

**Andover School Committee**  
**Minutes of July 30, 2020**  
**Virtual Meeting**

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**Participants from the School Committee:** Chair Shannon Scully, Vice Chair Susan McCready, Paul Murphy, Tracey Spruce, and Laura Conoscenti.

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

**I. Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order/Moment of Silence**

Chairperson Scully called the Andover School Committee meeting of July 30, 2020 to order at 6:30 PM and opened up the Regular Meeting through a Virtual Meeting Broadcast by Andover TV on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or via streamed: [www.andovertv.org](http://www.andovertv.org) **Public Participation via email: [scremote@andoverma.us](mailto:scremote@andoverma.us)**

- II. Executive Session:** Paul Murphy moved that the School Committee vote to meet in Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for Purpose 2, to discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, specifically the Superintendent. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**III. Regular Meeting Resumed 7:07 P.M.**

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

**A. Recognitions and Communications**

Dr. Berman looks forward to the School Committee meeting Kwesi Moody, the new Assistant Principal at Andover High who brings a lot of experience with him. Kwesi was an Assistant Principal at Methuen High for 5 years, Head Master at Dorchester Academy in Boston, and Assistant Head Master at East Boston High School.

The Legislature passed a bill today on Chapter 70 funding that looks like it will level fund Chapter 70 from the prior year. Dr. Berman will be meeting with the Town Manager to discuss if this will create any modifications to the School Budget.

A series of meetings for the West El Building Project will be held next week. A core team of the building committee will be presenting to MSBA's Facility Assessment Subcommittee and later in August to their entire MSBA Board for the project. The presentation includes much of what was elaborated on at the July 20<sup>th</sup> public forum. In addition, there will be a discussion on the reassessment of the reimbursement rate that we would receive from

MSBA and possible adjustments to the cost of the project which will be lower than what was initially projected.

Steve Nembirkow reported that they are actively purchasing sanitizing equipment and PPE supplies for all schools. To date, they have spent @ \$139,000. Additional Electrostatic Disinfecting Machines have been ordered along with 250 gallons of hand sanitizer.

Lauren Conoscenti said the AHS Graduation Ceremony was very well done and thanked everyone for their efforts. Special thanks to Diane Costagliola, for all of her work in making this event happen.

**B. Public Input**

Located under the school reopening discussion.

**C. Response to Public Input**

Shannon Scully thanked everyone who has submitted feedback on tonight's discussion on re-opening the schools. They hope to answer as many of the emails as possible that were not addressed this evening.

**D. Education**

**1. Update on School Reopening Planning**

There are many people involved in the planning for re-opening with sub-committee meetings happening every day. The work is intense to meet the short timeline, but the progress is discernable. Today, they had a discussion with the Town on ventilation in the school buildings which are in good shape.

It is important to understand what kind of interest and information parents have on the three learning models; remote learning, full-time, and hybrid. A two-question survey will be sent to parents on Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The questions are: 1) If we go to the hybrid model or in person learning, will your child attend school or are you interested in registering for remote learning only? 2) Will your child(ren) be riding the bus?

An agreement was reached between the State Teachers' Union and DESE to use the first 10 days of school to begin preparation of our teachers for the re-opening. School would begin on September 16<sup>th</sup> with teachers convening on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Sara Stetson and Sandy Trach provided an update on the return to school planning and an overview of the hybrid model which includes some in-person and remote time for elementary students. The presentation included views of elementary classrooms with 3' and 6' distances, middle school rooms with a 3' distance in labs and Engineering Rooms at a 6' distance able to hold 50% of the students in the classroom. Shawsheen School will have creative situations for students with plexiglass and space for floor play.

The hybrid and remote models include DESE's plan for blended-learning. In the hybrid model, students would use the same Learning Management System (LMS-Schoology) in school and at home. Students going fully remote will use the same LMS; the same curriculum and learning tools with teacher and independent learning. The LMS is the backbone of the plan, what changes in the model is where the student is and where the

teacher is. One of the ways to keep students active and engaged is using an interactive playlist (videos, books on-line, curated activities, etc.) Schoology will customize and curate learning for students. Schoology can run through all three parts of the model; students will find their schedules, play list etc. regardless of where they are learning.

Blended learning is the teacher methodology and hybrid is the schedule (remote and in-person learning). Several models of possible hybrid learning were provided in the presentations by group/day. The asynchronous learning day is used for a deep cleaning of the classrooms and for professional development for teachers. Hybrid days will be very cohesive for in-person and remote learning. Children will be grouped in co-horts allowing for 6' distances for in-class learning.

Half-day models might be used for young children coming in half of the day and working remotely on opposite days and perhaps children with special education needs will come into school. Group 4 is the group of students with complex needs who will come in every day.

Hybrid Model 3: Younger children coming into school 4 days a week. Group 2 students are in/out, and Group 3 the other half of the cohort (same classes) would be in Monday, out Tuesday, and remote on Thursday. Group 4, again children who would be in every day. Group 5 is a remote only option. Friday's is for "WIN" What I Need – students coming in for a wide-variety of reasons. Teachers are in everyday working from their classroom for each of the models.

#### Questions from School Committee:

Teachers being in the classroom everyday, how does that work. How will we staff the models? *It will depend upon the model we choose and scheduling of staff in creative ways. We can use our support staff and other professionals. Teachers cannot teach the in-class learners and remote learners at the same time. They feel very strongly that there has to be one model that we can toggle back and forth so that everything isn't new when we stop and start. Students need continuity and know what is going to happen.*

It sounds like the teacher is going to create an asynchronous collection of days with kids in the class that are extra? *That would be in-person learning. These are all elementary models with several activities, group work, shared reading, independent work. Children will have a through line in terms of the content and the tools students are using. Teachers would be working on one playlist/lesson plan for the entire week that is 'nimble' and doesn't create double plans.*

*The type of model chosen, creates the continuity for children and assists with some of the material management. Every child would have their own iPad, and a personal go-tote. If we have to shift to remote, they take the go-tote home.*

Will the devices be provided for all students? *We will make sure that all children who need them, have a device.*

Do any of these models transfer to middle or high school models? *The middle and high school teams are working to develop hybrid models that follow their schedules maintaining the normal class flow as much as possible. Groups 2-5 apply to everyone. Group 1, 3, 4 will be for students who need more days in than what the standard hybrid model presents. Group 4 would be on an invitation only.*

What is a realistic timeline for Andover? *The actual plan has to be submitted to DESE by August 10<sup>th</sup>. The plan to be submitted on July 31<sup>st</sup> is a logistic model only.*

What will parents have at all levels to make the decision to answer survey questions? *The survey includes a good deal of information about the models. We are going to try to have a registration for parents who want their children to go entirely remote. This will take a lot of flexibility and responsiveness. There has to be a balance to very responsive to students and families and to be mindful of what our administrators and staff can do as well. Parents would be able to change their mind, but we hope they make the decision to the best of their ability.*

Transportation: Guidelines from DESE require that busses be filled only to 30% capacity. Important points to consider: to support the hybrid sample models, bus capacity would be limited to 23-25 students per bus and would only be able to transport students from Kindergarten through Grade 6 and would need tiers of 4-5 with 45 minutes in between each tier. As a result of the reduced bussing, we would need to change our school start and end times by grade which may vary to correspond with the hybrid and bussing schedule. The cost of transportation will be significantly more than what budgeted.

In order to support a hybrid model, we would not be able to offer transportation for grades 7-12. Even if we had unlimited financial resources, there is a state-wide shortage of bus drivers and busses. It seems clear that if we move forward with any model that requires students to be in school, it would significantly change our bus policies. All districts in Massachusetts are facing the same quandary.

Can we get a sense of how changing the bus policy to a 2-mile radius would impact our economically challenged families? *They will ask people to register for bussing, it may change our capacity to provide transportation. The 4-5 tiers are problematic; it would be helpful if we can reduce it back to 3-tiers.*

Has anyone asked that even if families do/don't register for the bus, if we have to bus K-6 regardless, how can we plan for that? *This would need to be pursued legislatively and not by DESE..*

If we are not bussing kids to AHS we will need to expand parking. If there is a way to minimize or limit the disruption of bus time for families. *They are working on a plan that would be the least disruptive as possible.*

Sampling of questions that came in via email:

Masks for teaching staff for K-1 Classes: *Even though masks are recommended we will be highly encouraging masks for anyone in K or 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*

Will there be a Peer Program at Shawsheen? *Right now, we do not have any plans to cancel the Peer Program.*

How will you maintain 6' for lunch at the middle and high school: *They are planning to use the gymnasium at AHS and middle schools and looking at their cafeterias and adjoining rooms.*

What is being done in ventilation and air movement: *Our ventilation systems are very good and meet the standards for ventilation recommended in the guidance.*

How will bathrooms be monitored: *It will vary by building. Middle and high school will have some observation which may be difficult at AHS, there will be signage stating how many people can be in the bathroom at one time. They will cover or petition urinals.*

If there is a hybrid model and remote model will there be synchronous instruction. *Yes.*

If you decide to do hybrid learning at AHS how will students be grouped: *Presently, students will be able to use the schedule that they receive. If students are siblings, wherever possible we would like to keep them together. At the elementary- level they are discussing using an alphabetical model using cohorts if possible.*

How will Schoology or blended work for 1<sup>st</sup> grade students who don't know how to read or type: *That is one reason why we would like K and Gr 1 students in school as much as possible in small class sizes. We have invested in digital libraries for very young children, and numerous software for math, and we will provide student iPads, using touch apps, book bags, manipulatives, etc. LMS is one tool that will have the curated development activities.*

If kids are home and given playlist, will there be actual instruction using whatever streaming we are using all day long: *The curriculum in each classroom is not the same but largely individualized for students. A teacher can go in and make multiple pathways for different children based on an IEP or Tier 2 support model. Schoology is not a shift away from live instruction, it is a learning management tool where everything is housed. If child has a live lesson, it will be right there in the schedule so students/parents don't have to go searching. The adoption of a robust learning system is not any kind of a move away from what we are going to do with live instruction. Blended learning is the through line resource that the teachers are using to teach students all week. When students are in school they are learning how to use these resources. Learning is predicated upon engagement. Live streaming is actually very passive engagement. You want to have a solid cohort to develop a class identity. If we didn't have the need to maintain a significant 6' distance we probably would not be selecting this as a choice., We are trying to do the best we can to craft the engaging experiences that are beneficial with the realization that it is going to be more challenging for teachers, students and parents.*

How will schools and classrooms be cleaned: *We have secured Clorox electro-static machines for every school that uses a fine mist which adheres to surfaces all over the room and dissipates in 5-10 minutes after the mist goes through the room. They are efficient, fast and effective. Custodians will also be cleaning thoroughly and all the touch areas as well.*

The Committee will continue this discussion at their next meeting of August 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **E. New Business**

### **1. APS Logo Update**

Nicole Kieser, Director of Communications provided an update on the reformatting of Andover's logos. They engaged Civic Plus, and with the help of Susan McCready and Karla Kohl they are revising, not replacing the logo. The design of the AHS logo did not change, the colors were only refreshed. The District logo fonts and design of the 'apple'

have changed. These logos need to be done before we can update the website. Nicole is creating a style guide and she and Karla will visit every school to explain the best practices for posting on the websites.

#### F. Continuing Business

##### 1. Superintendent's Evaluation [click on this link](#) (*News Update-Super Evaluation*)

As the former School Committee Chair, Joel Blumstein was invited to participate in the Superintendent's evaluation; although he cannot vote as he is no longer a member of the School Committee. The annual evaluation is based on the goals set by the School Committee for the 2019-2020 school year. A mid-year report was provided by Dr. Berman at the March 5<sup>th</sup> SC Meeting. A final report from Dr. Berman has been posted on the website as are the individual evaluations by the School Committee. The composite evaluation has to be approved by the School Committee and submitted to DESE. With respect to the evaluators, this year the local election did not happen until June 9<sup>th</sup> at which time our former Chair, Joel Blumstein rolled off of the Committee. Shannon checked with DESE and the decision was to ask Joel to fill out an individual evaluation, while Lauren Conoscenti declined providing an individual report because she had only been on the Committee for three weeks.

Dr. Berman, at the July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, declined an increase in pay stating that it would be inappropriate to take a raise in recognition of the situation we are in.

Shannon read highlights from the composite evaluation. The full composite is available on the APS website. Paul Murphy: The composite is complete and well done. The extraordinary nature of a Superintendent's job is intensely difficult and sometimes when you are in a position for so long one should ask your peers, "what am I not seeing". Paul thanked Shelley for his patience during this very difficult year. Susan McCready thanked Dr. Berman for his leadership and tenacity during the closure and over the past year. There were many challenges to overcome in the spring, she considers his work as an instructional leader as exemplary. We are serving as a model and practice state-wide under Dr. Berman's leadership. A lot of work has been done on facilities including the submission of a robust educational plan for West Elementary. Full-day Kindergarten is tuition free next year and a great deal of time has been spent on reworking the budget and configuring the CIP. District communications have improved but we are still missing the mark on maintaining the service level on basic communication; a communication plan and establishing priorities is very important to have. She hopes that we will continue to solve the Student Start Time request.

Joel Blumstein provided a few suggestions for going forward. Dr. Berman is focusing on the right things, literature, cultural competency, equity issues, SEL, mental health, etc. Joel recommends including start times within the mental health category. In terms of the re-opening, it is an enormous challenge with no perfect solution. This is a difficult task they are facing and not made easier by DESE coming up with new guidance nor the AEA's unwillingness to buy-in on the full remote learning using all the available tools. It is clear that we are going to need additional staff and resources. The building projects each

moved along, but he is concerned about the lack of coordination between the two projects (West Elementary and Andover High School) and he worries about the ability to get the votes at Town Meeting for a debt exclusion and encourages development of a strategy on how we can maximize on succeeding on both projects. Joel expressed the need for open and honest communication with the School Committee. Overall management: Shelley has put in place a very strong team and should delegate to them for review of the bigger picture.

Tracey agrees with the points made by her fellow Committee members. There were a number of open positions that had to be filled in a very short time frame, and despite the pandemic, Shelley helped keep the new appointments on track and filled with great people. She thanked Dr. Berman for his educational leadership and shares the others suggestions on how we can make our district stronger and shape goals for next year to reflect on those areas.

Lauren Conoscenti: As new member of the School Committee, she hopes we focus more on communications for the upcoming year. Parents are going to tune in more; improving communication and family engagement must be a priority.

The Committee Chair agrees with a lot that has been said. She is excited about developing a relationship with a new Human Resources Director, and holding staff to a higher standard across the district.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept the Superintendent's composite evaluation as presented. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murpy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, and S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Dr. Berman thanked the Committee for recognizing how challenging this year has been and how much has been accomplished. The School Committee's feedback is very valuable. We do need to take next steps and think about how we communicate best. We need to have a cohesive strategy in these difficult times.

G. **Consent Agenda**

1. Grants/Donations to District; Minutes: Minutes of June 11, 2020 and June 25, 2020.

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

H. **Adjournment**

At 10:25 P.M. Paul Murphy moved that the School Committee adjourn from the meeting of July 30, 2020. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dee DeLorenzo*  
Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary