

ANDOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2020  
Virtual Open Meeting Broadcast by AndoverTV

**I. SC Regular Meeting – Call to Order**

Chairman Blumstein called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**II. Executive Session**

Tracey Spruce moved to meet in Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purposes: Purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Andover Education Association Unit A and AEA Secretaries, AEA Occupational & Physical Therapists, Andover Licensed/Practical Nurses, Andover Assistants, Andover School Food Services, Andover School Custodians, and Andover Administrators Associations because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee; and **Purpose 7**: to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law; specifically, to perform a review of executive session minutes dated 6/6/19, 6/20/19 (two sets), 6/26/19, 7/10/19, 7/15/19, 8/1/19, 9/19/19, 10/4/19,10/10/19, 10/24/19, 11/5/19, 11/25/19, 12/5/19, 12/19/19, 1/9/20, 1/24/20,2/6/20 and 2/14/20 pursuant to G.L. c. 30A sec. 22 and to determine whether all or portions of such minutes may be publicly released. The Chair declared that an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. Motion seconded by Susan McCready. Roll Call: S. Scully-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, Tracey Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion approved 5-0.

**III. Resume SC Regular Meeting**

**A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence**

Chairman Blumstein reconvened the School Committee at 7:05 P.M. He asked that we remember all the people who are going out to work every day so others can be safe at home. There are many who are making personal sacrifices and whom we owe a debt of gratitude including food services, APS Food Services, grocery stores, pharmacies, health care workers and public safety workers.

**B. Recognitions & Communications**

Paul Murphy read an email he received from Ciara O’Keefe thanking AHS Staff Mysha Khulman, Lisa O’Donnell, and Caitlin Brown who have gone above and beyond during this difficult time providing consistency and normalcy to her daughter and finding a way to deliver academic support, dedication to personal relationships, and out-of-the box thinking.

Susan McCready reported on the virtual Town-wide PTO and PAC meeting held last Friday with over 20 in attendance from all levels. Everyone is appreciative of the challenges that APS staff and students are faced with.

Susan also reported on this morning’s meeting of the West Elementary School Building Committee. The members reviewed feedback received from MSBA on the Preliminary Design Plan that included the educational plan. Shelley has gathered teams to work

on specific areas MSBA identified as being ineligible for reimbursement. The group agreed that there are two areas, Pre-K and Special Education common spaces, they are not willing to acknowledge as ineligible for reimbursement and will be developing comments to send back to MSBA. We will not hear back from MSBA until after we submit the PSR due in May. The School Building Committee put forth what they think is the preferred design voting on Alternate 3 – a new school. At the next meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup> they will approve the Preferred Schematic Report and address the three options they are submitting.

Dr. Berman reported that once they received the comments from MSBA they convened teams right away to work on responses concerning various spaces for West Elementary and for the Pre-K. Our information is due to SMMA by noon on April 22<sup>nd</sup> which has to submit to MSBA by April 24<sup>th</sup>. Decisions, as mentioned by Susan, will have to come back to the Committee to determine which spaces are sufficiently necessary to ask the Town to support. Shelley acknowledged Paul Szymanski for his work on the SOI submitted for AHS, although we are not overly optimistic. Some significant changes were made to the SOI.

**C. Superintendent: Update on APS District Closure**

Dr. Berman reported that they have received very positive feedback from parents about the pivot/shift made for online learning, providing additional materials and new instruction. Parents very much appreciate the visual contact between students and teachers. Our teachers are working hard and we have provided them with extensive professional development. We are refining instructional targets so they are more understandable for parents. We will be observing April vacation next week and parents have requested some enrichment activities be provided for kids. Shelley anticipates the Governor will extend this closure and we will be ready to pivot instruction again. They are beginning to think about the end-of-year rituals and what re-opening would look like. Shelley has been asked by administrators to shift the May 8<sup>th</sup> half-day to the week of April 27<sup>th</sup> to give teachers an opportunity to prepare for Phase III.

Sandy Trach acknowledged the hard work of our faculty, staff, and administrators on our remote learning plan. They have logged on to on-line parent sessions, professional development sessions and adding translation services that helps Andover Public Schools communicate with families who have specifically requested translations in their native language other than English. She recognized Dr. Allen for facilitating this effort. The parent survey closes on Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> and she looks forward to their feedback.

Sara Stetson talked about the professional development and acknowledged all the teachers and specialists in the Student Services Department who have been trying new things. They have had several on-line professional development sessions and on-line training which their staff have participated in. Social Workers have identified a number of resources for families and others that are available on the at-home learning

site. Parents can contact Joe Yarid or Ryan Fielding or reach out to Social Workers at their school building. They are also working to setup referral services for private support/counseling.

Technology: Steve Chinosi talked about the professional development sessions provided to our faculty and staff and the parent workshops that 300 parents signed up for. Additional parent workshops will be offered next week, as well as after the April break. They have also had requests for help with internet access for families. Professional Development Sessions started on April 2<sup>nd</sup> with many workshops available for teachers to participate in. They have distributed over 700 Chromebooks in the first three distributions, with another round tomorrow and will continue every week as needed.

Food Service/Facilities: Paul Szymanski said the work by the FS staff has been extraordinary. They are averaging about 400 meals per day for breakfast and lunch, and were approved for a 7-day meal service program. They have also received inquiries for breakfast and lunch being available to all students regardless of their status.

Social distance is in place and building access allowed on a limited basis/request only. The buildings have one custodian on duty Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM-3:00 PM. A significant decision was made to place all 10 schools in a hard shutdown, effective Tuesday April 7<sup>th</sup>. Heat is off and primary lighting services are off which will be important for energy savings.

Dr. Berman said the level of collaboration among our staff is extraordinary, teachers are working in teams in ways they never have before. We have lifted our technological capacity and understanding which will make a difference for our students for years to come. This is an enormous cultural change. We are gaining the collaboration of our colleagues, picking up new skills and applying them.

Joel thanked everyone for their presentation and recognized how big a shift this has been and for our teachers who have had to do their jobs in completely different ways.

Tracey Spruce is concerned with the budgetary implications of granting waivers for all student meals being delivered if we don't get reimbursed. Paul Szymanski reported that they have been following all Federal and State Guidelines and are compliant with respect to the day-to-day activities. As a result of the insurance reductions, the Town Manager indicated that we will remain whole throughout this process. We are on top of every aspect of the Food Services day-to-day operations. Dr. Berman said the rationale from the Federal government and State is that there are many people in need now who were not in need at the start of the school year.

Shannon Scully pointed out that it has become a full-time job for parents to track their children's assignments. Having one place to go to see all assignments would be wonderful and encourages the addition of a Learning Management System. She is

taken aback about changes that might come with the District's next pivot and what that means for the student learning environment and that more consistency would be helpful. She hopes we are not inadvertently giving privileged students who have the mental health capacity, or the physical wellness, physical technology or the parents who can sit down with them, the benefit that other students may not be able to gain.

Paul Murphy supports adding a Learning Management System when we have some resources to put towards this which could help parents and kids to stay organized.

Susan McCready asked what synchronous learning looks like. Shelley said they are learning a lot about online and virtual learning. Video conferencing lectures or new concepts should be recorded by the teacher first; the tool of video conferencing is for dialogue and discussion. It could happen at the elementary level for a morning meeting; or a middle school teacher could hand out a reading assignment with targeted questions and then meet with small groups of students to talk, or have office hours to help struggling students. We try to be consistent with the visual contact with students and teachers. It does not need to be a long engagement and can also be done in other formats such as a telephone call or email.

Joel Blumstein is concerned with the mental health of our students during this period and the isolation they may be feeling. On the positive side, with later start times, our students are getting more sleep.

Shelley said Sara Stetson has worked very hard with the social workers to reach out to students and families.

No email questions have been received at this point.

The Committee discussed the request by Dr. Berman on behalf of the administrators to move the scheduled May 8<sup>th</sup> professional development day to a date to be determined the week of April 27<sup>th</sup>. This would provide an opportunity for teachers to design the learning targets for Phase III which they have not had time to do. In this current on-line learning environment, the first half of the teacher's day is spent on-line with students; the second half is spent preparing for the next day. They need the additional dedicated time to properly prepare for the next phase.

#### Questions from School Committee:

Why do need to further reduce the amount of time students have for instruction?

What day is this professional development going to happen on?

What is the structure of the time for students and teachers that day?

Can afternoons be used for the professional development teachers need?

Paul Murphy said the whole idea of time has shifted and, in his view, as a teacher, he is working twice as hard to deliver half as much to teach. It takes time to get used to

and there are times that are frustrating. Do what needs to be done for the next phase to be good.

**D. Public Input** None

**Response to Public Input** N/A

**E. New Business**

**1. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Andover Education Association**

Shelley and Joel met with Matt Bach and Julian DiGloria of the AEA and arrived at a tentative agreement which would commit to paying all the employees during the closure for this school year. The MOA includes: having all paid employees participate in remote learning or other activities, stipend positions started before the closure will continue to receive their stipend pay. If spring sports do not happen, spring coaches will not receive stipends. Child-rearing leave: for teachers who come back during the closure, their teaching days will support their 92-day limit. The agreement sets out some expectations on remote learning and the types of platforms to be used. Given the disagreement between management and the union over the use of live-video conferencing, the decision was to be silent on that provision. The agreement also provides for creating professional development opportunities related to closure and the formation of a Joint Labor Management group which will attempt to work out some specific implementation issues, including teacher evaluation and student grading. Any pending grievances will be held in abeyance, as will any new grievances. This agreement will be in effect until the end of the closure period or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

There were no public comments

Susan McCready moved to authorize the Chair of ASC to sign the COVID-19 Closure Memorandum of Agreement as presented. Paul Murphy seconded the motion. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y, S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, and J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**2. Last day of School June 2020**

Dr. Berman said the new guidelines for the last day of school will be coming out from the Commissioner next week. This item will be rescheduled to the next School Committee Meeting.

**3. Bus contract**

A consortium of 8 Districts in the Merrimack Valley have been discussing the issue of paying bus contracts when there has been no school. The districts are working with an attorney that Methuen uses who has been negotiating with the head of NRT and Trombly Bus Company. Negotiations are underway, but we are still waiting for financial information from the companies. This item will be on the next agenda. Paul Szymanski said the groups are still in confidential negotiations.

**4. Financials**

Dr. Berman reported that there have been no significant changes from the last financial

report. Shannon asked if extraordinary relief is still on the list of potential revenues we could expect. Dr. Berman said there should be decision by DESE shortly.

**F. Consent Agenda**

1. Grants/Donations to District - None
2. Minutes: October 4, 2019, November 5, 2019, November 25, 2019, January 24, 2020, February 14, 2020 and February 27, 2020.

Tracey Spruce moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion approved 5-0.

**IV. Adjournment**

At 8:43 P.M. Shannon Scully moved to adjourn from the meeting of April 16, 2020. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y, P. Murphy-Y, Tracey Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion approved 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary