

The Laconia School Board held a regular meeting at the Laconia High School Auditorium.

PRESENT: Aaron Hayward, Dawn Johnson, Joe Cormier, Laura Dunn, Heather Lounsbury, Malcolm Murray, Nick Grenon, Superintendent Steve Tucker, Assistant Superintendent Hinds, and Business Administrator Christine Blouin.

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairperson, Heather Lounsbury, called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. The agenda was posted on Friday, August 13th at the SAU office and on the District's website, along with being sent to each of our schools, the Laconia Daily Sun, Laconia Library, and City Hall, in accordance with RSA 91-A.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Board Member Cormier made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Board Member Murray. The vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Board Member Cormier to approve the minutes of August 3rd, seconded by Board Member Murray. Board Member Johnson opposed. The vote was 6-1.

Motion made by Board Member Murray to take back the motion as Board Member Johnson has an amendment to the minutes, seconded by Board Member Cormier.

Motion made by Board Member Cormier to amend the minutes to reflect the following in the nonpublic section of the minutes, "Board Member Johnson inquired about the July 20th non-meeting on the agenda, saying that she read it as a nonpublic. She said that she looked for polices for a non-meeting and could not find anything and expressed concerns that they may have done something illegal by having a non-meeting. Board Member Hayward said the Board is empowered to meet outside of public session to have a non-meeting for 4 different reasons and that it is in the open meeting law (RSA 91-A:2, I), collective bargaining is one of them., seconded by Board Member Murray. The vote was unanimous.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Zachary Dea, Ward 4 of Pearl Street talked about masks and safety procedures for the upcoming school year.
- Dillon Q of 78 Heath Street talked about CRT
- Karin Salome of Orchard Street talked about being a Public Health nurse and the benefits of masks.
- Doug Teegarden of Gilford Ave. talked about an article in the Laconia Daily Sun on August 17th and content that was taken down from the Office of School Wellness' website.
- Laura Polakowski Ward 1 talked about Inclusive Diversity, wanting more transparency and masks in school.
- Oscar Toce talked about Critical Race Theory
- Briann Ward 3 talked about Critical Race Theory, and teachers being informed in order to help students
- Jane Whitehead of Ward 3 teaching critical thinking to students
- Steve Murphy of Ward 3, Oak Street talked the CDC and masks in school
- Wayne of Ward 2 Gilford Ave inquired about what the district is teaching children
- Deanne Hacket of Sanborn Street said politics should not be in a School Board meeting and talked about her immune compromised child and a reasonable reopening plan.
- Kathleen Murphy of Ward 3 talked about gender bread paperwork.
- Christine LePage of Pitman Court talked about a mandating masks in school.
- Joe Higgins Ward 1 of Old North Main Street talked about children learning behavior at home, gender, and Critical Race Theory.
- Kathy Brown of Ward 3 talked about masks interfering with communication.
- Brad Brown of Ward 3 Messer Street talked about wanting his grandchildren to have a choice in wearing masks.

- Dan Lasada of Ward 4 Whipple Ave inquired about what the District will do to bring students up to speed and said we need to focus on kids again.
- Dr. Ephram talked about COVID in our community and the ICU at the hospital being nearly full. The COVID cases are as high as the beginning of the pandemic.
- Lindsey Packer, Ward 5 talked about teachers caring for students.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Personnel: Board Member Cormier said this committee has not met.

Facilities: Board Member Murray said this committee has not met

Policy: Board Member Hayward said this committee has not met.

Board Member Input

Board Member Dunn talked about the High School recovery program at Laconia High and said that Lisa Hinds did a fabulous job with the student led podcast and that there was a lot of engagement.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT /CALENDAR

Board Chairperson Lounsbury reported on the New Teacher Induction at Laconia Middle School on August 30th starting with breakfast at 8AM. She added that Opening Day will be at Laconia Middle School as well on August 31st at 8AM in the multipurpose room. Board Chairperson Lounsbury talked about the Ward 1, Ward 6 and Ward-at-Large elections.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Tucker talked about the last 19 months with the COVID pandemic and the divergent opinions on mask wearing and the priority of bringing students back to school in person and his hope that the community can agree on the hope to bring students into school each day. He talked about DHHS recommendations and emphasized that having students in school is a good thing. He talked about the challenges of hybrid and remote learning. Assistant Superintendent Hinds talked about vaccinations and that it is important to know that vaccinations are a choice. She talked about daily screenings that will continue this year prior to coming into school buildings and that if families have questions or concerns to please contact their child's school nurse. Board Member Dunn added PK and kindergarten families should communicate with the nurse if their child has allergies or medical conditions as it is helpful for families and teachers. Business Administrator Blouin talked about the health and cleaning protocols and ventilation and work with Rist Frost Shumway work with the air quality. Superintendent Tucker reported on Teaching and Learning additional 19 staff and their positions with ESSER Funds. He talked about Google Classroom, and the benefits of having that tool if a student is out sick. He said that there will not be a remote division for learning in the District but families can look into VLACS as a remote option. Board Member Cormier said there was a question in general public comment about what the district will do to help students catch up. Superintendent Tucker said through progress monitoring and meeting students where they are at. Looking at data and focus on literacy, reading and writing. Board Member Cormier inquired on how the District identifies students who are falling behind and Superintendent Tucker said through multiple data points; assessments, attendance and how they are doing personally in school. he said that is how the District identified students for summer learning. He said the District is doing a great job in identifying who we need to support. He talked about masks and the public comment and the general public comment on CRT and that we are not doing that but are doing required training for teachers by law. He talked about the optional or required mask mandate. He said it is a difficult issue but we look at county data, local and school data. The summer programming had optional mask due to the data being in the green and now we are in the red which is substantial level. He talked about the ever changing data and the recommendation to hold off about making the decision to get more information on the data. He talked about the 3 feet and the flexibility of doing the distance to best extent as possible. First Student Bus company is required by the federal government to mandate masks wearing on the bus to school or athletic events. Board Member Dunn talked about the data in the substantial over the last 2 weeks of summer programming, and inquired about positive cases and that we do not have any in the district. Johnson inquired about the data and how many that are sick are children, Superintendent Tucker said he has data on that further in the presentation. Dunn inquired

about distancing of at least 3 feet and asked if the intention is that students will eat in the cafeteria, Superintendent Tucker said the intention is to keep them in the cafeteria but LMS uses the multipurpose room for lunches and the high school will use the Huot dining room and some cases the elementary schools will use classroom in a few cases some elementary classes will eat in the classroom, Dunn inquired pre COVID and that the norm is not to eat in the classroom, Superintendent Tucker said yes, there is one class at Woodland Heights School that eats in the classroom. Board Member said she is hearing from her constituents that eating in the classroom was hard for some students and wanted to clarify what the plan is for students to eat in the cafeteria and Superintendent Tucker said they are working on the logistics of that. Assistant superintendent Hinds reported on quarantine and isolation guidelines and Superintendent Tucker added that the guidelines have changed and relaxed. Superintendent Tucker said athletics will be full play with no masks and proposed that he will work with the athletic directors and principals to determine if schedule changes or cancellations are necessary due to COVID-19 circumstances. Board Member Dunn inquired about Open House plans. Superintendent Tucker said the hope is to have the elementary Open Houses on September 2nd, LMS open House September 13th and LHS is working on a date. Board Member Dunn inquired about PTO Banking, field trips, and guest presenters. Superintendent Tucker said as long as people are symptom free. Board Member Dunn inquired about IEP and 504 meetings and Superintendent Hinds said they will plan for remote options as families enjoyed that as an option or make accommodations for a space for an in person meeting if need be. Board Member Dunn asked for clarification that if a parent made a request for an IEP or 504 meeting that the District would accommodate that for a parent, Assistant Superintendent Hinds responded yes. Board Member Dunn inquired about visitors coming in if it would be the same limited guests or a case by case, Superintendent Tucker said yes and talked about out student teachers and their importance to the District and how we have hired some of our student teachers. Superintendent Tucker talked to the Board about current COVID data by county and how we need look at local data in schools in our city. The Board talked about last year and how to move forward to get through issues and get back to students. Board Member Cormier referred to a speaker discussing education and his hope that we, as a District, get through these situations and CRT and get back to talking about education and students publically. Board Member Johnson added that the Board should go over the curriculum to improve math and science scores and said Laconia School District as a whole is 67% deficient on State scores. Board Member Cormier said we should not rely on data on mandated tests as it is not true to what students can do and talked about No Child Left behind, the data, testing and age level of students and that we should take the percentage with a grain of salt. Board Member Hayward said be careful not to conflate and assign a number and value because you have to consider what type of assessment, which domain within that content area and where does that number come from? Do not paint our students with a broad brush with that number. Our students and our teachers work hard and we have to get back to discussing where are students are at and back to presentations to see where they are at. Superintendent Tucker continued to report on data by age group and Board Member Dunn inquired about the tipping point for mask mandates and Superintendent Tucker said we don't have that number. He said we need to hold off on the mask discussion until we have a better sense of the data and come together in the middle for all kids.

DISCUSSION

- **Second Read Policy JICD Student Discipline and Due Process:** There was no discussion on this item.
- **Stay in School Recommendation:** Board Member Dunn said to be clear and specific as to what we take action on for this plan in the minutes. Superintendent Tucker said he will be communicating with the community of the decision on the Stay in School Recommendation too if that helps. Board Chairperson Lounsbury said the plan will be up on the website as well.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Catherine Vishton of Shore Drive talked about the CDC recommendations for mask wearing as of August 4th.
- Liana Crowell of Sarah Circle talked about masks being optional and shifting the focus to students.
- Katie Barlow of Ward 1, talked about no mask mandate and student's having options for mask wearing.

- Doug Teegarden of Gilford Ave talked about fall sports without masks and masks being a personal choice. He talked about cleaning protocols in the school's air filters and air flow.
- Oscar Toce of Stafford Street talked about masks being not healthy.
- Joe McCarthy of Ward 3 Bell Hill Road inquired about the cost of N95 masks.
- Mr. Henderson of Ward 2 talked about opinions and masks.

ACTION

- **Second Read Policy JICD Student Discipline and Due Process:** Motion made by Board Member Murray to approve this policy as presented, seconded by Board Member Cormier. The vote was unanimous.
- **Stay in School Recommendation:** Motion made by Board Member Cormier to accept the recommendation from the Superintendent as presented unless there is any more discussion. Board Member Dunn said to be clear, we are taking action on everything we just talked about in discussion. Board Member Lounsbury said to clarify, we will revisit the mask issue until we can meet a week prior to school start. The motion was seconded by Board Member Murray. The vote was unanimous.

NONPUBLIC:

Motion made by Board Member Cormier to go into public session, seconded by Board Member Murray. The Board returned to public session at 8:40 PM.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Motion made by Board Member Murray to reconvene Public Session, seconded by Board Member Johnson. The vote was unanimous. Public Session reconvened at 9:41 PM

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Board Member Murray to adjourn, seconded by Board Member Cormier. The vote was unanimous. The Board meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Hinds
Clerk