district's Continuation of Learning Plan was approved by the Agency of Education. She thanked Gwen Carmolli, the director of curriculum, for pulling the plan together by collating all of the processes and systems from the district's five schools.

Superintendent Minor shared that all of the systems, meetings, and structures that normally take place when the buildings are open are still happening, they are just occurring virtually. There are several critical teams in place that help support students in need such as Child Protection Teams and Education Support Teams. Along those lines, she also gave a nod to the Colchester Police Department for continuing to support the schools in a variety of ways.

Academically, the district is continuing with an asynchronous learning approach which means teachers are recording instructional videos for students that can be viewed at their convenience. 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.

Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli gave an overview of the results of a remote learning survey that was sent out to students and parents/caregivers. In total, there were 857 responses. Over 93% of families felt the superintendent, principals, and teachers have done a good job communicating since the closure. The survey results were broken down by school and Ms. Carmolli provided specific data regarding how families and students felt about the amount of work being given and the level of that work. The survey also gauged how families and students are feeling about digital learning so far. The survey provided students and families the opportunity to share suggestions for what would make remote learning better in Colchester. The responses were on both sides of the spectrum. Some asked for less work or less challenging work while others ask for more work and more challenging work. The responses were also split in regards to the format. Some asked for more synchronous learning opportunities while others asked for more flexibility with the schedule. Many asked for less screen time.

Student School Board Member Mitch Gadapee extended a sincere thank you to everyone in the district and specifically at the high school. He stated that all of the efforts by teachers and staff have made him and his fellow seniors feel very supported and appreciated.

Director Taylor was pleased with the survey and the results and expressed interest in comparing the responses regarding school work to a survey that could be administered when school is in session under normal circumstances.

Director Cox expressed thanks for sharing the feedback from the survey, especially since she is a parent in the district who took the survey. She inquired about any conversations regarding remediation of learning that has been lost since the closure. While she stressed that everything that has been done for students so far is amazing considering the circumstances, she highlighted the obvious difference of remote learning to in-person learning, especially for those who are struggling to engage in the school work in their home environment. Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli shared that Central Office has started those conversations already. The District Leadership Team will be planning for that soon and then any plans that are made will be passed down to the school

level leadership teams. She stated that they will implement quick student assessments to administer in the fall to help gauge where students are, particularly in the most critical content areas of literacy and math. Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz stated she has been touching base regionally and statewide with other districts on this topic. She emphasized that they are concurrently finalizing plans and systems to complete the current year while also planning for the next phase when students return to in-person schooling. She agreed that support services will be critical. Planning for what students will need, both academically and socioemotionally, will be crucial. Director Cox suggested administering another survey for parents and caregivers to identify specific concerns on both levels to help alert the school and their new teacher of individual needs. Both Superintendent Minor and Ms. Lutz applauded the idea.

Board Chair Mike Rogers pondered where the district should go from here, specifically thinking of when the district hopefully returns to a more normal school environment in the fall. He encouraged administrators to be mindful of the strong points that have come out of the experience. He asked them to pass along thanks to the faculty and staff for all their hard work in this transition.

#### **IV. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda**

**Action**

The following agenda was presented to the school board.

**PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA**

**Board Date: April 21, 2020**

**REVISED**

**Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)**

<b>Contract Type</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE/Hours</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>Agenda Information</b>	<b>Person Replacing</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Admin Support</b>
Teacher	Wayland	Cole	FTE Increase	TIPS Teacher	.20 FTE	CHS	Request to Increase FTE	Wayland Cole	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Erin	Brady	FTE Increase	Professional Development Coordinator	.20 FTE	CHS	Request to Increase FTE	Erin Brady	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Andrew	Rinere	New Hire	Special Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CHS	Notice of Hire	Ann Carol Moffett	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Ghana	Rimal	New Hire	Math Teacher	1.0 FTE	CHS	Notice of Hire	William McClintock	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Nichole	Fitzgerald	New Hire	Reading Teacher	1.0 FTE	UMS	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Christopher	King	New Hire	English Teacher	1.0 FTE	CHS	Notice of Hire	Hilary Carter	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Taylor	Houston	New Hire	Reading Teacher	1.0 FTE	PPS	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes

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

<b>Contract Type</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE/Hours</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>Agenda Information</b>	<b>Person Replacing</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Admin Support</b>
Support Staff	Kristin	Funsten	End of Employment	Paraeducator - Sped	32.5 hr	UMS	End Employment effective June 16, 2020 (anticipated last day of school)			Yes
Support Staff	Susan	St. Pierre	End of Employment	Paraeducator - Preschool	32.5 hr	MBS	End Employment effective June 16, 2020 (anticipated last day of school)			Yes

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

**V. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: April 7, 2020** **Action**

*Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on April 7, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

**VI. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: April 14, 2020** **Action**

*Director Cox moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on April 14, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

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

None.

**VIII. Future Agenda Items** **Informational**

- COVID-19 Update
- Lead Testing Results
- CSD Safety Planning
- Future Facilities Needs Presentation
- Policies: Fraud, Truancy & Attendance

**IX. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations** **Action**

*Director Taylor made a motion to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations at 7:43 p.m., seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

*Director Kieny made a motion to exit executive session at 8:14 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*


**X. Adjournment**

*Director Cox made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m., seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

Recorder:

  
Meghan Baule  
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

  
Lindsey Cox  
Board Clerk