

Carlisle School Committee
Minutes
March 20, 2020
8:30-9:45 a.m.
Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Present – School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, David Model, Eva Mostoufi, Sara Wilson, Shannon May Lavery.

Present – School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal; Dennet Sidell, Elementary Principal; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Susan Pray, Business Manager; Rob Fortado, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Note: Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, the public was not allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting.

Members of the Public were able to access this meeting via live stream at <https://zoom.us/j/357585508> Meeting ID: 357 585 508

Public comments were posted via the chat box. Questions/Comments were read and answered by the School Committee via live stream.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Lear called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

II. Information/Discussion Items

- A. Update on School Closure. Mr. O’Shea shared a PowerPoint update. Governor Baker has extended the school closure through April 7. Things are changing hour by hour. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is meeting every other day. CCHS is offering a take away breakfast and lunch from 8:30-11 each weekday. The last day of school in Carlisle will be June 22 regardless of how long the school closure is. The custodial staff is working full time. The office staff is maintaining 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. office hours and conducting necessary business. The Administrative Team has been using Zoom to meet. Everyone is adhering to recommendations on social distancing. The faculty is designing and sharing lessons to keep students engaged and connected with school. The school will keep evaluating and adjusting what teachers and staff are doing. SeeSaw and Schoology are being utilized. Dr. Mehler gave an update. Middle School teachers, in addition to designing and sharing lessons with students, have been inputting grades for the second trimester. Report cards will be sent home today. There have been multiple Google plus hangouts with staff. All students in grades 5-8 have Gmail accounts to ease communication. Teachers are posting enrichment activities and specialists post activities on the day of the week a student would meet with him or her. Specific examples of activities include: Liz Gray had an optional Google meeting with students, and 8th grade science students have been encouraged to go outside to see what plants are growing; they have been taking pictures, sketching, and shared a Google slide to post online. These are all hands on, engaging activities. Enrichment resources have also been posted. Dr. Sidell and Dr. Mehler will be creating a survey to parents to see how things are going for

families. People are mindful of the stressful times in which we find ourselves. Teachers are creative; these are excellent opportunities for project based learning. Ms. Wilson asked if there was a mechanism to send report cards electronically. Dr. Mehler will consult with the technology department about this. Parents do have the ability to look in the parent portal for grades. Dr. Sidell gave an update. He had a Zoom meeting with principals from other districts, and noted that Carlisle is ahead of a lot of districts in terms of disseminating information and enrichment activities to students and families. It helped to have had practice with Husky Home Day, but also, the teachers worked together as teams and for week one, things went smoothly. Activities for School Closure and See Saw are ways the elementary school is communicating. Specialists are posting an activity every day. One teacher might do a read aloud for a whole grade level. For most elementary students, it's an hour-hour and half of work each day, and it doesn't have to be done all at once. Students are making videos and sending them back to teachers. Dr. Sidell acknowledged that it is difficult for children and parents to be online. But this is a great start. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has provided guidelines for teachers to give feedback on student work but not grades. This process is helping to foster a lifelong love of learning and creativity. Ms. Mostoufi asked if any new material was being introduced. Dr. Sidell answered that the goal is to maintain student skills and keep them strong. Mr. Model asked about assignments for students to turn back in. Dr. Sidell sees student writing, but this is optional work. Dr. Sidell added that the school wants to not overwhelm households. Ms. Lavery thanked Dr. Sidell, Dr. Mehler, the faculty and staff for their work. She asked how frequently administrators have meetings with staff about what worked and what didn't. There will be weekly meetings with staff via Zoom. Ms. Bruce shared that the special education staff has been working to connect with students on IEPs. The resources provided have been vast and varied, from staff creating student check ins to Zoom interactions with kids. Therapists have posted office hours for families. There has also been work on summer planning. Ms. Bruce shared that with school closed through April 7, 20 team meetings will have been missed. Ms. Bruce has offered those families online IEP meetings, where draft IEPs would be shared and the whole team would be on Zoom. If meetings don't take place this way, Ms. Bruce will figure out how to best make up the meetings. Ms. Mostoufi asked if children on IEPs were missing some one on one instruction, would the focus of the summer program change to be more instructional versus just maintaining skills? Ms. Bruce shared that the goal is to have a robust and fulfilling summer program. Mr. Model asked that if school is not reopened, would the summer program be even more robust? Ms. Bruce said that if the program were to be expanded to more hours, it would impact the budget. Mr. Model advocates to put pedagogical needs first adding that summer may become the new spring semester. Ms. Mostoufi wondered how students are coping with these new practices. Ms. Bruce answered that it is week one; teachers have contacted families and connected with them. Ms. Bruce also met with the executive board of SEPAC this week and received positive feedback about the current practices. Mr. O'Shea returned to his presentation and said that he is planning for an extended closure. Mr. O'Shea will continue to compensate employees through this school year. The school is also in conversation with our bus company, Bedford Charter, and wants to maintain its positive relationship. Mr. O'Shea added that to reopen school, he would first have to hear from the governor that it's all right to open schools, then it becomes a local decision. Mr. O'Shea will make sure the Carlisle Health Agent is involved in this decision. A question was asked that if school is in session by April 14, would classes be held during April vacation? Mr. O'Shea answered that it would be challenging to have classes then. He considered instead what a summer program might look like if the closure extended beyond 3 weeks. Mr. O'Shea would have to ensure

that students all had access to any offered summer sessions. He is also looking at the time implications. He summarized that there are lots of decisions to be made, and he is looking to work collaboratively to make sure we are doing the best for all involved. Mr. O'Shea was grateful for the patience, support and understanding expressed by the entire school community. Ms. Lear added that she is so impressed by what faculty and staff has done. The following questions were posed. What about Kindergarten registration? Mr. O'Shea answered that Amy Smack will be communicating with all incoming Kindergarten families. How can we make up all this missing work? Mr. O'Shea answered that we are looking to make sure all students can be supported, but will have conversations if the closure extends, particularly about what the summer term would look like. When will the 2020-2021 calendar be finalized? The School Committee has had conversations about the calendar and will continue the discussion. (It was noted after the meeting that the School Committee had, in fact, voted to approve the 2020-2021 School Calendar at the March 11, 2020 meeting). Mr. O'Shea added that Ms. Bruce has been working on developing a more robust summer program, she will work out the nuances. If it is determined that a summer session is needed for all students, that will mean a great deal of faculty and staff working. Will community members be utilized in any way? Mr. O'Shea may reach out to the community for additional support. He added that many people are sharing ideas and offering their services. Mr. Model said that what we are doing is the Carlisle way. The school is the largest employer in town, he looks at this as an opportunity for the entire school to reach out and offer support to families with no children in the school system. Seniors are especially vulnerable. He stated that it's a great time to remind people how important the school is to the community. He asked if we could show leadership and provide innovative ways to offer assistance to community members. There was a question about if the DESE has provided any information how the closure impacts MCAS testing. Mr. O'Shea answered that 10th grade testing has been postponed. Right now just the time frames for grades 3-8 have been postponed. They need a supportive gesture from the federal government before the state can change rules since state testing is federally mandated. Information is still coming, and no tests have been cancelled yet.

- B. Compensation for Contracted and Hourly Employees. Mr. O'Shea stated that these are unprecedented times. He supports keeping the faculty whole during the 19-20 school year. It has been recommended through counsel that we put this to School Committee for a vote. We want to support our people as our staff is being asked to work. It's important for us to be a community. Mr. Model agreed and added that we have a responsibility to the community and the economy. Ms. Vanaria thanked everyone for their work in the past week; administration, staff and the school committee for holding the meeting. Right now, 63 people are in attendance at this meeting.

III. Action Items

- A. Vote Compensation for Contracted and Hourly Employees. Mr. Model motioned to waive the usual practice of discussing an issue at one meeting and voting on it at the next meeting; Ms. Mostoufi seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. Ms. Mostoufi made a motion to pay all employees through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

IV. Public Comments

Ms. Bruce asked for a list of items that the COA needs during this time; she will contact paraprofessionals to help make that happen. Mr. O'Shea will make connections about this at the LEPC meeting today. The Committee was asked if an 8:30 a.m. Friday meeting next week would work for all members. It was noted that there were 78 people in attendance at the height of this

meeting. Susan Pray commented that she is overwhelmed by what the Carlisle staff is doing in relation to other communities. Ms. Lear added that it is not a surprise, but it is amazing. Melissa McMorrow asked the Committee to do a roll call vote during Zoom meetings. This will be the practice moving forward. Dr. Mehler said that the president of Mass General Hospital made a plea for 3D printers to print various resources they need; and asked if that something Carlisle could help with. We will look into downloading the plans and donating these items to MGH. The Carlisle School will do what it can to help this global pandemic.

V. Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Model made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Lavery seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Lear, aye; Model, aye, Mostoufi, aye; Lavery, aye, Wilson, aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Anderson".

Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent