

Richmond Consolidated School - School Committee
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

6:00 PM

Approved

Attendees: Adeline Ellis, Ian Wilhelm, Peter Dillon, Jill Pompei, Mary Shook

Guests: Tim Walsh, Mackenzie Greer, Brigid Naventi, Neal Pilson, Mike Harke, Kimmie Lecco, Amity Winters, Brian Grebeldinger, Rachel Kanz, Errin Roney, Jen Stover, Cristina Lenfest, Joy Mullen, Michelle Smith, 10 others.

1. Call to order: 6:02pm

DW announced the meeting is being recorded per MGL Ch30sec20(f) requirements, and that the meeting was posted and being held according to current Open Meeting Law requirements.

An Executive Order from the Governor of Massachusetts relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

All other provisions of the Open Meeting Law, such as the requirements regarding posting notice of meetings and creating and maintaining accurate meeting minutes, as well as the limited, enumerated purposes for holding an executive session, remain in effect.

Web: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/867872549>, Phone: (408) 650-3123 Access Code: 867-872-549

2. Positive messages -open call to hear observations related to our educational efforts.

DW acknowledged the hard work put forth by many on the immense challenges.

3. Public Comments: Per request of C Swinson, DW read an 8/7/2020 email regarding his concerns with COVID19 and the need to focus on plans for remote learning.

4. Review and approve minutes: 7/14/2020 Ina motion, AE 2nd, All in favor. 7/29/2020 Ina motion as amended, AE 2nd, all in favor. 2/5/2020 exec session AE, DW 2nd all in favor, 2/27/20 exec session AE motion, DW 2nd all in favor.

5. Principal's Report

School's reopening: Goal is a phased reopen, mirror what the state is now recommending.

See outlined details below

Pre-K: remote learning for youngest learning is a challenge and less effective. Do we want to change tuition, how and when do we open pre-k? Currently 5 half days or 4 full days at a minimum.

SC Vote: approved forgoing charges until the end of October. DW motion, AE 2nd. DW Aye, IW Aye, AE not connected.

There is a significant need for more communication to families, even while there is still so much to understand. Looking to schedule additional info sessions and trying.

SC Vote: approved the modified calendar, students starting 9/14, staff on 8/27 : DW aye, IW aye, AE not able to vote due to connection (however was in favor via a text).

DW acknowledged resident ER with a question about the parent survey and how the results of the survey were used for the current plan.

JP: 68% of families said they want to send kids to school, the rest were split between won't and undecided. Continued to move forward with a hybrid model plan but from discussions with many stakeholders it was decided a phased open starting with remote then to hybrid

would be best. This would allow stepwise advancing on figure out all aspects for having kids safely in the school..

PD: info on bus usage. 30% of those who would use the buses are looking at how to drive them separately. If numbers on buses are down that will help with requirements including spacing. As this situation evolves, people thoughts will be changing.

DW: realized there was still a lot to sort out, but starting with the professionals only in the building will make it easier to set a solid plan fro having students in the building.

TW: asked if teachers will be in classroom during remote, and what conditions teachers see as needed for students to be allowed to come back. PD explained these aspects are subject to negotiations currently going on. There are positive aspects of being in the school and we are working to set metric to guide decisions (regional, and local).

IW: there can be glitches with any new systems you are learning so it would be good to be there with support so will be much easier to resolve.

IW joined a webinar today where a comment from Tom Scott President of Mass Superintendents resonated with her: “The problem is not a situation of win-lose, it’s a situation of problem solving, so we need to focus on that.”

2020-2021 Return to School: Phased Re-opening

Mirroring the phased-in reopening plan the Commonwealth is employing for state operations, Richmond Consolidated School will reopen one step at a time. Assuming public health indicators related to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to trend in a positive direction, Richmond Consolidated intends to reopen school safely in four phases.

- **Phase 1: Staff and System Readiness (August - September 11)**
- **Phase 2: Student and Family Readiness (September 14-?)**
- **Phase 3: Hybrid/Remote Learning (DATES TBA)**
- **Phase 4: Evaluation and Next Steps (DATES TBA)**

Key Components of a Phased Reopening:

- All students will begin on a remote learning platform in September. The remote learning experience will be much more robust than what occurred in the spring.
- Students in specialized programs will have the opportunity for in person learning.
- We will gradually increase in-person offerings through October with the goal of providing in-person instruction to all who choose it by the end of the month.
- As we do not have the capacity in classrooms or on buses, in-person instruction will be a hybrid model that provides 2 days of in-school instruction and 3 days of at-home instruction each week. Students will be required to log-on during school hours and attendance will be taken for remote learning sessions. Students may attend in person on M/T or Th/F. All students will be remote on Wednesday.
- We will continue to offer remote learning for those that choose a “fully” remote option even after hybrid is offered.

PHASE 1:

Beginning of the Year Planning AUGUST - September 11:

We are focusing heavily on the PD for staff for August 27-September 11. There will be a focus on our new LMS CANVAS to ensure we can provide the best remote learning experiences for students, we will also focus on SEL, and of course because we hope to return in a hybrid model soon, a focus on safety.

CANVAS is a LMS that allows a consistent approach to teaching and communicating. Students can submit assignments, and teachers, students, and parents can seamlessly communicate using the tools embedded. It allows for both synchronous and asynchronous activities, it inherently provides the flexibility needed to meet students unique learning needs. Students can go back and review content as needed. They can learn the content through audio, video, photos, articles, and interactive simulations. AND Students can demonstrate understanding in each of these ways as well.

Many teachers have completed or are completing a Growing with Canvas Course, which was a self paced on line course to introduce them to the concept of a learning management system and play around with uploading content, creating quizzes or rubrics, assigning discussion topics and so forth. We are now planning our first PD days to expand on this and meet teacher needs:

- We are looking at planning daily training sessions and chunking content into modules at different levels such as basic - intermediate - advanced to meet various staff member’s

needs.

- We may offer a show and tell session with some exemplary courses, followed by hands-on, well-supported sessions. OR we may combine training and work sessions - using the morning to introduce course tools and use afternoon to allow faculty to “work on their own” and ask questions as they go!
- We are planning for teachers, paras and other support staff (ot/pt) so that we have a smooth roll out
- We are also looking at the best way to roll this out to parents and students
- In all planning we are focusing on the impact of remote learning on the dynamics of the T-S relationship, engaging tasks, planning units of study, feedback, assessment and grading... all while monitoring student well being.

Concurrently we are creating an RCS parent/student handbook for families that will better explain the benefits of CANVAS and will include a Code of Ethics/expectations for on line learning. We are including requirements from the state for remote learning which are different than the spring. In the fall, schools must take daily attendance for remote learning which is a difference from the spring. In the spring we were encouraged to focus on a review of information that was presented prior to covid when we first began remote learning. Now we are being asked to go beyond review and we must assess all students as we would during in person learning, also different than in the spring. CANVAS allows us to do all of this.

3. We are reviewing various resources to best meet SEL needs. We are looking at on line tools, the use of mindfulness, planning PD for staff to best meet SEL needs in a remote setting.

Phase 2: Remote Learning

Teachers will be providing approximately 3 hours of synchronous learning in the core areas and there will be a specialist class as well.

Schedules will go out at the beginning of September.

Phase 3: Hybrid Return

We continue to prep the building for an in person return- ensure distancing, sanitizing, outdoor learning opportunities, review protocols for illnesses...

We are reviewing DESE/DPH protocols and procedures including communicating with the bus company.

6. Superintendent’s report

- a. Appointment of new school physician: Dr Pirano who has been the school physician for many years, is retiring. PD thanked her for her support and how she has been a huge asset. Recommends Dr Alec Belman who works at Fairview to become next school physician. Guidance is usually for a pediatrician, but after shared his resume and is highly recommend. IW motion to approve, DW 2nd, All in favor.
- b. Asbestos: This was to provide and update on the AHERA (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act) report. The agenda listed closure, however this still needs to be finalized as we are waiting on the response from the Dept of Labor. There should have been a plan in the district years ago so work has been going on to address gaps. Research was done, statement from the architect firm from last renovation says there is no asbestos, Formal response coming.
- c. PD provided further comments on activities relative to plans for the new school year.

7. Special Education Director’s report: MS is in the Sped Dir Leadership Academy and is very excited to be learning about all that is going on and developing further connections. There are three referrals for testing. Thirty students on IEPs in Richmond. Working with parents, scheduling meetings. Timelines have been waived from the spring.

8. Policy – Discuss needs related to Covid-19

- a. Face Covering – first reading. Admin recommendation for no exemption for younger kids, like all are doing. There are exceptions for certain conditions.

- AE brought up concerns about privacy. What happens if there is a positive case? The district cannot communicate who patient is, but there will be communication based on contact tracing. There is clear protocol for communicating cases.
- b. MASC provided an EBC Supplement for guidance on policies to focus on. Accept it and EBC Emergency Plans as a first reading.
9. Financial Report: reviewed first report of the year. DW asked about SPED tutor line already fully expensed. PD to follow up on this. DW asked for the end of year report. PD said Amy and Town hall are working on final details are should have it by next meeting. AE asked about the Lee tuition. PD and MS explained this is a SPED related expense. DW asked where we stand on future spending needs. PD comments on areas needing attention.
10. Other unforeseen items: none
11. Public Comment: DW offered to hear any comments, there were none.
12. Adjournment: 7:33pm IW motion AE 2nd all in favor.

Submitted: DW