

Carlisle School Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Carlisle School Auditorium
83 School Street Carlisle, MA 01741
and Zoom Remote Access

Present– School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, Amanda Comperchio, Jack Huntress, Eva Mostoufi

Present – School Committee via Zoom: Sara Wilson

Present– School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent

Present – School Administration via Zoom: Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal; Denet Sidell, Elementary Principal; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Anne Mahan, Business Manager.

Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, members of the public that cannot physically access this School Committee meeting could access this meeting via live stream at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87580921119?pwd=RzgrbUdZQkVtbUFZbzRwOVR1TTJiUT09>

Meeting ID: 875 8092 1119

Passcode: 0M.UK7

The School Committee reserves the right to implement additional remote participation procedures and will notify the public of these procedures as soon as practicable. Public comments were deferred until tomorrow’s meeting.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Lear called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

II. Information/Discussion Items

A. Carlisle School Reopening Discussion. Ms. Lear stated that the purpose of this meeting was to talk with members of the Board of Health about the challenges of reopening school in the current climate. She thanked everyone for doing what they can to keep people safe. Mr. O’Shea said he will be submitting three school reopening models to the State, as requested. It is not yet known which model will be implemented, as the situation is fluid. It was noted that the Back to School Task Force (BTSTF) contributed to the development of the models. The following models were presented:

1. Full In-Person: Masks will be worn (mandatory for all staff and all students PK-8), hand-washing and sanitation protocols will be implemented, and 3 feet distancing as recommended by the DESE will be in place. It was noted that Dr. Mehler looked at all spaces in the school and 6 feet distancing can be implemented in instructional spaces.
2. Hybrid: This is the preferred model from data collected through staff surveys. One cohort would attend school on Monday and Thursday; one cohort would attend on

Tuesday and Friday, and Wednesday would be a day of remote instruction. Students will be grouped in cohorts based on their needs, not alphabetically.

3. Full Remote: The faculty and staff worked hard on the model that was implemented in the spring, and everyone's efforts were appreciated. However, per feedback from surveys, it was not perceived by parents as the best model of instruction. The administrative team and the curriculum team have worked on enhancing the remote model, which will be more robust, with asynchronous and synchronous instruction. There will be direct lessons and a structured school day.

Mr. O'Shea said that the School is ready to implement any of these 3 models. Summer days will focus on programming for these models. The State provided relief on the mandated days of instruction, which has been reduced from 180 to 170 days. The first day of school for students was moved to September 15, and the days at the beginning of September will be used for planning. Mr. O'Shea introduced Laura Marshall, Special Educator, who gave a presentation on the Summer Program. Ms. Marshall has been teaching in the Summer Program for eight years. This year, she had five Middle School students in the program and had the assistance of two paraprofessionals. The program ran for 3 hours a day, 3 days a week, for 5 weeks. The students wore masks, had assigned seats, had assigned Chromebooks, there was no sharing of supplies, and they maintained physical distancing. Windows were opened. There were also sinks in the rooms for handwashing and hand sanitizer was available. Positives of the program included: students were engaged and happy to be in school, they enjoyed their summer project which was learning about COVID, project ideas were creative (examples included conducting interviews and writing poems,) they went outside for recess, and were respectful and compliant with rules. Challenges included: maintaining distance when a student needed help, difficulties with understanding students wearing masks, and reminding them to distance from others. Ms. Marshall said the students worked hard and she received positive parent feedback. Mr. Huntress asked Ms. Marshall what school reopening plan she would choose. Ms. Marshall said she would prefer the hybrid plan because it would be less crowded in classrooms. Mr. Huntress asked if there was less learning this year compared to the last years; Ms. Marshall answered that there was an equal amount of learning this year compared to other years and the small numbers helped achieve that. Ms. Mostoufi asked if the attendees were high needs students; the answer was yes. Ms. Wilson asked how the kids adapted to the routines; Ms. Marshall answered that through the 5 weeks, they followed the safety protocols and other rules. Ms. Mostoufi asked about the daily schedule; Ms. Marshall said it was posted on the board along with expectations. Ms. Mostoufi asked if the students could socialize; Ms. Marshall said they were able to run around on the plaza, talk with each other, and had no problems interacting. Ms. Mostoufi asked if Ms. Marshall has shared this feedback with other teachers. Ms. Marshall said she would be happy to; Mr. O'Shea added that this is the first opportunity for a summer program teacher to share information. Mr. Huntress asked the Board of Health members the best way to share information with teachers on how to teach students to keep their distance from others and wear masks. Mr. Thorsen answered that these rules are easier with older kids. He noted that it is difficult for a small child to pass this disease to another person. The risk is higher as people get older. Teachers are cognizant of that. It is a management of risks. Ms. Mostoufi asked if fresh air keeps people more safe. Mr. Thorsen answered that replacing the air in a classroom is

important, but fresh air is best. Filters help too. Increased air flow helps in all situations. Ms. Comperchio asked about classroom management and if more staff are needed. Mr. O'Shea answered that more adults are needed to supervise students this year due to the many new safety procedures in place. Mr. Huntress asked if people are 6 feet apart, do they need to wear masks? The BOH answered that it is more risky if you don't wear a mask, and it is better to err on the safe side. He noted that sneezes can carry 18 feet. Ms. Comperchio asked about transitioning from one model to another. Mr. O'Shea answered that with the 3 plans, the School should be able to transition smoothly. Ms. Mostoufi asked about the unique needs of elementary students in a remote model. Mr. O'Shea answered that it is a challenge to manage a group of elementary students remotely. Some of the work falls to the parents to support learning and their child's social emotional connection. He feels that it is critical to have young students in person for learning. It is also important for older students. Ms. Wilson asked what in person instruction would look like. She said that during the walk-through of the classrooms and the bus, she thought collaboration and hands-on projects would have to be eliminated. Mr. O'Shea said that it should not be assumed that there would be no project-based learning occurring this year. He cited the creativity of the teachers and knows there will be tradeoffs and changes. But he knows that Carlisle educators will find ways to provide a great education for our students. Mr. Huntress wanted to make sure everyone was aware of all of the things that the School is doing to prepare for this year's learning plan, such as purchasing outdoor furniture and creating the 6 feet distancing set up in classrooms. Mr. O'Shea added that in the Middle School, teachers will push into classrooms with the exception of P.E. and World Language. For the teachers that see a large number of students (such as in Art), those teachers may provide remote instruction to a group to limit exposure. Ms. Mostoufi asked about guidelines for distancing on the bus. Mr. O'Shea said at the tour, the BOH expressed concern about one child per seat being too close. The School will adopt the practice of one child in every other bus seat. Surveys have been sent to parents asking if their child requires bus transportation. It was noted there is limited space on the bus with the seating restrictions in place. We will analyze our needs, open windows, and do what we need to do to make transportation work. Ms. Comperchio asked if a teacher tests positive and has to quarantine for two weeks, does the class have to quarantine as well? Mr. O'Shea answered that if students were in the room with a teacher who tested positive, the students are close contacts and would quarantine for 14 days. Ms. Mostoufi asked the percentage of families that will send their children back to school in person. Mr. O'Shea answered that 87% of families will send their children to a hybrid or in-person model. Ms. Lear said that people should not be able to change their minds about their kids having to ride the bus. Mr. O'Shea said we should be able to accommodate the riders to date. Mr. O'Shea reviewed the frameworks for school reopening and changing models. He noted that no cases in Carlisle is one extreme. If there were 4-5 cases, the School would switch to remote learning based on the DESE model. The Carlisle School model is more safe. It includes masks for all, 6 feet distancing, and if anyone in the classroom is exposed they go into quarantine. To summarize the frameworks; with 0-4 cases the School remains in-person; 5 or more cases warrants a move to remote learning. Also, 5-6 cases in the Town of Carlisle or high numbers in the State would trigger the move to remote instruction as well. Ms. Wilson said it's important to tell parents the plan for in person or hybrid instruction. There is

always the possibility that we have to pivot to remote learning and people want to plan for that as well. Mr. O'Shea said that it is the School's responsibility to educate the children of families that choose remote learning. We are fine-tuning the curriculum plan for those families. Ms. Wilson is concerned that it will be a diminished curriculum. Mr. O'Shea said one of the great challenges for districts in MA is that Schools have to run a parallel program. We are still looking at approaches. We will survey parents. Can remote kids Zoom into classrooms? Can remote students ask questions and participate in discussions? These ideas will be explored. Ms. Mostoufi asked how we know that all of the COVID cases are being reported in Carlisle. Mr. O'Shea said data is posted on the State website. The public health nurse shares information as well, and the BOH receives information. The BOH added that there is an electronic state epidemiology network, and names can't be released because of HIPAA laws, but if there is a case in the School, the BOH would know and Ms. Fantasia would let the School know on a need to know basis. Ms. Mostoufi asked if the School would have students sign a pledge to follow the rules. Mr. O'Shea answered that expectations will be explained and listed and there will be a commitment to follow the guidelines. Daily check-ins will be done through Lauren Sawyer. Mr. Huntress appreciated the transparency of these discussions. He said sometimes in Carlisle we forget how fortunate we are. We benefit from low enrollment and work tirelessly to solve problems. It is humbling and he is grateful. Ms. Lear said there is another CSC meeting tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. and there will be opportunities for public comments at that meeting. Mr. O'Shea thanked the BOH for attending.

III. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VIII. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Huntress seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye. The public meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent