

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 10
Special Meeting of the Board of Education
Zoom Webinar/Phone Conference
Monday, August 3, 2020

The Board of Education Meeting was held through Zoom online and could be viewed at the following:

Joined by Internet (computer, iPhone, or Android): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83485390810>

Called in: (888) 788-0099 - Meeting ID: 834 8539 0810

There was no password to join the call, but Meeting ID was required.

Board Members Present:

John Vecchitto, Chairman
Thomas Fausel
Eleanor Parente
Paul Omichinski
Brooke Joiner
Dean Cowger
Scott Ragaglia
John Goodno
Ania Stolarz

Absent:

Also Present:

Howard Thiery, Superintendent
Dana Corriveau, Director of Student Support Services
Susan Laone, Director of Finance and Operations

<i>Call to Order</i>	The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, John Vecchitto at 7:00 p.m.
<i>Amendment to the Agenda</i>	A motion was made by John Vecchitto to amend the agenda to include after item III (Approval of the Minutes), Superintendent's report for a presentation overview of the reopening plan; seconded by Paul Omichinski; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.
<i>Pledge of Allegiance</i>	The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
<i>Approval of Minutes</i>	Minutes: Regular Meeting dated Monday, July 13, 2020 A motion was made by Paul Omichinski and seconded by Scott Ragaglia to accept/approve the minutes as presented; all in favor; none opposed; John Goodno abstained; motion carried.

<p>Superintendent's Presentation Overview</p>	<p>Superintendent Thiery opened his presentation by acknowledging and thanking the 201 participants via Zoom for their engagement.</p> <p>His PowerPoint presentation this evening was formulated to address the reopening plan for schools in the fall 2020. The plan provides for all schools to run safely in any of the three models of instruction, fully open, hybrid learning and distance learning and was developed under the working directive from those at the state that schools were to open up fully for all students, 5 days/week in the fall.</p> <p>It was noted that last week the Governor has now transferred that decision to local school leaders, who were told that the state would like to see most students return to school full time and the that the state infection metrics support that scenario. Operational factors to take into consideration would include school square footage, class sizes, overall student density, etc.</p> <p>Early last week, most school districts were prepared to open fully, but after the Governor's recent press conference and the shift in responsibility to the heads of districts, most are now opting for some degree of hybrid learning design with K-12 hybrid being increasingly the landscape.</p> <p>After completing his opening remarks, Superintendent Thiery then proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation which centered on the design and role of the steering committee and the operation of its sub working groups, the various reopening models and the considerations of each, guiding principles, main operational considerations, and critical decision points relative to the reopening model; hybrid model school schedule; student attendance, staffing and opt out distance learning; and athletics.</p> <p>In closing he stated that nothing has been more at the forefront of the district's work than the safety and wellbeing of the students, school professionals and community members.</p>
<p>Public Participation</p>	<p>Superintendent Thiery read each of the correspondence that he received via email for public comment.</p> <p>Rachel McFadden</p>

Ms. McFadden thanked the committees for their hard work; she had several questions/concerns; (1) prohibiting live public comments from tonight's special meeting discourages participation and negatively impacts the transparency of the board's actions and (2) the plan for reopening was due to the state on Friday, July 24th, but was not shared with the community in advance for feedback (3) asked if there would be a follow up public meeting to discuss the questions and concerns raised at this evening's meeting (4) referenced an article noting that Dr. Fauci held a virtual town hall meeting where he stated that as districts return to school, we will learn how the Coronavirus is spread by children. Ms. McFadden said Region 10 will be a part of the experiment and asked if the staff and students will have high enough safety standards.

Matt Thomas

Referenced Dr. Fauci and his comments regarding the importance of ventilation in the classrooms, even more so than social distancing. This is the time when Region 10 should address the aged systems once and for all. Asked why there were no guidelines for mask filtration and how often they would be cleaned.

Heidi Beaulieu

What model will Region 10 start with this year? What indicators will be assessed for change to the model and how will the indicators be monitored? If need be, can a student change to distance learning? How will the chosen model integrate with fall sports?

Krista Renaltor

(1) How is it that the district is attempting to return students to school, but the Board of Education and others are holding Zoom calls? Felt it would be better perceived if in person meetings were held. Town halls and government offices remain closed. (2) Knows first-hand that the Superintendent and Board of Education have received e-mails from parents indicating that they do not trust their high school students to be home by themselves as reason to be open full day/every day in the fall. Is that fair for other parents? Do the schools serve as babysitters? Feels it is the responsibility of the parents to establish rules with their children and not the schools. (3) With 3 feet of spacing for the classroom, how is the ventilation? (4) Aware that there are students in the community

that have tested positive; that alone is enough to show that the district should not open full days.

Pamela Belanger

(1) What is the plan for students who have sensory issues and difficulty keeping a mask on all day? (2) What accommodations and solutions will be put in place to lessen anxiety? (3) Do you foresee a vaccination becoming mandatory? (4) Should a student have difficulty when back in school, will they be easily able to transition over from one form of learning to another?

Kristin Craig

Received information from an area school district noting that they would start the school year in a hybrid plan and slowly work their way to full time by the end of October. Is this something that could be considered for Region 10 Schools? Sees it as a way to for students and teachers to acclimate to the new procedures and policies.

Confirmed Community Member

Expressed their deep concern for the mental health and wellness of their children and all the children if they were not to return to school.

Nathan Furtado

Strongly urging relaxing the restrictions that will be placed on elementary school students in the upcoming year, particularly in Kindergarten. Feels that social distancing and mandatory face coverings are unreasonable expectations for children who will be starting school as young as 4 years old. Applying blanket standards on students from Kindergarten to 8th grade seems completely arbitrary. He applauds the decision to allow parents to opt out of in person learning accommodating those who are fearful for the health and safety of their families, however, for those who wish to send their students to school are doing so because they believe an in person classroom is intrinsically valuable. He feels that in an effort to protect the communities' physical health, that we are sacrificing the children's mental and emotional health. Believes that asking parents to opt out without proving an in-person orientation is unreasonable. The Region 10 document was very general and did not offer a concrete picture.

Rich and Samantha Zimmerman

Considering the confidentiality of peoples' health records, will parents be notified if their children come in contact with anyone who tests positive for Covid 19?

Tara Diorio

Curious as to the protocol that would occur when a teacher or student tests positive. Also concerned about a student who learns in a structured environment - while adapting to change is a skill that one must learn in life, it also is one that should be presented while learning and developing in their education.

Jeanne Sullivan-Mignola

Lives fairly close to the middle school and high school; understands that Route 4 can be a very busy intersection at Lyon Road especially in the morning; could consideration be given for a crosswalk and crossing guard morning and afternoons to lesson the amount of children riding the bus?

Christine Misluk

Will temperatures be taken either upon entry to the school bus or if not riding the bus, before entering the school buildings? Seems to be a standard Covid19 operating procedure in high traffic locations. Are the mask breaks going to take place outdoors, if not, would this cancel out the benefits of students wearing their masks? Will there be ramifications for students who choose not to wear their masks?

Jennifer Legere

Considering that bussing is the least safe alternative in terms of transportation to and from school, would like walking to be a viable option. Would like the town to give attention to and discussed and included in Region 10' plan.

Karen McDonald

How does the town plan to support working parents if there is Hybrid and Distance Learning? Many parents work and will need to hire and/or enroll in daycare programs; pay a lot of taxes for schools. What funding will the town be providing?

Denise Reid

Feels it is imperative that high school students attend school 5 days week. From March to June, her then freshman, received an average of 2 hours work per day; it was grossly inadequate.

Karen Cargill

Has many concerns regarding the opening of schools (1) the BoE meeting is held via Zoom, but willing to risk having students, staff and teachers in school (2) parents send their children to school all the time, how will we stop that from happening and were they considered?

Laurie Stickle

Supports a plan to bring students safely back with precautions in place, understands all plans are fluid; might a need for a hybrid or all virtual learning at some point in the future. Need to focus as a community to improving the virtual learning environment for learning. Recommends that Region 10 engage with parents and students regarding weekly expectations, Zoom attendance and schoolwork.

Robert Bell

While the current prevalence of Covid19 is relatively low in Connecticut, there are 2 factors in place that should give the board pause to reopening our schools in late August (1) South hit hard, most likely due to reopening too soon and lowering their guards with mitigation steps (2) transmission rates have risen and is on our doorsteps. Believes there will be a rise in Connecticut right as school is scheduled to start. Two companies and in final stages of approval for a vaccine; may be available to the public before end of year, if not sooner. Asked the board if this was factored into the plan to reopen schools. Feels schools should start with distance learning and then adjust the plan when it is safe to do so.

Susan Winn

Those students who are not wearing masks due to a medical exemption, should not be in the same classroom with as students with masks. Could be infecting those students who are wearing masks, though 6' apart. Hoping those students will be provided with a different classroom. Asked for comments if a decision has been made one way or another.

Kevin Dix

Addressed the lack of transparency in the Board's decisions related to its reopening plan and its large district-wide issues as a whole. Parent participation on committees, for some, is not possible due to time constraints, nor is the appointment to a committee guaranteed. Neighboring school boards solicit public input prior to making final decisions. In doing so, those boards benefit from new ideas and possible solutions and more importantly, the impression they give their citizen's input is of value. In contract to tonight's meeting, the towns of Farmington and West Hartford held public meetings regarding their reopening plans prior to their submission to the state and their attendees had an opportunity to speak.

Liz Gaffney

Speaking as a parent and administrator, strongly believes that every effort should be made to keep children, families, and staff safe and that children need to be in school to truly have a well-rounded education experience. Please make every effort to children back in the classroom for true, whole-child learning.

Lisa Gilbert

Inquired if Region 10 was planning to bring back students in a Hybrid plan K-12. Having a classroom at half the capacity would alleviate many of the concerns and allow teachers to return in the safe way.

Kimberly Hunter

Asked if it was possible to hold some of the classes outdoors to give students a break from wearing masks and get fresh air.

Jim Prins

What work stills need to be done to adapt our schools to the DOE and DPH guidelines? Will schools reopen if we are not fully aligned to these guidelines? The reopening plan is well thought out and if it is followed, feels the risk of exposure is significantly lowered. How will violations to the reopening guidelines be identified and communicated to parents? Asked for clarification regarding safe, low and moderate risks for buses and schools. Missing piece of information for parents determining what is an acceptable risk.

Justin and Amy Mierzejewski

How are classrooms without air conditioning being addressed? Even more difficult for students wearing masks.

Steven Muscaro

Family with two working parents; had a difficult time managing “at home schooling” and their children ended up falling behind. Hopes that schools will be operational Monday through Friday with the option to take “at home schooling” for those that wish to keep their children home; Hybrid model would prove to be difficult with babysitting and work schedules.

Eugene Pickert

Noted that there are way too many variables to try and send children back to school safely; has seen many parents attend their children’s sporting events and not follow social distancing protocols. These parents may send their children to school not feeling well; doesn’t believe Region 10 can provide a safe environment; add in legal liability and the district is opening themselves up for legal concerns; fully expects that the district will do what is best for the safety and well-being of the children.

Stephen Porter

It is not clear what the opt out distance learning program is and would like it described in more detail.

Cara and Jon Reagan

Wanted to address the hybrid model; how are full-time parents supposed to secure daycare providers who will be able to fluctuate days every week? Made a suggestion that the board consider looking at a block of days.

Shelly Bernetich

Has grave concerns with returning to school in person while the country remains in the middle of a pandemic. Should be thinking outside of the box and coming up with a creative solution as well as building a robust distance learning plan. Has a friend who is a psychotherapist and shared her comments and shares the same viewpoint.

Jaimie Wilcox

Her child will be attending HCS in the fall. Asked if there has been any consideration to follow OEC (Office of Early Childhood guidelines)? Is there a possibility to have Kindergartners follow these guidelines to have a more positive, developmentally appropriate first experience in the Region 10 School system?

Jennifer and Matthew Weeks

If the elementary schools open following a full, in person schedule, how will the desks be distanced following the 3' given the already limited space? Will desk shields be provided?

Karen McDonald

Has consideration been given to using the school fields for outdoor classrooms? Major issue for everyone is how children will keep their masks on. Use the fields while the weather is still nice. Spoke with a local tent company. Kids are used to be outside during the summer, so we can sustain this for a few more months.

Lauren Fenlon

If they chose to opt their children out of school learning, will there be an option to change this during the school year? What will distance learning look like? Will it be live streaming into the classroom?

Peter Eagan

	<p>Will parents be able to see this plan in action prior to sending students to school? What will a classroom look like? A bus, lunch and recess? Something more than a list of bullet points.</p> <p>Courtney Comporesi</p> <p>Wants to know that the district will have the flexibility to change their decisions if things were to get better or worse. Feels comfortable starting out remotely, then hybrid and then full time in person when things are back to normal.</p> <p>Kristen Murray</p> <p>If a student begins with on-line learning, can they return to school at a later date?</p> <p>Rebecca Sanford</p> <p>What will the distance program involve for students who opt out of in person learning? How will distance learning be different from this past spring? How much technology PLDs will be used in classrooms? What might a Kindergarten and second grade schedule look like? What will specials like Art and PE look like and others?</p>
<p>Action Items</p>	<p>A. Defined Pension Plan Restatement</p> <p>A motion was made by Paul Omichinski and seconded by Scott Ragaglia to accept/approve the Defined Pension Plan Restatement as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.</p> <p>B. Region 10 District Reopening Plan</p> <p>A motion was made by Paul Omichinski to accept/approve the Region 10 District Reopening Plan as presented understanding that it is an evolutionary plan and any changes should be brought back to the board in a timely fashion and shared with the community; seconded by Eleanor Parente;</p> <p>Discussion:</p>

	<p>Superintendent Thiery asked the board, as they begin their discussions, to weigh in on the three decision points.</p> <p>The board members examined both the soft opening or Hybrid plan and full in-person plan. Considerations included the mental health of the students and the need to use good, sound judgement - which plan best educates the children and keeps them safe? No one design will make everyone happy with families having their own unique set of circumstances.</p> <p>Weekly update reports to families were suggested so that parents had the ability to plan accordingly.</p> <p>There is not enough data to support making a final decision regarding athletics; should rely on the CIAC and their experts to make those resolutions; some members felt it was the Board's discretion. Need more information. Public safety is first.</p> <p>Masks, face shields, air handling, and the suggestion of a crossing guard on Route 4 were additional items brought forward for discussion.</p> <p>The motion was reiterated; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.</p>
Business	N/A
Next Meeting	Regular Meeting; Monday, August 24, 2020; 7:00 p.m.
Adjourn	A motion was made by Paul Omichinski and seconded by Scott Ragaglia to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 p.m.; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Paige
Board Clerk

Approval:  Date: 8/28/20
Dean Cowger, Board Secretary

Board of Education Meeting Minutes are placed on our web page (www.region10ct.org) within seven (7) work days following the Board of Education Meeting.

The minutes are marked as DRAFT, pending Board of Education approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

When participating in or attending a Board of Education meeting or reviewing minutes, please note that the Board of Education uses formats prescribed by Robert's Rules of Order for conducting meetings and publishing minutes.

Robert's Rules state, "Minutes are a record of what was done at a meeting, not a record of what was said." [RONR (11th ed.), p. 468, ll. 16-18] which is the standard for which board minutes strive. For this reason the minutes will typically not reflect the discussion surrounding a motion, only its outcome.

Additionally, Robert's Rules in brief advises "The name and subject of a guest speaker or other program may be given, but no summary of the talk." [RONRIB page 149]

Both books can be found at our local libraries for anyone interested in more information.

RSD10 Chair