

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Library

Tuesday, October 6, 2020
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2020. Due to COVID-19 precautions, school buildings are remaining closed to the public. LCATV provided coverage through a live stream and citizens were provided online and telephone options to participate in the meeting. Those in attendance (both remotely and in-person) were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Lindsey Cox, Curt Taylor and Nic Longo; Student Representative Julia Correll; Superintendent Amy Minor; Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli; Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz; Principals: Michele Cote, Jordan Burke, Carolyn Millham, and Chris Antonicci; and District Nursing Supervisor Deb Deschamps.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Mike Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. COVID-19 Update

Informational

Superintendent Minor provided general updates regarding PPE, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, the number of meals served both in the schools and through delivery, mask compliance among students, and data from the nurse's office regarding reported symptoms. To date, nurses have evaluated 454 students who exhibited one or more of the symptoms on the COVID-19 list including a headache, nausea, congestion, or a sore throat. Of those visits, 26% were sent home. District Nursing Supervisor Deb Deschamps answered some additional questions regarding what happens when a student is sent home and when they can return to school. She explained that the nurses use the health department's algorithm to make those determinations.

IV. Phasing in More In-Person Learning for Grades K-5

Action

Superintendent Amy Minor led the board through the district's plan to start phasing Kindergarten through Grade 5 students into school more days per week. The district will begin to phase K-5 students to in-person learning 4 days a week starting October 19th. The youngest grades in each school will come back first and they will gradually add additional grades. The virtual academy will remain in place and continue to operate as-is.

Superintendent Minor went over the rationale to increase in-person days for elementary students including the essential benchmarks that were met which allowed the district to have the confidence to increase the number of students in the building at one time. These benchmarks included sufficient staffing levels, low COVID-19 activity in the community, the ability to maintain compliance with the guidance set by the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and the Agency of Education (AOE),

effective systems and routines which can be assessed and adjusted to meet changing needs, and that the VDH guidance and data supports increasing the number of students in the building. She noted that if the district's status with any of the benchmarks cited were to change, the district would need to adjust, alter, or outright cancel the plan.

Director of Curriculum, Gwen Carmolli, went over some of the early assessment trends that they are seeing in elementary students. She highlighted literacy assessments and compared them to February of last school year. She noted the biggest learning gaps are occurring in the youngest grades, however, she expressed confidence in the district's plan to get students on track moving forward. She stated the data is not showing insurmountable losses. Students are generally rusty in the fall and with the closure in the spring, they were expecting to see some lost learning. She emphasized that the students are very eager to read and are engaged in their learning.

Increasing the number of students in the buildings will not change the health and safety precautions already in place including health screenings, masks, plexiglass in classrooms, cleaning and disinfecting, and time for hand washing routines. She highlighted the physical distancing guidelines from the AOE for PreK to grade 5 is three-to-six feet and it states that if installed properly, plastic barriers between students would eliminate the need for the three-to-six foot distancing. She went over class sizes, both in-person and virtual, and the impacts of those sizes in regards to distancing and staffing. She also gave an overview of how having additional students on campus will affect district departments such as IT, Food Services, and Transportation.

Director Cox asked if any of the current mitigation protection measures in place will change based on some of the new information released from the CDC. Superintendent Minor stated she is anticipating a formal update from the AOE on Friday.

Director Kieny asked if the district received any feedback from families or employees after the plan was releasing late last week. Superintendent Minor stated that overall they have not heard anything from families. She noted that most families were expecting the news since other regional districts have announced similar plans. The district sent a survey to K-5 employees, submissions are still coming in and the feedback has been very helpful to gauge what the concerns are and to also review staff suggestions for how to make the transition successful. Director Longo asked what other districts in the region are planning. Superintendent Minor stated each Chittenden County district has a plan to return elementary students but the implementation varies.

Board Chair Rogers asked how support services such as Title 1 will be impacted if there are substantially more students who require help with literacy. Mrs. Caromolli stated that thankfully, the Colchester community approved two additional reading teachers in the last voter budget so they are playing an important role this year. She also noted that any grant dollars that can be carried forward will be and they are prioritizing where to add services.

Director Cox asked what academic plans are in place for students who have to quarantine. Porters Point Principal, Carolyn Millham, stated they are doing the same process they would any other year if a student was out. The teacher and school pull together work for the student to do from home.

Director Taylor moved to approve the district's plan to phase in more in-person learning for students in grades K-5 using the Agency of Education's Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

V. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda

Action

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

DRAFT

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA
Board Meeting Date: October 06, 2020

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Lisa	Bullinger	New Hire	Middle School Teacher	.85 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	One Year Only - new position	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	Jenna	Mashtare	End of Employment	Paraeducator - Bus	15	MBS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Chelsea	Audette	End of Employment	Paraeducator - Bus	15	MBS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Stacy	Vincent	New Hire	Food Service Worker	25	CHS	Notice of Hire	Allison McCuin	Yes	Yes

DRAFT

Director Cox moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for October 6, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VI. Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 15, 2020 Action

Director Cox moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 15, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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

- Superintendent Minor recently presented to the Colchester-Milton Rotary regarding the reopening of schools. The Rotary donated masks to the district.

VIII. Future Agenda Items Informational

- COVID-19 Updates
- FY'22 Budget Discussion
- Policy Work

IX. Executive Session to Discuss Negotiations

Director Kienny moved to enter executive session at 8:14 p.m. to discuss negotiations, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Director Taylor moved to exit executive session at 9:38 p.m., seconded by Director Kienny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

X. Adjournment

Director Kienny moved to adjourn at 9:39 p.m., seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:

Board Clerk:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk