

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Thursday, October 1, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Participants from the School Committee: Shannon Scully, Susan McCready, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Lauren Conoscenti.

Others participating: Superintendent Shelley Berman, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Trach and Sara Stetson Chief Operations Officer Stephen Nembirkow, , Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Director of Innovation Stephen Chinosi.

I. Regular Meeting

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson Scully called to order the meeting at 6:00 PM and the Committee immediately voted to meet in Executive Session. The Regular SC Meeting will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or streamed: www.andovertv.org.

Public Participation via email: scremote@andoverma.us

II. Executive Session:

Tracey Spruce moved to meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for Purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with AEA Unit A, Andover Assistants, Andover School Food Services, and Andover Administrators Association because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating and bargaining position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

III. Regular Meeting Resumes 7:00 P.M.

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

A. Recognitions/Communications

Superintendent Berman announced that Jessica Porter has been selected as the Human Resources Director. The Town and School Departments collaborated on the selection process. Dr. Berman also reported that we will soon be developing the FY-22 budget. The Governor has put additional funds into the Circuit Breaker which will hopefully be approved by the legislature.

Susan McCready announced that the West Elementary & Shawsheen School Building Project Forum will be held on Tuesday, October 13th at 7:00 PM in a virtual gathering. This is an opportunity for the community to hear an update on the projects, (financial, general update, sustainability, and timeline) and how these projects will benefit the District overall. .

The Andover Coalition for Education (ACE) will once again hold their ACE Scarecrow Festival from October 17-October 31st. Scarecrows will be displayed in the downtown area. The School Committee will be creating a scarecrow for the event.

Paul Murphy said it is really important that we recognize teachers, parents, and students for the work that is happening in school at all levels. Paul reported that SEPAC held a meeting last Wednesday and anyone who would like to be involved with SEPAC can send an email to sepac@andover.com or locate them on Facebook.

The first School Committee Informal Forum was held last Friday. Susan McCready and Lauren Conoscenti met with the community and received quite a bit of constructive feedback on what is working and what needs to be done differently to engage kids in the hybrid/remote learning process. Parents were encouraged to reach out to school principals and teachers for some of the questions that were raised. They appreciate all the families that attended the forum.

Shannon Scully reported on the independent examination performed by NV5 of the school ventilation and HVAC systems review that the Town engaged in addition to NV5 conducting their own analysis. The report is available on the APS Return to School page.

B. Public Input

A majority of the questions are related to the re-opening. A sample of questions follows.

~ Is there any discussion to offering a full in person option to our younger students who struggle with hybrid and remote model. *Not until the state changes its regulations, until we feel safer with a social distance of less than 6 feet, and can get more students on a bus.*

~Will the District be survey parents on model preferences? *We have discussed a survey and want to wait 4-5 weeks before sending out. We will get some preferences of teachers of what is working but will need to collaborate with the AEA. We do know how much of a struggle this is for younger students.*

~ Are there specific requirements for synchronous learning. *We are encouraging that live synchronous opportunities happen regularly for students at all levels.*

~How do we access whether a student gets 4 days of instruction and will we be expanding Cohort C. *Yes, we are looking into expanding Cohort C, but it is a prioritized on the level of need. Parents can contact the Special Ed Department with concerns.*

~Bus ridership, can we get some metrics on actual ridership? *Yes, we can look at ridership. During the first two cycles, many students were transported by parents.*

~Should DESE Guidelines change, are we ready to change? *Yes, we are but it would be done over a period of time back to switch to an in-person model with the ability to move back to a remote model if needed.*

~**Concern expressed that IA's were not given an opportunity to apply for remote teaching opportunities.** *See Response to Public Input.*

C. Response to Public Input

Responses are in italics after the question under Public Input.

Comments by the Committee: Tracey Spruce said the School Committee very much values the Instructional Assistants and would refer people to contact Human Resources for accommodations for reasonable medical leaves. Paul Murphy said Schoology is a process that takes a long time to master, even for a teacher. If we all keep pushing forward and have patience, a better day is ahead. Lauren Conoscenti requested that in the future meetings we continue to provide updates on Schoology and how we are moving forward. Susan McCready said she sat in on one of the Schoology sessions, they were very fair with setting reasonable expectations that it would take quite some time to fully implement Schoology.

D. Education

1. Update on School Reopening Week

Dr. Berman reported that on the second full week of school, our teachers are doing the best job they can moving forward learning the new systems. He acknowledged staff at all of the schools and the work they have done to get the re-opening of the schools off the ground. He has visited all the schools and teachers are thrilled to see their students and very excited and gratified to work with students both in the hybrid model and the remote model.

Sandy Trach also visited all of the schools and extended her thanks to the faculty at all of the schools for their commitment and engagement to re-open with students. We have completed two cycles of Cohort A and Cohort B. We encourage parents to reach out to principals for any questions and concerns. We want our plan to work and appreciate the feedback. Substitute coverage: There are three methods for a hybrid class. Teacher will teach remotely and have a building staff member at the school, there will be a substitute covering, or the class could engage in asynchronous classwork. Remote: Children will engage in asynchronous classwork.

MS/HS World Language Model: It has been necessary to use online educational programs to support our back-to-school plans. Our high school students are successfully connected to an online program for World Language; the Middle School is on their way to being connected. For questions or concerns, please reach out to World Language Program Coordinator Dr. Jorge Allen, Jorge.allen@andoverma.us.

Friday, October 9th will be a Professional Development Day for school staff. Teachers will have a full day of professional learning focused on Schoology and pedagogy (how we teach) and common planning. This will be a no school day for students.

In response to the request to changing the PD days from Fridays to Wednesday, Sandy explained that the early release days are part of our 170 student days, collapsing the PD days would affect our student count and our model would be impacted if we shifted half-

day early releases to Wednesdays. She does not recommend changing the early release days from Friday to Wednesday.

Assistant Superintendent Sara Stetson said students with special needs are doing a great job adjusting to the new model. The Special Ed Programs are all up and running, and all hybrid and remote classes are doing well. Sara will reach out to SEPAC on how to get some of our assistive technologies pushed out. We are rounding the corner on hybrid and remote individualized lesson plans. The middle schools should be complete early next week, and AHS students will need another few weeks due to the complexity of the schedule. One of the items that comes up is an idea of synchronous opportunities for at home learning days and using the Broadcast Model. A broadcast classroom is when a teacher turns on a camera with students at home watching while the teacher instructs students in the classroom. Synchronous would be a real inter-active opportunity. The district is encouraging a shared experience; it is happening in many of the classrooms and seems to be going well.

Schoology is a dynamic, comprehensive Learning Management System. We are in the process of moving all of our teachers to a comprehensive professional development model to acquire new skills and learn how to apply them. Right now, they are at a more basic level. Over time, they will be migrating the Google Classroom Concept into the Schoology Model. Schoology has good privacy and data security and integrates many of the tools without having to leave the learning environment which is great for students and parents. It provides the ability to differentiate instruction and is easy to use with the ability to find materials and assignments easily.

Director of Innovation, Steve Chinosi said the implementation of Schoology is a thoughtful and collaborative system. We are right on track where Schoology recommends us to be and now seeing the benefits of Schoology. The amount of collaboration has been remarkable; as of today, we had 5,078 active users and 19,000 materials created. Interactive Parent Guides were sent and are also available on the school website that provide a very crisp and clear guide on who to call for whatever reason. Teacher supports are on-going including an interactive faculty guide. Starting Monday, drop-in PD sessions will be available and all day on Wednesdays.

Steve Nembirkow reported that we are in a maintenance and learning mode. Custodians doing a great job performing deep cleaning on Wednesdays and Saturdays and handling all other building needs and maintaining PPE supplies. Food distribution and transportation are both going extremely well.

Athletics: Dr. Berman reported on a discussion he participated in with area School Superintendents that included red COVID communities Andover competes with and if the communities have gone from hybrid to remote. MIAA has come out with a standard to not make quick decisions on changing modes of instruction, and to use a 3-week average. Area communities reached a consensus that they are going to continue competing with communities in yellow and red with low risk sports (cross-country and

golf). For those that are moderate risk (field hockey, soccer, volleyball), they will wait one more week to decide. High Risk Sports have all been moved to the Fall 2 season. Their concerns are with keeping students safe. The suburban communities are better able to stay in green and yellow range compared to urban communities, raising the issue of equity.

New Business

2. In Person Meetings

The Town Manager has issued a memo that provides a summary of input from various town stakeholders in determining options for resuming in-person government meetings including feedback from Andover Department of Public Health, Information Technology, AndoverTV, and Town Counsel. Shannon Scully attended this meeting last week reporting that the goal was to determine how to meet in person, improve communications between committee members, and public participation. The Town Manager's memo is available online.

The Town Manager has reviewed the Governor's Guidelines to determine if there were any spaces available for some in-person meetings. The occupancy guidelines allow for 25 participants. They would consider using the School Committee Room to allow for committee members and support staff only, or going to a larger space to allow members of the public that would have to be restricted in numbers. If they return to in-person meetings, it would be a hybrid (committee members and the support staff) having virtual public communications. The School Committee Room has technology that allows it to talk to the Select Board Meeting Room that could be used as a satellite room. Guidelines from the Commission for Disabilities would need to be considered, everyone would have to wear a mask and closed caption would have to be added to the TV. It is recommended not to start in-person meetings any time before November 1st.

One of the reasons to pursue this is to make sure the public can engage in the conversation. With the limited number of people allowed in the School Committee Room, it does not seem like the best solution. We have had more public input on the current remote meetings we have been holding. The Committee looks forward to when they can involve the publicly as before. There is interest in having IT pursue public interaction via video conferencing.

3. October 1 Enrollment Preliminary Report

The Superintendent provided an update on the preliminary October 1 enrollment numbers. This is a unique year with parents making other choices than participating in hybrid or remote models. There is a significant decline in enrollment across the district, which is a similar trend other schools are experiencing. There is conversation from DESE on holding school enrollment harmless for this year (state aid is based on student enrollment). Projections for this year originally were the same as for the prior year with an expectation of a decrease of 25 students. This year however, the decreased enrollment is significant.

Changes in enrollment:

Pre-school: 54 students down from a projected 80 students.
Elementary: 2,389 students down from a projected 2,524 students.
Middle School: 1,396 students down from a projected 1,425 students.
AHS enrollment: 1,471 students down from a projected 1,876 students.
Overall, we are 259 students lower in-district than the projected 5% decline.

Out-of-district placements: Last year we had 83 OOD placements. This year, we predicted 78 placements, we are down to 73 placements. A decrease of 10 students.

The most significant changes are in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. Thirty new elementary students moved into home school learning. At the Middle and High School levels there is about a 10-20 student decrease in each grade. Hybrid Learning students represent 78% of the district and 22% are in our Remote Academy. We do have 3 students participating in remote learning at Shawsheen and 37% at the elementary level; 22% at Middle School and 14% at Andover High School.

4. School Calendar 2021-2022

Per School Committee Policy, next year's school calendar must be approved by November 1st. The draft is based on a regular 180 school year. Two readings must take place at a meeting before it's approved. The Commissioner is considering using remote teaching for snow days but until a decision is made, 5 snow days are built into the calendar. No action taken.

5. WMS PAC donation to Town-School Playstead Project

The Town is repairing the WMS play space area. The WMS PAC recently contributed a check in the amount of \$7,000 to the Town of Andover towards the project. James McSweeney, Asst. Director of Plant and Facilities, detailed the plans provided. The Design was shared with the students and the PAC.

West Middle Play Space Project:

- 1) Filling in the cracks and holes on the court surface.
- 2) Recoating the surface and painting new lines for all the courts.
- 3) Adding a ½ court basketball setup with a new pole and backboard.
- 4) Painting new "hardscape" games, 4 square and 9 square, on the surface.
- 5) Replacing the block wall with a new 2-tiered wall, that can also be used for outdoor learning.
- 6) Replacing the existing swing gate with a new one.
- 7) Repaving a portion on the fire access road.
- 8) Placing 2 rows of blocks near the school for an additional outdoor learning space.

This project went out for bid and came back with a price tag of about \$150,000.

Susan McCready spoke with the district's Legal Counsel and the Town Finance Department to understand the appropriate way for the School Committee to accept this gift for allocation to its intended purpose.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept a donation from the West Middle School PAC in the amount of \$7,000 per Policy KCD. The motion was seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes: 5-0

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee affirm \$7,000 will be used for the West Middle School Play Space Project, and that the money will be placed in a separate account to be expended for this intended purpose. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

6. Administrators' Collective Bargaining Agreement

Paul Murphy and Candace Hall worked with John Norton and his team to negotiate the Andover Administrator's Association for a one-year Memorandum of Agreement. The Andover Administrators have approved the contract.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the contract with the Andover Administrators Association for a successor collective bargaining agreement covering the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 as presented. And to authorize the Chair to sign the MOA on behalf of the School Committee. Motion seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

E. Continuing Business

1. Policy Updates, second readings – Susan McCready

a. EBC Supplemental (EBC-S)

Lauren Conoscenti moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt Policy EBC Supplemental, as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready.

Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

b. EBCFA, Face Coverings

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt Policy EBCFA as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Policy Update, modification under EBC Supplemental

a. EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles

The first policy for consideration of modification under EBC-S is EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles. Athletics Director Bill Martin said they would like to use the busses for the weekday games, and allow parents to transport students on the weekends to the games without having athletes in and out of the school building and making it easier and safer for all.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept the temporary change to Policy EEAG, as allowed under Policy EBC-S. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, and S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

F. Consent Agenda

Grants/Donations to District \$1500; School Committee Minutes of August 10, 2020.

Paul Murphy moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

G. Adjournment

At 9:21 P.M. Susan McCready moved to adjourn from the meeting of October 1, 2020.

Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary