

Carlisle School Committee

Minutes

April 3, 2020

8:30-9:45 a.m.

Remote Meeting Via Zoom

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

Present Via Zoom – 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; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Meeting Documents:

Minutes of March 27, 2020		
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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://us04web.zoom.us/j/321756655> Meeting ID: 321 756 655

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

Chair Christine Lear called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Ms. Lear announced that the meeting is being recorded.

II. Review/Approve Minutes

Ms. Lavery made a motion to approve the minutes of the meetings of March 27, 2020; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The following vote was taken in Roll Call: Lear, aye; Model, aye; Lavery, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson aye.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. Update on School Closure. Mr. O’Shea thanked everyone for joining the meeting. He announced updates to the school Zoom platform so now all employees can join staff meetings and security safeguards are in place. He was pleased to announce that the CEF will support the purchase of additional Zoom licenses for all staff. Dr. Mehler shared a video on an example of asynchronous learning that Marcella Pixley created. Pixley cited author and naturalist Annie Dillard, who wrote about trying to understand the world around her. The assignment for students was to go outside and find a place that’s quiet, sit, pay attention, listen to sounds, look at shadows, trees, and birds for 10-15 minutes, then write in a journal. 8th grader Noah Rosado shared his writing for this assignment. It

was a detailed piece noting that upon initial examination, the same species of plants look slightly different than others. He equated it to societal situations using detailed and astute observations and symbolism. The final statement was that everything is more than it seems. People commented on his thoughtful and articulate work. Ms. Gray shared that she had been giving students daily “quick writes” where students receive a menu of writing options to choose from, some serious, some silly. Students can write riddles, poetry, journals, tongue twisters, essays, or something of their own choice. Charlie MacDonald shared a clever riddle and Leah Rotman each shared a detailed journal entry. Dr. Mehler told the students they did a great job, thanked them for joining the meeting, and said that he and the staff miss the kids. Marcella Pixley added that it’s an honor to see what kids are thinking about, and interesting to present them with a new platform. Ms. Gray added that the ELA teachers are fortunate to see such insight from students. Mr. O’Shea then shared a slide presentation. School is still closed through May 4. The building is open Tuesday-Thursday from 8-11a.m. and the office is still conducting business. CCHS is offering takeaway breakfast and lunch. The School is working with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) because the health and economic crisis is still looming. There is social distancing in place, and presently, we will keep outdoor facilities open to use in a safe way. Rob Fortado is assisting the Police and Fire with disinfectant. The School has shared technology resources with the community as well. Amy Smack has also connected and shared resources. Ginny Lamere is printing 3D shields in the Engineering room. Everyone is adhering with social and physical distancing in these instances.

Student engagement and distance learning was discussed. Administration made the determination to move forward with curriculum in what is called Phase 2 on Monday, April 6. It was noted that there is still focus on social and emotional needs of students. Families have been encouraged to reach out to principals if students need technology devices. Other inequities like educational supports for students will exist; challenges become greater and the School will continue to address them. For younger students this phase is an increased demand on parents. How does this economic and health crisis impact a student’s access to curriculum as families deal with all of these issues? It’s important to stay flexible. Teachers and staff will get feedback, make adjustments, and move forward. Dennet reported that the teachers and staff have worked hard and are in a great routine. It was felt that families will not notice a major change because of all the work that has already been done. The activities presented will be able to be done throughout the day, not at a set time. There will be more live sessions in phase 2. Teachers will not overload students; they will strive at keeping a balance. There have been many thoughtful conversations with faculty. Starting Sunday, April 5, at 8:00 p.m. parents can go online to see the next day’s activities. There is also an effort to reduce the number of emails parents are receiving. Parents will receive one email Sunday night with Zoom meetings for the week. There will be two or three academic areas with one or two specialists on the weekly schedule. On Monday, they will receive a communication from Mr. O’Shea, on Friday communications from Dr. Sidell and Dr. Mehler will be sent. Dr. Mehler shared that he has virtual faculty meetings each week, where teachers share what works and doesn’t work. It was noted that certain things don’t translate well to a Zoom platform. It is always noted that remote learning can’t replicate classroom teaching. In Phase 2, teachers will use the phrase “required” with students. Everyone is conscious of

the increased screen time. There is a lot of project-based learning happening. There is a focus on critical thinking skills. It is important to have flexibility with deadlines. The DESE recommends meaningful and productive learning for about half of a regular school day, with a focus on the morning time. They recommend classes about 20 minutes in length, with a goal of independent work. It is also important that students make time each day for physical activities, engage in enrichment activities like music, art and band, and safely engage in outside world as much as possible. Balance is important. Also starting April 6, students will receive either a Pass or Incomplete for grades. Mr. O'Shea said we will all learn from this. Ms. Bruce added that her staff is going above and beyond. Special educators started right away reaching out to students and utilizing various platforms to see what works for supporting them. Her staff has done some heartwarming things such as making videos, mailing packets with work, and sending birthday videos. She noted these were amazing and talented people. Special education and general education are working collaboratively. Special education has been included in schedules. The special educator sends communications talking about expectations for children. Progress notes were completed when the closure started. Everyone is doing the best they can. Mr. O'Shea said this is a testament to the Carlisle faculty and staff. He has heard from many parents who are appreciative of this effort.

Mr. O'Shea shared the plan for April vacation. He knows teams have been doing what's best for our students, and gave kudos to everyone for being collaborative. Over April vacation, the faculty and staff will prepare enrichment activities for students, but also take a breath and reenergize. This time can be used for students to catch up if needed. In other business the 8th grade DC trip is cancelled. Kim Reid is still working with CCHS on student schedules and getting needed supports in place. The school is planning for summer programming to offer educational services for all students. The School is looking at funds from the operating budget to see what kind of program we can build. Mr. O'Shea appreciates the ongoing support and patience from everyone during this time. Ms. Mostoufi appreciates what the school is doing to keep kids engaged. She asked if students would have opportunities to connect with psychologists if needs arise during April vacation. Mr. O'Shea will talk with staff about this to see what supports can be put in place. Mr. O'Shea believes everyone would benefit from a healthy break from this stressful time. He added that he is communicating with other districts on what is successful, sharing helpful information and the staff will continue to modify lessons as necessary. He said there is great work taking place.

VI. Public Comments. Kathy MacDonald expressed thanks for all of the amazing work being done by teachers and administrators. Lee Stevens asked about summer programming. Mr. O'Shea said we presently offer a summer program for kids on IEPs so kids don't regress. As another summer program is designed, it would be available to all K-7 students. The focus would be on core content. It would not be mandatory but an option families could take advantage of for all students. Cynthia Sorn, asked if this closure continues through the summer, will the teachers be offering the same supports through the summer months? Mr. O'Shea we are venturing through an unfamiliar world. Right now, once we are through the end of school, we know we are offering a separate stand-alone summer program. If this crisis continues through the summer, more discussions will take place. But right now, he is not making any decision before its time.

Ms. Lavery expressed gratitude to the faculty and staff. She added that having teachers and students share today was fantastic and she would love to see that continue. She also thanked Mr. O'Shea for his comprehensive overview. She looks forward to seeing the documentation of this effort. Ms. Lear echoed the gratitude.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Mostoufi made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Lavery seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Lear, aye; Wilson, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Lavery, aye. Mr. Model had left the meeting. The public meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent