

**MINUTES  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**ZOOM:** <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72990029169?pwd=a2EzRmpzY2tvRC9WdFJPRXU1eFJxQT09>

**JULY 29, 2020, 1:00 p.m.**

**In attendance:**

Jessie Harrington  
Gail Holloway  
Dottie Kauffman  
Meghan McCrillis

**Absent:**

George Scobie

Casey Handfield  
Beth Chamberland  
Cecelia Wirzbicki

**Visitors:**

Dr. John Brackett  
Jessica Carleton  
Dawn Meola  
Julie

**CALL TO ORDER:**

At 1:03 p.m., Mrs. Harrington, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** None

**SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:** None

**MINUTES:**

**7/22/2020 for Approval**

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 22nd SC meeting; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes;*

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

**Introduction to Superintendent's Coach**

Dr. Handfield noted that as previously shared, he is enrolled in the New Superintendent's Induction Program (NSIP). This program includes a number of workshops and coaching sessions through the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS). Dr. Handfield shared that Joining the meeting today, as an observer, was his appointed coach, Dr. John Brackett. Dr. Brackett holds a doctorate in education from Stanford University, and his impressive career includes time as a classroom teacher and high school principal in California and successful tenures as a superintendent in Michigan and Massachusetts where he retired from the Sudbury Public Schools. He now does consulting work in a variety of areas related to education and leadership. Dr. Handfield noted that he will be invaluable to him and he was pleased he was there. Dr. Brackett noted that he would attend a future meeting and speak to the Committee once things had settled down.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **Class of 2020 Graduation Update**

Dr. Handfield reminded the Committee that the Class of 2020 Graduation is scheduled for July 31st. He provided a copy of the protocol that was sent to families after extensive review and discussion with Darlene Coyle who heads the Auburn Board of Health and Department of Inspectional Services. He noted that the weather seems to be cooperating at this time, and he knows we are all excited to see the Class of 2020 off in a safe manner.

### **Return to School Update**

Dr. Handfield reported that as a follow-up discussion to last week's adopted motion to recommend that ***"the Auburn Public Schools adopt and implement Hybrid Option (B) - the 2-1-2 model - to start the 2020-2021 school year,"*** developments occurred late last week including updated DESE guidance and MTA action that warrants a review of last week's motion. These developments include the stance of DESE on "full return/hybrid instruction," transportation guidance, and MTA activity. He provided a draft layout of phases of reentry containing Remote (Phase One), Hybrid Instruction (Phase Two), Hybrid Instruction (Phase Three), and Total Return (Phase Four) and also listed activities for late August/early September regarding Town Hall and Orientation activities for students and families. These topics are for thought and discussion over the next couple of weeks with stakeholders as we begin to plan for the start of school.

Before any discussion was held on the topic, Mrs. Harrington asked for a motion to adopt and implement the modification of Hybrid Option (B) from a 2-1-2 model to a 1-2-1-1 model to start the school year with the length of day (half or full) being decided by the Superintendent. This academic model will remain in effect until such time the Superintendent determines, based on available information, that a modification to this model is warranted based on health data and recommendations from DESE, the CDC, and/or other organizations that would inform this decision.

Dr. McCrillis made the motion with Mrs. Kauffman seconding it. There was then a broad discussion on the motion. Dr. Handfield shared that school would now begin for students on September 16th and that this first few days would be remote, with Cohort A students attending school for a half a day on Monday, September 21st and Cohort B attending school on Thursday, September 24th. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday of that week would all be remote. He further stated that for the second week, Cohort A students would attend for a full day on Monday, September 28th and Cohort B students for a full day on Thursday, October 1st, with Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday of that week being remote. For the week of October 5th, Cohort A would attend on Monday and Tuesday (full days) and Cohort B on Thursday and Friday, with that Hybrid model being continued until it is deemed safe for Phase 4 and a complete return to school is recommended. The caveat is health data so this plan might have to pivot back to a fully remote plan should health data indicate that be necessary. Dr. Handfield also shared that there will be a fully remote version offered to families, with some teachers needing the ability to teach fully remote due to health concerns too. Surveys will be going out to staff and families later this week.

The members shared their concerns and asked lots of good questions and Dr. Handfield and Dr. Chamberland responded to each.

A roll call vote on the motion was then taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes;*

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Social Justice Discussion**

Dr. Handfield shared that the death of George Floyd sparked a movement in this country that has many schools and organizations examining social justice issues. He reported that during his final days as Principal of Auburn High School, there was an outpouring of desire to discuss social justice issues within the context of the Auburn Public Schools. He noted that he had sent a request for participants to engage in an introductory discussion around social justice issues within our community to the high school community and community members at-large that he met at protests that took place in June. He reported that on August 6, 2020, starting at 1:00 p.m., a group of 30 people (parents, alumni, faculty, and staff) are going to discuss their feelings regarding the issue of social justice in our community. From there, suggested “next steps” will be formulated regarding what we do as a school system with respect to evaluating curriculum and programming to ensure we are meeting this moment appropriately. He invited the Committee to join the conversation promised to keep them apprised accordingly of the meeting’s outcomes.

## **TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:**

### **ESY Summer School Update**

Dr. Chamberland reported that we continue to have great success and positive feedback from families on the ESY Summer School Program taking place at AMS for 8 of our students with significant special needs. Staff and student attendance has been excellent, parents have expressed great appreciation for the opportunity for students to attend and students have been enthusiastic in their participation. Each daily session, Monday-Thursday, also includes remote interactions with other students who are receiving their support in a fully remote manner. The students are always thrilled to see one another. Dr. Chamberland reported that this week, we have begun special education evaluations as well. Students come to the middle school and are being assessed by either a school psychologist or team chair. Safety protocols are in place such as Plexiglas shields between the student and the evaluator, masks, gloves, and frequent hand washing. Beginning the testing process will position us well as we work to address the backlog of special education evaluations created by the school closure due to COVID-19. This has all been completed in collaboration with the Auburn Board of Health. Dr. Chamberland noted that Mrs. Reidy has done a tremendous job overseeing all of this.

### **Competitive Technology Grant**

Dr. Chamberland reported that Eric Bouvier, in collaboration with Cecelia Wirzbicki and herself, have submitted an application for a competitive grant through the Center for Strategic Initiatives and DESE. This grant is designed to fulfill technology-related needs as we prepare for an uncertain structure to the reopening of schools. The grant requested funding for 50 Hotspots and the accompanying monthly subscription in the amount of \$ 21,494. These funds, if awarded, will be used to support families in the District who do not have reliable access to the internet. She noted that they will keep the Committee apprised of the outcome of this application.

### **Coronavirus Relief Fund Grant**

Dr. Chamberland shared that we have been notified by DESE, through the Corona Virus Relief Fund, we could be eligible for up to \$225 per student for COVID-related expenses such as PPE, professional development and technology as long as the identified need is a resulting expense due to COVID 19.

She noted that the Leadership Team is collaborating to identify items or initiatives that will need to be funded given the fluidity of our school reopening plan that will allow students and staff to have a safe and supported return to school. We are in the process of compiling a list of identified needs and those with the highest priority. The application for funds is due by August 31st.

**BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:**

**Year to Date Budget Report**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report as of July 23, 2020.

**Transfers**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided budget transfers and sought the Committee's approval of those that are between the Series.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the budget transfers as presented by the Business Manager; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes;*

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 2:12 p.m. Mrs. Holloway made a motion to enter Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30, Section 21(a) (3) to discuss strategy with regard to litigation; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

*Roll call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes;*

Respectfully submitted,

Ailaine Zautner  
Recording Secretary

**Referenced Documents:**

Minutes from 7/22/2020  
Graduation Update  
Reopening and Recovery Plan  
Year to Date Budget Report  
Transfers