

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #51
PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
August 6, 2020
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Bea Douglas, Chairperson
 Heidi Asdot, Vice Chairperson
 Jessica Drouin
 Adam Gauthier
 Ted Mitchell

Others Present: John J. Freeman, Interim Superintendent of Schools
 Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
 Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal
 Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
 Danielle Harvey, PES Principal
 Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
 Tobi Chassie, Recording Secretary
 Members of the Public

Ms. Douglas called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Ms. Douglas thanked participants for attending the meeting, both in person and online. She asked that people be polite in their comments regarding the proposed reopening plan. Ms. Asdot stated that people should keep in mind that there is no “perfect” plan and that the administration has worked diligently to create a plan that has children’s best interest at the core.

II. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. Reopening Plan

Members of the administrative leadership team introduced themselves in order to clarify new titles.

Ms. Bickford stated that the overarching tenant of the work to come up with a plan was to “educate students in the safest way possible”. She went on to provide

the audience with the goals of the work that was done. Guiding principles were shared.

Ms. Harvey reviewed the district's planning process, including a timeline of events that took place to develop the proposed reopening plan.

Ms. Harvey reviewed the proposed plan. She stated that various plans were considered and the plans of other districts were reviewed. Ms. Harvey explained that the proposal was organized and driven by the guidelines established by the New Hampshire Department of Education's Re-Opening Task Force.

Ms. Harvey explained how technology will be leveraged in order to allow teachers to pivot quickly to remote learning, if and when necessary. All teachers in the district will have all materials on Google Classroom so that all students will have equitable access to the curriculum and materials. There will be an available bank of devices to ensure that all students will have access to technology.

Ms. Harvey reviewed the two options that will be available to students and their families. Option 1 includes a hybrid model of face to face and online. Option 2 will be entirely remote learning. She explained that home schooling is an option, but will mean a loss of revenue for the district. Virtual Learning Academy Charter School is an option, but is filling up quickly and may not realistically be an option.

Ms. Harvey explained that Wednesdays will be a remote day for all students. She stated that the default will be for siblings to be in the same grouping, but parents can request splitting siblings up as well. Ms. Harvey stated that students will work in their assigned "home base" in a socially distant manner. Students will not transition in large groups from one location to another.

Digital platforms will include Class Dojo for PES, while PMHS has not finalized the common platform. Google Classrooms will be shared through links on PowerSchool. Zoom will be the prioritized platform used for virtual meetings. Students and staff will have expectations to be online live at certain times. Staff will be available during the school day to support learning.

Mr. Hamilton explained the public health protocols that have been established. A "status protocol" will notify the public of the status of the learning model, using a color coding system. A safety protocol will include the use of face coverings and social distancing. Reporting and investigating Covid-19 will follow the CDC school decision tree in case of confirmed cases. Cleaning and disinfecting procedures will follow CDC recommendations.

Ms. Brown reviewed classroom environment proposals. Students' home bases will be organized with desks six feet distanced from center and masks will be required. Arrangements will be made for students to take mask breaks. Visitors

to school will be only allowed by appointment and screening protocol will be applied. Ms. Brown reviewed considerations relative to the schools' ventilation systems, including upgrades in filters and increased exchange rates.

Ms. LeMay reviewed plans for effective communication pathways. She reviewed website, emails, and phone calls via school messenger, Facebook, Class Dojo (PES) and another platform for PMHS, which is yet to be determined. A weekly family newsletter will be published to update families on district information, building specific information, and health services notes.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed several other topics such as co- and extracurricular activities, food services, recess, and transportation.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed a more detailed timeline, which included notifying the public of the plan, asking parents to commit to a decision on their option for segment one (five weeks), and preschool screening. He explained the changes in the school calendar including: September 3 - roll out day; September 4-7 - Labor Day holiday; September 9-10 - remote learning; September 10 – first “A” day, and September 11 – first “B” day. Mr. Hamilton shared a proposed school calendar providing details for the calendar relative to the reopening plan.

Ms. Douglas opened up the discussion to participants in the room, asking speakers to limit their comments to three minutes.

Heather Elliott asked if there are options for supporting families which include front-line workers, such as providing child care. Ms. Bickford stated there are no options for students to attend school full time as there would be no way to maintain CDC guidelines. Ms. Harvey stated that a committee is working on after school options and community based solutions.

Justin Clough commended the administrators for their detailed plan, but stated his disappointment that there will not be an all-day, every day option for students. He stated that this is a problem for many people in the community. Mr. Clough asked if there will be duct cleaning of the HVAC system. He stated he liked the status color code system and wanted to know where that daily status will be published. Mr. Clough asked about CRTC and wanted to know what would be done for those students attending. He opined that communication is a significant issue and wanted to know what the system would be to ensure that clear and timely communication will occur. Ms. Bickford explained that teachers working remotely will be assigned to be point people for communication. Ms. Harvey stated that teachers have committed to responding to all communications from parents and students within forty-eight hours of receipt. Mr. Clough asked what steps will be taken to ensure the safety of students in a remote environment; he offered an example of a student being harassed online during a Zoom meeting.

Jodi Cunningham asked for clarification regarding a commitment from students and staff to do option 1 or 2. Mr. Hamilton explained that all staff and students will be contacted on Friday, August 7 with follow up calls to anyone who has not responded during the following week. Ms. Cunningham asked if it is known how many teachers are willing to return to school. Mr. Hamilton stated they have a sense of who the teachers are that will return to school. Approximately 75% of teachers have indicated their willingness to return and 65% of students who will likely be coming to school, based on an initial survey. Ms. Cunningham asked for clarification on mask breaks and if there would be consequences for students who refuse to wear a mask. Mr. Hamilton stated that there will be a protocol for students unwilling to follow the guidelines. Ms. Cunningham asked about “shared materials”. Mr. Hamilton stated that there are not enough textbooks to separate from group A to group B.

Karen Perras asked who would be re-teaching content on remote days. Ms. Bickford stated that initial teaching of material will be by certified teachers; re-teaching and support will be provided by teachers and paraprofessionals. Ms. Perras asked for clarification about tracking students according to assessment data. Ms. Bickford stated that there is no intention to group students according to skill level, but that the district intends to maintain heterogeneous groupings. Ms. Perras asked if there is a vacancy in math, to which Mr. Hamilton replied that interviews are currently taking place. Ms. Perras stated training is available for Google Classroom on “Simple K-12”, which could be very helpful to staff and students. Mr. Hamilton explained what a mask break would look like for students. Ms. Douglas added that the breaks would be determined by teachers and look different by grade level and by student.

Lisa English asked for clarification on the online support. Ms. Harvey stated that certified teachers will be providing initial instruction and Google Classroom preparation. Paraprofessionals may be the people checking in on students on Wednesdays and providing follow up support. Ms. English asked how parents will be notified of missing work; Ms. Harvey stated this communication would be via email. Ms. Harvey further explained the way in which students would leave the home bases to attend labs, family and consumer arts, art, and music activities in small groups. Mr. Hamilton explained further the protocol for parents coming to the school. Ms. English asked for clarification regarding lunch choices; Mr. Hamilton stated lunch options will be similar and in a pick-up fashion.

Jillian Gauthier asked if preschool students will be required to wear masks, to which Ms. Bickford stated in the affirmative. Ms. Gauthier asked about sanitizing between group A and group B. Ms. Harvey stated that cleaning will be done on a daily basis to sanitize, but deeper cleaning will be done on Wednesdays.

Jodi Cunningham asked for clarification about what would happen if there was a positive case of Covid-19. Mr. Hamilton stated that if someone is tested and found positive, CDC guidelines will be followed. For example, the school would

be closed for two to five days in order to fully investigate the situation and any impacted individuals would be quarantined for fourteen days.

Lisa English asked about the PMHS decision for communication. Several options are being considered, such as Class Dojo and Class Tag.

The questions that have been asked via Zoom which have already been answered will be published in the School Board minutes.

Melissa Babcock (via Zoom) asked if VLACS is for grades 4 through 12, or K through 12. Ms. Harvey said VLACS is still building courses below grade 4. Ms. Babcock asked if all PES teachers will be required to use Class Dojo to which Ms. Harvey answered in the affirmative. Ms. Babcock commended the administrators for their work in preparing the plan.

Justin Clough asked for clarification about decisions made regarding sports; he wanted to know who would be making the decisions. Mr. Hamilton said it would be either the superintendent or the School Board.

All questions from both the face to face audience and the online Zoom audience were answered. Ms. Douglas opened to questions from the Board.

Mr. Mitchell asked for clarification for the students attending Concord Regional Technical Center. Mr. Hamilton stated Concord is developing a plan that will include offering students either five day or partial week participation.

Mr. Gauthier stated his concern for an ABAB schedule, as opposed to AABB. He asked if there is a plan in place for students who run a high temperature normally to which Ms. Bickford stated there is plan in place that includes a doctor's note provided by the parent. Mr. Gauthier asked for clarification about the number of days for staff and students to be away from the facility if tested positive. It was agreed that there would be a fourteen-day quarantine, as recommended by the CDC. Mr. Gauthier opined that when students are in their seats in their home base rooms, they should be able to take off their masks. It was explained that students will start in status yellow where students wear masks; the status can be adjusted. It was suggested that students should start off with more stringent requirements which could later be eased up as may be warranted. Mr. Gauthier asked about special considerations for students with special needs. Ms. Bickford explained some options that are being utilized with students during the summer programming. Mr. Gauthier asked if preschool will continue to be half day, to which Ms. Bickford responded that it will remain status quo, except that the off day will be on Wednesdays. Mr. Gauthier asked about the device distribution. Mr. Hamilton stated devices will be collected from students, checked out, and then reassigned accordingly. Mr. Gauthier stated he believes there needs to be a full class Zoom meeting with each teacher if there is a pivot back to all remote learning.

Mr. Mitchell asked if there has been any indication of child care options being provided by the State. Ms. Harvey said the State is aware of the issues but has not offered any options.

Ms. Douglas commended the administration for the work that was done to develop the plan. She acknowledged the amount of time and energy that was spent on developing the plan by teachers and administrators. Ms. Douglas asked if there would be a way to provide parents training on Google Classroom and Class Dojo. Mr. Hamilton stated there will be an opportunity provided for families not present or on Zoom tonight to receive the information. Ms. Douglas stated her appreciation of using Google Classroom and Class Dojo throughout PES and Google Classroom and a specified platform for PMHS.

Ms. Drouin asked about updating devices without coming into the school. Mr. Hamilton said most updates can be done remotely, but if not, they will be returned to the school for updating. Ms. Drouin asked about paraprofessionals being assigned to classrooms. Ms. Bickford stated that paraprofessionals will be assigned according to the individual education plans (IEP's). Ms. Drouin asked what support will be provided to students who choose to learn remotely but still need support. Ms. Bickford stated students' needs will be met according to the IEP. She explained that Governor Sununu has mandated IEP meetings being held for each student within the first thirty days so needs can be determined and solutions developed. Ms. Harvey explained that accommodations will be made for the remote students when taking NWEA testing. Ms. Drouin asked if parents will need to provide more than usual back-to-school materials. Ms. Harvey stated that packets of supplies will be provided by the school so that each student has what s/he needs. Ms. Drouin asked how often the electro-static sprayer will be used to which Mr. Hamilton answered daily.

Ms. Asdot asked about instruction for A and B groups. Ms. Bickford stated that equity is at the core of instruction. All curriculum and materials will be available online so that all learners, whether remote or face to face, will have what they need and receive the same educational opportunities. Ms. Asdot asked for clarification regarding student movement. Ms. Harvey explained that students will remain in their home bases and only leave when they need to do so for labs and other activities. Ms. Asdot inquired about cafeteria protocol; Ms. Harvey stated students will eat in classrooms at PMHS and will eat in the cafeteria with no more than twenty-five students at a time at PES. Ms. Asdot asked if playground equipment will be sanitized. Ms. Harvey said the students will be asked to wash their hands on their way out and their way in. Portable sinks have been purchased.

Mr. Gauthier asked if a family can split their decision for multiple students. Mr. Hamilton said that families can make different decisions for different children in the family.

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted to approve the reopening plan as presented. The motion passed with Ms. Douglas, Ms. Asdot, Ms. Drouin, and Mr. Mitchell voting in the affirmative and Mr. Gauthier voting against the motion.

Justin Clough stated his appreciation for the tremendous amount of work that was done to develop the plan. Although he does not agree with everything in the plan, he does appreciate the work that was completed. Mr. Clough asked if the results of the initial survey could be published. It was agreed upon that pie graphs illustrating survey results will be published on the website.

Mr. Mitchell stated his appreciation for the work of the administration.

Dr. Freeman thanked the administrators for their work. He said that the work reflected the national resources that were available. He especially commended the administrators for their willingness to include faculty, staff, and parents in the process. According to Dr. Freeman, the integrity of the product was due to the process that was followed by the administration.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Non-public session (Dr. Freeman)

The following item was deleted from the Superintendent's report:

- School Reopening Plan (Dr. Freeman)

IV. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to accept the minutes of the public meeting on July 16, 2020. Changes include on page three, paragraph one, change to "Ms Douglas, yes" and on page five, change Donna Kiley to Donna Keeley.

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to accept the minutes of the non-public meeting on July 16, 2020. The motion was passed unanimously to accept the minutes as corrected.

A motion was made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to accept the minutes of the public meeting on July 21, 2020. The motion was passed unanimously to accept the minutes as written.

A motion was made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to accept the minutes of the non-public meeting on July 21, 2020. The motion was passed unanimously to accept the minutes as written.

- VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE - No Report
- VII. PES PRINCIPAL - No Report
- VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL (Continued)

- A. 2020-2021 District Calendar

- A revised calendar was proposed which included three additional workshop days for staff training. The Governor has permitted these days to be swapped out for the 180 instructional days to maintain the 185 professional contract days with teachers. The calendar also shifts the official start date of the school year from August 31 to September 3 and the calendar has been color coded to indicate A and B days. On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to revise school calendar as recommended.

- B. Administrative Organization Charts

- Mr. Hamilton presented organizational charts that have been modified after the reorganization of the administration. Job responsibilities for the new guidance coordinator position were included.

- IX. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES - No Report
- X. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

- A. Title IX Policy Updates

- Dr. Freeman explained that new federal requirements regarding Title IX, a civil rights law regarding discrimination based on sex in education institutions. He provided the Board with a draft of the required policy and asked that the Board consider approving the policy. Additionally, two current policies could be rescinded as the new proposed policy includes the key provisions of these policies.

- On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to rescind Policy GBAA and Policy JBAA and to adopt Policy ACAC.

- B. New Professional Employee

Dr. Freeman announced that Sarah Holman Gould has been hired to fill the position of PMHS guidance coordinator.

C. Tuitioning Study Committee

Dr. Freeman requested Board guidance regarding the makeup of the Tuitioning Study Committee. Ms. Douglas suggested asking Leslie Vogt to be on the committee. Justin Clough volunteered to participate on the committee. Ms. Asdot stated her willingness to participate on the committee. Mr. Mitchell suggested asking Bob Schifferle to participate. The superintendent would also be added, with five members comprising the new Committee.

D. Report: Student Assistance Program

The annual report of the district's Student Assistance Program was enclosed in the Board's packet for their review.

XI. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee - Ms. Asdot
- B. Drake Field & Facilities - Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiations – Ms. Asdot and Ms. Douglas
- D. Foss Family Scholarship Foundation – Mr. Mitchell

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Drake Field

The situation at Drake Field has improved, although there is still an issue with trash.

XII. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Jillian Gauthier asked for clarification on unified arts. Ms. Harvey stated students will receive unified arts according to a schedule.

Justin Clough stated there has been a decrease in the amount of trash being found at Drake Field. He said there is an increase in graffiti. Mr. Gauthier suggested that the Board consider work on the gazebo.

XIV. NON PUBLIC

At 8:04 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 (b) and (c) to discuss two

student matters, two personnel matters, and collective bargaining with the EAP. The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes) to enter into non-public session.

Actions taken in non-public session:

1. Approved two non-resident attendance under certain conditions;
2. Approved the hiring of short-term interim superintendent.

At 8:35 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot to exit from a non-public session and to re-enter into open session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier; Mr. Mitchell, yes) to exit the non-public session and to re-enter open session.

XV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for August 20, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School lecture hall.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Chassie
Recording Secretary