

**WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, November 5, 2020
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative M/H School-Media Room
7:00 p.m.**

The videoconferencing link and audio number were published several places including on the meeting agenda.

Present: *Alex LoVerme, Carol LeBlanc, Jonathan Vanderhoof, Mark Legere, Brianne Lavalley, Tiffany Cloutier-Cabral, Charlie Post, Paul White, and participating online Jim Kofalt (7:02pm),*

Superintendent Bryan Lane, Business Administrator Rob Mullin, Principal Bob LaRoche, Technology Director Mark Kline, Clerk Kristina Fowler and participating online Director of Student Support Services Ned Pratt, and Principal Peter Weaver

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman LoVerme called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

• ADJUSTMENT TO THE AGENDA

Superintendent requested to add to the agenda a discussion regarding the 2nd grade.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Mr. White to accept the adjustment to the agenda.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

III. PRESENTATION-DISTANCE LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

a. Holiday Remote Learning Proposal

Technical difficulties occurred at the beginning regarding the link and were sorted out. There was a 100-person maximum through "Google Meet" and that limit was reached. This was unknown prior to reaching it and will be resolved.

Mr. White reviewed the slide presentation, a copy can be found with these minutes.

A question was raised regarding student enrollment and asked to confirm the 20 additional enrollments since the first day. This was confirmed, 575 on the first day and fall enrollment was 595. A question was raised regarding how the committee is defining "equitable" education. Ms. Lavalley spoke to this noting the committee is finding there is a difference in the education received in person vs. remote; the goal would be to have a model that is more equal. There was further discussion regarding this including not wanting children to lose out because they have concerns coming in, the desire that all children received the same type of instruction and wanting all to feel safe sending their children. Mr. Post expressed he has a problem with describing this as "equitable". It was expressed some students are struggling. It is difficult with the dual platforms and there is a desire to make a consistent way of teaching so all students will be in person for a portion of education and remote for a portion. The committee will look at the 2-1-2 model; no recommendations have been made, no details have been worked out. It was noted they can speak more regarding the holiday break issue than this. There was discussion regarding what evidence was used rather than feeling or impression. Feedback from a number of parents and educational professionals who have raised concern is the basis and it is not just in our district. It was expressed that the scope of the proposal is now not just going remote for the holiday and is beyond the scope of what the committee was asked to do. It was noted the committee was asked to look at this as the original goal and the holiday issue was added and bumped up on the list because it was happening this month. The committee wanted to be open about the discussions. It was noted people looked at this and were upset. Ms. Lavalley expressed she thought it was imperative to let the community know this is something we are working on. Discussion was had that when the school board asked for this committee to be formed, it was done to look at the data from September regarding remote learning and they did this. This is an immediate need for us to look at but also is the holiday break. Discussion moved to the formation of the committee, who was on the

committee, were the meetings public meetings, was it posted, was there an agenda, was this a school board committee and what authority does the committee have. Superintendent reviewed the committee consisted of both Principals, Mr. Pratt, teachers Ms. Abbe, Ms. Dane, Ms. MacPherson, Ms. Bujak, Ms. Lhotsky, school nurse Ms. Bertoncini, school counselor Ms. Kovaliv and 3 school board members, Ms. Lavallee, Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and Mr. White although not everyone attended every meeting. It was noted there was no recollection that this was voted in as a school board committee or that it would need to be posted; there are other committees that school board members are on that are not posted nor are they school board committees. Ms. Cloutier-Cabral added they would be remiss if they did not bring this information forward to give parents time to plan. This was seen as a very realistic issue and thought it should come forward. If the public is aware of the risk and choose to go forward anyway that is their choice.

Ms. LeBlanc voiced appreciation for the work the committee did but thinks this got carried away. She understands it was all in good meaning but believes the protocol we have covers absence of teachers; it says if teacher absenteeism rises to the level that cannot be obtained we would go to remote learning. According to the CDC if someone has a visitor outside of the NE area they should quarantine. She believes the community is aware the school could be close if there is a positive result in the school. She expressed the schools would be closed the minute we have a positive test; it is not a big shock to people. She thinks this may be overreacting. She doesn't agree with closing down when we have a game plan; people are concerned of losing their livelihood. She spoke a little regarding the responses from parents and notes not all the 35 agree so much as they said whatever is decided is OK with them but 53 of the 88 say this is devastating; we already have a protocol to handle the situation.

Chairman LoVerme noted the parents who sent in feedback may have multiple children therefore does not think it is fair to say they are representing 9% of families or 25% of families; we should look at that. It was noted that we have faculty members that are leaving the area and will need to quarantine; substitutes need a background check and it takes time. Superintendent reviewed what the process is and confirms we could start the substitutes prior to the background check being returned as long as it is submitted. It was expressed, the hope is that those who are leaving the district would have 2 weeks of planned out lessons for students. Discussion was had regarding if those who are traveling would be paid while quarantining. Superintendent reviewed if they are teaching remote, they are not using sick time or FFCRA (Families First Coronavirus Response Act). The question is if there is enough supervision in the building. At FRES they have used "specials" teachers to cover but this is not a long term solution as we are not meeting the minimum standards but can do it for a day here and there. If a teacher is out for 10 days, that is not a viable solution. We could manage 2-3 teachers out maximum at FRES. At WLC teachers have been volunteering their prep time to cover classes and we pay them for the class coverage. It is a matter of how can we create a schedule and fit all the pieces of the puzzle in without having multiple classes in the gym. Mr. Weaver spoke regarding this noting 12 teachers have been out for COVID related reasons, we have missed 56 school days for staff and tried to cover with the one sub we have. We have been lucky some teachers have volunteered to cover. The dilemma, as the holiday progresses, is the concern if we will have more teachers out even though wait time for testing is shorter, we are still going without teachers for 2-3 days. It is hard for a social studies teacher to cover a math class for example and teachers could be out because their children who are in other districts are going remote for the holidays. It is a little unpredictable right now. Superintendent adds, if there are more than 2-3 teachers out we would need to go remote.

Discussions continued including we can ask staff if they are traveling or hosting but cannot require this, we are already in jeopardy, this is brought forward to allow families time to plan so it was not a surprise, and another key factor is the essential worker exception. Mr. Kofalt spoke that the state has guidelines and they call for a 14-day quarantine but carve out a section for essential workers. He notes per the DOE call last week, it was said there is no need for a school to be remote for the holiday break. Using the essential worker piece is one more tool in the mix for us to come up with solutions. Mr. Kofalt expressed he understands the rates for substitutes is low and agrees with raising it and spoke of one possibility of having a per diem teacher coming in to fill for a situation which could help to solve the problem. He sees multiple tools that could be applied to mitigate the situation and if kids had to go to the gym for the day it is unfortunate but if it happens once a week instead of 4-5 days a week that is an improvement. There are some kids who have a good experience with learning remotely and others do not; we need to provide an avenue to continue to be in person learning. He appreciates the committees work and doesn't want to belittle them but agrees with a proposal to look at other options. To sum it up, look at per diem options and essential worker classification according to the state and if there are no symptoms of COVID or history of recent contact with people with COVID or symptoms and no positive test they can be allowed to not quarantine.

It was noted this is a staffing issue; it's a problem when you have a committee and don't get the public involved. It was suggested to look at getting substitutes; offer teachers (perhaps 4) who are new graduates \$100 per day. Funding would need to be looked at but the substitutes could be deployed to different parts of the building.

Ms. Lavallee reported she was in contact with Dr. Chan and agrees teachers are essential and in order for them to be exempt from quarantine, they need to meet certain guidelines (she referenced where to find the link) and in order to qualify for exemption the employee cannot do essential tasks remotely and we know they can. The lack of substitutes has been going on since the summer and she did try to raise a flag regarding this.

Discussions continued acknowledging teachers can teach remotely but does it work for the clientele, a lot of responses were no it doesn't and could lead to job loss. There was prior discussion regarding increasing substitute rates but the issue was there are no substitutes out there. Other towns paying \$100-\$125 are not getting any either. Superintendent confirms it is a topic discussed on Channel 9 and is a statewide issue not just here. It's not an easy job. Some retired teachers are in a high risk category and do not want to substitute during this time. If the Board was to entertain a long term substitute on a per diem basis paying Bachelors/Step 1, we could move in that direction. They would come in daily even if they are not needed. If the Board would give the administration the ability to advertise for a long term substitute he believes there may be a number of teachers out there who are not teaching and would teach for 30-60 days. If we had the ability to hire 4-5 people to do this and if we did it for that money (Bachelors/Step 1) with certified educators we could have the background checks started, get references etc. It doesn't mean on one given day we won't have a problem; no one can predict that. Members discussed this option. Superintendent confirms they would not qualify for benefits for this short term, only FICA and a couple of other not large things. The Board would have to authorize this; he notes this was not something he thought of before. He noted as far as the essential worker, it was his understanding this was only temporarily waived at the beginning of school as some district would struggle to open and as we moved past that point, other restrictions come into play. The long term substitute option may be a resolution that works and we would have 2-3 weeks to advertise and hire. Funding of this was discussed using 28 days with 4 long term substitutes; there is savings in salaries from new hire reductions. There is also an additional \$120,000 in the substitute account that is typically used for FMLA or maternity leaves which has not been used much this year. If it relates to Coronavirus we could use the CARES funds available till the end of December. Mr. Mullin spoke regarding the CARES funds. The state has made additional CARES Act funding available and we will receive \$110,200 but it needs to be expensed by December 30. He reports we have budgeted a good amount to cover items we already purchased and plan to purchase but that still leaves an amount left over. It was noted there may also be additional funding we will see; this is unclear however. Members continued to discuss the option and funding for it. Superintendent notes we need to guarantee 28 days of work whether faculty is out or not and he believes we would have a good amount of applicants. It was suggested if they are not covering classes they could tutor remote students who are struggling.

*A MOTION was made by Ms. Cloutier-Cabral and SECONDED by Ms. LeBlanc to approve hiring 4 long term substitutes for a period of 28 days at per diem rate of Bachelors/Step 1. **

Superintendent confirms that does not solve the 2nd grade situation.

It was suggested it may be better to have a written proposal for Tuesday to be sure the money is there and to have it on paper. Superintendent reviewed the funding; there has not been much spending in the substitute account, the state has given us \$200 per student with funds remaining which we could use for this and pay the remainder from the substitute account. He confirmed if a teacher travels and quarantines we would want them to teach remote in the classroom and the substitute can guide the class and work with the students. The lessons would be planned by the teacher and not have to use FFCRA if they are working. He confirms if they were sick they would be paid under the FFCRS; the funds are for 80 hours per person if a teacher traveled for both holidays they would use up the 80 hours and after that we are not required to pay them. They would be on unpaid leave. Superintendent will check to confirm it is consecutive days or accumulative days. It was noted this will keep our doors open from November 30-January 18. Superintendent confirms we will still need to find ways to manage some days and he cannot guarantee there will not be an issue on any given day.

A question was raised if a waiver can be obtained regarding special education students coming to school. Superintendent responded that the Federal Government has not given any leeway for not meeting a free and appropriate education under the IDEA requirements. Initially the Governor had said that special education students could not come to school and about a month later he said yes they can. For the RISE students they can come in; we

would provide transportation for 5 days a week, other SPED students can come in 3-4 days per week to ensure they are getting services. If we did not, the concept of compensatory services comes into play and we would need to make up for any service not rendered. We would still need paraprofessionals to meet their needs collectively across the district. We would transport K-8, there is no leeway for that and a plan would have to be created. Mr. Pratt confirmed that is correct and based on the prior experience with COVID he doesn't think there would be a waiver for IDEA. A question was raised if it is the same for 504's, he responded it depends on the services required but typically that is for accommodations in school due to life altering situations and would be handled on a case by case basis. If a student couldn't come to school due to a medical condition, we would still have to provide that. Chairman LoVerme asked for inquiry into whether or not a waiver could be given to temporarily waive classes such as art, gym and music. Superintendent responded it is his opinion the legislature would have to give permission to waive a minimum standard and they are not in session now but he will inquire.

A request was made to more clearly define the role of the committee.

Principals were asked for input. Principal Weaver expressed appreciation for the solution. Any additional staff is helpful especially if they have a degree in education. He likes the Chairman's suggestion that if they are not needed they can support struggling remote students. That kind of discussion is helpful and solution oriented. He believes it will be a big help. Principal LaRoche echoed what Principal Weaver said having permanent substitutes in the building is great and if they are certified, even better. Differentiating instruction will be important going forward.

A question was raised if the Chairman wanted to take public comment prior to the vote; Chairman calls for the vote.

**Voting: via roll vote, eight ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme; motion carried.*

Mr. Post expressed we wouldn't have got here if the committee members didn't get the work done and bring it forward. We had the option to find a solution and we did and we need your work going forward.

It was expressed that the teachers presented the 2-1-2 option at a previous meeting but it was not seen as a viable option for our community. Discussion was had including what the committee should be doing forward, the committee was a staff committee, the real purpose of the committee was to determine the effectiveness of remote learning and somehow it was morphed into something different and maybe it should be broken out into 2 committees. Superintendent spoke that the committee was originally for staff to analyze not just remote learning but working in multiple platforms, what was going well and what was not. Three board members volunteered and he believes the Board gave permission for them to be on it. It was so that we had various levels of teaching staff while the feedback from parents and we got a lot of great feedback, which was shared with the Board. The level of efficiency can only be expressed by the people in the trenches. He reports he went to them with this problem and how do we work with it. It was seen as something more urgent and looked to expedite it; whether done well or not he notes he will take the responsibility for it. He adds we can post the meetings and asks that they be recorded so minutes can be taken after. A discussion was had about forming the committee/committees. It was noted Ms. Lavallee put in a lot of time to compile this and spent time reviewing other districts plans and a lot of other districts were doing this in the summer. All these decisions were already done and they are going over budgets now. A plan is needed that is not necessarily in stone. We voted on the plan in August but it does not mean this plan will successfully carry us through the year. It is important to get feedback and come up with a better plan. There is a lot of concern with remote students and she believes they are valid concerns. She would like to see the committee look at it; in all reality the plan was only discussed for a very short period of time: she didn't have time to research it. She does not think it was the consensus of the board. Discussions continued with using page 2 (parent and staff feedback) as a starting point. Concern was raised that the 2-1-2 model was discussed; it got out into the community that we were going back to that model. The Board was clear there would be options of in school with some remote and hybrid for those who wanted it, not sure if the committee going back to that program fits the Board's or community's needs. Concern was raised this falls outside the committee's scope. Discussion was had regarding this including the Board needs to be aware of what work is being done and feedback obtained as discussion progresses. Also including in the discussions were that no one knew this was happening or what was being worked on, the committee was established as a school/teacher committee with school board members on it to bring things back to the group, these things were going to come up regardless if Board members were on it or not, it was a good idea to bring the information back to the Board for discussion, how would it be done if not done at a school board meeting, and bringing it up vs. a presentation. Superintendent acknowledges, point taken, this or any other committee that has updates should be discussed on a regular basis and there may be times thing some up quickly; he hopes there would

be a level of understanding. He acknowledges documents need to come to the public in a timely manner. He adds there is a grave concern on the part of teachers regarding the viability of being able to do all platforms at FRES a few are doing it but mostly grades 8-12. Teaching is a difficult job and to have to do it 3 different ways is becoming almost unattainable. The committee is looking into that as far as what the level of viability is as we move into the future. It was noted the teachers thought a 2-1-2 model may be viable. It was expressed the amount of disinformation going on in the community is astonishing; the committee never said they were doing it (2-1-2-) it was one thing to discuss regarding possible solutions to a problem. Committee members are telling you and you are still upset. If there are specifics you want the committee to discuss then provide the list. It was explained there was no “sneakiness” going on, maybe a misunderstanding of what the committee was tasked with. There was ongoing discussion including comments being made on Facebook, if the community wants information they should come to a Board meeting or read the minutes and not rely on Facebook for information. Discussion was had regarding the structure of the committee, forming the committee as listed in the protocol, it was noted the substitute shortage was brought up prior to any presentation. Question was raised is this the best model, families are concerned about their children’s health and some classrooms are at maximum capacity. The committee does not have a recommendation but has identified the model we have is not working. It may be that too many options were offered in the summer; the teachers are struggling, some students are struggling and we need a better solution. They continued to discuss forming the committee including does it need to be a Board directed committee, if it is a non-school board committee the information should be received first hand, this was the wrong model for the committee, committees like strategic planning were given topics and then the presentation was brought back. It was suggested to table this discussion of forming the committee and revisit it next Tuesday at the Board meeting. Chairman LoVerme noted some comments were to involve the students.

The area substitute rates were reviewed and discussed. Discussion was had regarding tracking the substitute costs, what was budgeted and why. Superintendent noted additional funds had been budgeted into that account to pay for maternity and FMLA leave, actual expenditure for this year is not known at this time. Concern was raised regarding raising the amount of substitute pay based on the budgeted amount which did not include an increase. Superintendent confirms we do pay teachers to cover other classes. If the teacher has a sick day, that is paid out of the salary line if a substitute was brought in that is paid out of the substitute line. A decision was not made and this will be brought back up on Tuesday.

● SECOND GRADE TEACHER

Superintendent confirmed he was notified yesterday of one additional change to the 2nd grade and another was a day late. He reports even if we move the furniture out of the classroom we cannot social distance appropriately. The Board has 3 options he believes unless they come up with another; to not social distance and put the students in the classroom as the protocol says “when possible”, we could bring in the remote teacher back in school and create 3 sections and have each teacher teach 5 remote students which would create an issue of multiple platforms plus manage the class (HS its difficult to do but more difficult with 7 year olds), or hire a long term substitute for 90 days. It is unclear how long after the 90 days there may be still a need or not but benefit eligibility starts after 90 days. If the Board approved the 3rd option, they would create 3 in school classes and 1 remote class would continue. He reviewed this option. Principal LaRoche invited all the Board members to come to FRES and see the classrooms; the teachers would love to have them come in. He has spoken to the teachers at different levels, the remote is going well for those that it fits and the children that are coming to school are getting the right model for them. They just enrolled an additional 4 students new to the district this week. He notes the students are getting closer and closer to each other and some adjustments have been made such as in the library moving out more desks. He believes the best option would be to keep the remote children with their remote teacher. He adds the only thing different they are seeing with remote, is they are at a slower pace than those in school and they are getting 3 days of instruction instead of 5. He explained with the remote learning, there is a make-up day and another day to plan all the this. It takes more time. It was noted, it is easy to see why they are falling behind; they are getting less instruction. He confirms they do not have the ability to livestream. He believes part of that is because MS and HS students are a little more independent. Interactive teaching is more common in the elementary grades. The teacher would have to sit in front of a class and teach the 15 students in class and the remote ones at the same time. That would be a dual platform. He was clear, he would like to create another class with an additional teacher, keep the remote teacher with her remote students. This model has 4 teachers; 1 remote class, 3 in school classes. He reviewed how many remote students they have and what grades they are in. The Board discussed the options and what happens if they hire a long term substitute and it goes beyond the 90 days. It was noted it would need to be discussed at that point; benefits would be for the remainder of the year. Concern was raised regarding the funding. Mr. Mullin had researched what has been spent to

date while at the meeting and it appears \$3,200 has been spent on the \$120,000 budgeted line. Superintendent notes the additional CARES funding required a budget to be submitted which has been done. Bringing in a substitute does qualify for COVID funds as it is to maintain the recommendations of the Department of Health. Principal LaRoche reports having a long term substitute would be acceptable to him and the teachers; the parents do not want the kids on top of each other.

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Post and SECONDED by Ms. LeBlanc to hire a long term substitute for up to 90 days, contract at Bachelors, step 1 for purposes of dividing 3 classrooms in grade 2. **

Superintendent confirms even if we past the 90 days, the rate is still Bachelor, step 1. It was noted this seems to be an economical solution. A question was raised if there were Union issues. Superintendent responded it is not a Union position if we past the 90 days it may be but since we are serving teachers in a positive way he doesn't believe it would be an issue once they got to that level. He will check on this to confirm. After 90 days we would pay NHRS and insurance, prorated for the remainder of the school days. It was noted they could hire a different person. Superintendent clarified one of the requirements is that the teacher has to be certified in elementary education and as far as hiring a different person, he feels the continuity of the same teacher is highly important. It was noted since Principal LaRoche is looking for another teacher next year it may be a good trial run.

**Voting: via roll call vote, eight ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.*

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment section of the agenda was read. Chairman LoVerme noted comment time should be limited due to the number of people participating.

Superintendent called out all the phone numbers and names joined in the meeting asking if they wanted to comment.

Ms. Alyssa Lavoie was present and notes she had sent a letter to the Board but since we are not moving forward with that concern she is not addressing it. She spoke of guidance, a process, which was already in place for the most part developed by the Dept. of Health and Human Services, Department of Infectious Disease in the conjunction with the Dept. of Education. She was not sure if the committee or Board referred to this previously during their discussions. She expressed there is a framework that we can work with which she hopes when the initial plan that was put in place in Aug. was based off of this. She made a few comments regarding the presentation for the Board to consider and the committee to consider when they are working through this. One of the things that was mentioned was as the "in person" student attendance has risen, the ability to social distance has been challenged. She thinks what the Board should take away from that is there is an increase need and interest from the community to be in person learning, that should be the priority, it's the Dept. of Education priority, it's recommended by the Department of Health. It's what the community wants, whatever the committee ends up being responsible, that should be the priority if it can be done in a safe manner. She spoke regarding the discussion of "equitable" education; she would have to see what the school board's exact responsibility is but hazards to guess that making something equitable isn't necessarily the school board's responsibility as it is to provide a high quality effective education when possible. Her concern is for the child who is in person in school. The committee is looking to making it more equitable when the in person students are making larger strides in the curriculum they are learning vs. the remote students and what we want to do is hold back or slow down the in person students so the remote students can catch up and lessen that gap and she doesn't think it is the job of the school board. She thinks the job of the school board and school is to make sure the kids are getting as effective education as possible so that means the in person learning is clearly more effective. That needs to be made public so families can understand it and make their decision while we still try to improve remote instruction if we are offering it. She doesn't feel at any point that in person should be removed to try to bridge that gap. She added, it was worth noting since it was discussed, Nashua is not fully remote K-1 are going back as of Monday 100% in school, Hudson is not fully remote prek-5 is 100% in school, 5-8 is hybrid, she is not sure about HS, Mascenic is hybrid 4 days a week in school, Litchfield, Hollis, Brookline, Amherst, Mont Vernon, are all 100% in and remote option; this was not provided as surrounding area comparisons. She adds, we will potentially have COVID cases and we work with the Dept. of Health on how to manage that. Derry has 41 active cases and are still 100% in person with remote options. Just because we have positive cases we should not be shutting down, that is the recommendation from the Department of Education, recommendation from the CDC, recommendation of the Department of Health. We need to be sure we are making data driven decisions not reactive decisions based on personal concerns. Chairman LoVerme noted her time is up and he requests she email him the information. She asked the Board reconsider the daily substitute rate in the sense that we are already spending the money for paying

administration and specialists at a much higher rate. We are paying their salary and the stipend rate. It would be better to pay people who are available for that stipend rate and let the specialist continue on with their classes. She notes she owns Tumble Weeds childcare; she and 3 of her teachers would be able to sub on any given day based on their schedule as she works hard to be sure she has extra teachers in case of a need to quarantine. Chairman LoVerme apologized but has to stop the comment due to being over the time allotted. She notes "I am giving you guys a resource for subs and you are cutting me off".

Ms. Melissa Knight was present and spoke that she came to the meeting tonight not really knowing what to expect or if she was going to comment at all. She thanked the Board for the 4 substitutes; she believes it is a big sigh of relief for the community. She notes that we know we may have to shut down at a moment's notice and that is understood but the availability to have 4 more potential teachers is awesome. She thanked them for opportunity for the additional 2nd grade teacher; she is a parent of a child in 2nd grade.

Mr. Adam Lavallee (online), commented that he has been watching the meetings all year and this has been bothering him for quite a while but has not said anything. Unfortunately, he was not present for the last meeting as he was attending a Budget Committee session at that time but he heard about it and watched the fall out of what happened. He expressed the behavior of vice chairman of the Board is unbelievable unacceptable at times. He spoke of the public "dressing down" of the only employee the school board manages was amateur at best. That it was totally inappropriate. He added, a motion was put on the table, to table a presentation, to speak about research that was done which is fine, you could have made a motion to not vote on anything but that was tabled and then speculative discussion about what was being looked into took place. He notes when Mr. Post asks and says he had got many calls from upset community members, that is why; they listened through an incomplete discussion about something that people were not even given the appropriate time to present and were left for 10 days to speculate about it. The amount of "venom" that was spewed online toward the teachers was shameful and that happened because of the way that meeting was handled; there was no reason for that. He expressed we need to be more protective of our precious teacher resource, as we found out, it is not easy to find more teachers. He doesn't understand why anybody would want to be a teacher in this district after that. The amount of animosity coming from the vice chair was more than he would ever want to put up with. He adds, I am not sure where this animosity towards teachers comes from. People are saying you should make the teachers not see their families for the holidays so they don't have to quarantine. He doesn't think anybody in this audience would be cool with their employer making that request. If we feel somehow teachers are different because their salaries are paid with tax money that is ludicrous. He feels this needs to change; he listens to the vice chair interrupt fellow Board members sometimes while they are doing presentations. He has listened to him speak to fellow Board members in a demeaning way. Chairman LoVerme noted his time was up.

Mr. Adam Graham (online) commented that his name was called. He said he agrees with Mr. Lavallee's comments to a point but he was a bit controversial. He said we really need to look at this like a public service level. He adds, we need to know how many substitutes are needed to let down the expectation of the teachers through this period that is a critical number to know. We need to know that number. He questioned, is it 4, 6 or 8 substitutes we need.

Mr. Dennis Golding (online) commented he knows it is a really hard decision for the school board and he thanks them because they are our elected officials and he thanks them for their service. He knows they have ultimately the best interest of our children at heart. He hopes they make the right decision moving forward.

Mr. Geoffrey Allen (online) thanked the Board. He agrees this is a difficult decision. He wants to see better communication as a parent and tax payer going forward. He echoes what Ms. Lavoie said, she was spot on. He thanked the few Board members, one was the vice chair, who did get his email and responded and did bother to pick up the phone and call. He thanked the vice chair and thinks he is doing a great job as well as every Board member. He senses the frustration and some seemed to come from... it was almost like an ambush. He thinks it was a result of trying the same thing last week and there was no communication, zero communication to the parents. He didn't get any information this was going to take place today. He happened to see it on Facebook, "thank god for that". It looks like an agreement was come to, a very effective and equitable agreement. He thanked everyone for putting in the time today and notes to include the Superintendent in that.

Ms. Jennifer Gagnon (online) thanked Mr. Post for all his comments he made tonight because it really hit home. She also thanked the Board for adding a teacher into the 2nd grade. Her son is in the 2nd grade. Even though it is 90 days, it's fine, we will think about it later on and find out what we need to do in the future. This was a great experience tonight.

Chairman LoVerme invited Ms. Lavoie to finish her comments from earlier.

Ms. Lavoie asked the Board to reconsider a vote for increasing the substitute cost as it is already being paid through the administration of a stipend. She adds, the substitutes are an extremely critical part at this time and should be considered. She knows there has been discussion that other districts are having challenges and we should take on our challenges ourselves and prove ourselves wrong vs. taking their word. She and 3 other teachers can help on a temporary basis for subbing with the district although they must be planned days. She has spoken with 2 community members, 1 who is a substitute already in the system and another who is certified who is open to do substitute if the daily rate increases. She urges the Board to reconsider that vote and understands the need to be fiscally responsible but this is a critical need and the funds are already being spent and at a higher rate. You are losing the specials and if you increase that rate it may help at the same time.

Ms. Tracy Bell (online) commented she has 2 children who go to FRES and one is a 2nd grader. She loves the fact the Board agreed to get another teacher. She questioned how it will be decided who will go to the new teacher. She notes if my child goes to a new teacher she will be very upset and will be devastated. It will be hard for her. Superintendent responded that decision will be made at the building level and parents will be communicated with in advance.

Mr. Adam Lavallee commented on the plan regarding what to do going forward, short term plan, long term plan, holidays, the rest of the year; he thinks about this and hopes the school board thinks about what they are actually being asked to decide because it's a little crazy. He assumes there are no Epidemiologists, Virologists, Immunologists, public health experts on the Board. He questions if anybody is following the statistics of what percentage of our community is considered high risk, what is the transmission rate in our county. He assumes no one is doing this. Essentially what the Board is being asked to do (he feels bad for them about this), is you are being asked to make a decision that they are completely unqualified to make and on a part time capacity. He doesn't think anyone put 30 hours into it. Mr. Lavallee's point he said is when people come with research the Board should be more accepting. He wishes the Board luck but does not think they should be making the decision.

V. SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Cloutier-Cabral notes this was a tougher meeting than most. She thanked the public for their input and asked "please, understand we are never trying to put together secret committees, many of us are parents and our kids are in school. We care; we are not trying to get ahead in anyway. We are just trying to help out the school." She thanked everyone for all their help and staying up till almost midnight listening.

Mr. Vanderhoof commented that he is the vice chair Mr. Lavallee was speaking about. He expressed at the last meeting this topic was supposed to be discussed, there were 18 people on the line and there was no mention on the agenda that it was going to be discussed, and no attached materials in the board packet. He states he did not "dress down the Superintendent". He stated the fact is that he requested 3 times for that information to be posted and visible to the public. He adds, we are at a factor of 3- 4 times the amount of people that were at the last meeting because of this topic. He wanted everyone to have time for input, to hear the presentation and to know it was coming. The idea that he has animosity toward teachers is ridiculous because he is trying to protect the interest of the public and for them to have the ability to know what is going on at minimum so they can make the choice if they want to be here to participate in a decision that will greatly affect their families and their neighbors is very important. He adds, "I stick by that, I didn't "dress down" anybody. He requested the presentation be tabled so the information could be put out appropriately, it was not; it went on because the Board did not choose to table it. He adds, I did not say anything and the discussion was stopped by the Chair and the Chair was copied on all my requests to make it public. He stated, I didn't "dress down" anybody.

Mr. Legere thanked those for turning out and the feedback that was provided. Having 100 people participating is good; the issue with the maximum amount of participants is not and needs to be fixed. He notes it is good to see the people involved in the process. He thanked the committee; it's a thankless task. He acknowledged they took a beating but put in hard work and good work. He adds the teachers have taken a lot of negative feedback in the public media and on Facebook. He doesn't think it is fair and thanked them for the job they are doing.

Mr. Post agrees with Mr. Vanderhoof, noting "everything he said was spot on and that is how it went down". Mr. Post had sent communication that this was going to be a problem. He notes if he has learned anything from being on the school board it is if we don't get all the stakeholders together as issues are evolving, it leaves people feeling upset and left out. Staff, parents, administration and tax payers that's who we are here to serve and to make the best

possible education for the children. That is our purpose and it happened tonight but was a very bumpy road along the way. He thinks the committee did a good job, they met a lot. He doesn't think they got good guidance from the Board. It was not intentional it was just the way it went. He thanked everyone and notes it would good to say the Pledge of Allegiance and voiced appreciation for adding it.

Ms. LeBlanc commented that if there is anything she heard from the public it's that the Board is really being asked to be transparent and we try hard to do that although maybe we were not as transparent as we thought we were. She adds, this is what the whole point was for tabling this, the purpose was to allow more people to have more input in something that would have been more limited. It's unfortunate because so much was put into it and people may not have felt they were being appreciated and maybe they weren't. She voiced, "the point was that it was not that we didn't appreciate so much of what you did rather than it was we wanted to share it with the public". The whole purpose was transparency and allow for public input and it worked; never negate the value of what was done.

Mr. Kofalt echoed the comment that we need to deal with the 100 person issue because if people are shut out of meetings that they want to have a voice in and listen in on it's a big problem. He acknowledged everyone involved in the committee was functioning with an attitude of service. He appreciates that ultimately it was raised as an issue so that it could be addressed; although there were some bumps along the way. He acknowledges the efforts and sacrifices made by the folks who participated in that.

Mr. White thanked everyone for coming out tonight and listening to the presentation and being involved. It is great to see this many here and he would like to see it more often.

Ms. Lavallee spoke making a personal comment that now during COVID, we have stressed ourselves to the max; the community is stressed, our families are stressed and our children are stressed and it has been very hard for everybody. That being said, she would like to remind people that kindness is key in a situation like this. It saddens her to see the way the community reacted. She appreciated constructive comments that came from our community members; it was sad to see some of the attacks that were going on toward our very hard working teachers. No teacher become a teacher to teach remotely, no teacher becomes a teacher because they just like hanging out with kids. They are passionate about their jobs and we need to keep them in our district by treating them nicely and kindly. They should not be a source of our anger, ultimately we are really angry about what the virus has done to our lives. That being said, she also agrees with what Mr. Post said about Mr. Vanderhoof's comments but she disagrees with how they were delivered. As board members we need to emulate keeping our emotions in check and behaving professional at all times. She doesn't think that happened last week. She was thankful that the Superintendent came back into the meeting and apologized after he left and it saddened her that there was not an apology on the other end because she does think we could have been more appropriate to the Superintendent. She thanked the Board for their consideration tonight and thanked all the community members who were able to join. She agrees with Mr. Kofalt we need figure out a way to have all people to be here. If parents want information she recommends they access the SAU website. Prior to being on the Board she came to every meeting and got the information off the SAU website. The Board does not have a presence on Facebook. She asks, please do not get your information regarding our activities off of Facebook because that is based on rumor and not fact. If you have a question, feel free to contact any board member or the Superintendent at any time and she encourages all community members to do that.

Chairman LoVerme expressed the last two meetings have been a lot of work and in between all that several members have been in additional meetings. He notes, the Board just doesn't have two meetings a month, they are in multiple meetings. They are on multiple committees and at times they are over worked and a lot of times believe it or not they are underappreciated. He read most of the comments on Facebook and can't count on one hand how many people that posted comments spoke up at the meeting tonight. "We have public comment at these meetings for a reason". We want the public to speak up at the meetings. We had 100 people on and I don't think we had 20% speak up tonight. Your comments and emails are greatly appreciated. He is probably one of the few Board members who didn't get a phone call. He did read the emails that came into the school board and he appreciates those emails as well. As far as the emotions that went on at the last meeting, he appreciates all members keeping their emotions intact. The last board meeting can be compared to another board meeting he watched and that one was kind of embarrassing and he can only imagine how this one looked. He expressed, moving forward we have to watch how we address people. He voiced appreciation for the work the folks did on the committee; it is not an easy task. He adds, any changes we will propose to make in the school we will have some positive and negative feedback. The unfortunate part is the negative feedback will come via social media. We have to take that with a

grain of salt because they are not coming here to speak to us in person. The people who do, it is greatly appreciated. All of the Board meetings are in person and virtual. We have very few people who show up in person. We would appreciate it if more people did show up in person. He thanked all the board members for all the long hours they put in not only at the meeting but the time they spend preparing for the meeting and the subcommittee meetings. He thanked the Superintendent and his staff for all the hours they are putting in. The Superintendent is working on multiple things, there are multiple (Union) contracts going on that he is actively involved in. He is actively involved in all the meetings, committee meetings as well as preparing the budget for next year. This is a budget that the Superintendent will not be here to spend any of. He is putting in a lot of hours preparing us for the next school year so that it is a successful one. He thanked all the teachers for working multiple levels and the demands that parents and students are putting on them. He thanked the custodial staff for being here waiting and the all the extra cleaning and disinfecting they have had to do. No one thought we would have to do this in our lifetime.

Superintendent noted he was unaware there was a 100-person limit because we have never had 100 people on before. He apologizes that and we will correct that. He and Mr. Kline will fix it, there is a way to do so with a small cost to the district. Again, he was unaware there was a limit. Superintendent reports, Mr. Dennis Golding had thanked the Board, (the comment was missed earlier).

Next Board meeting is Tuesday, November 10 at 6:30pm at WLC with the Budget Committee also.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Mr. White and SECONDED by Ms. LeBlanc to adjourn the Board meeting at 10:32pm. Voting: via roll call vote, eight ayes; one abstention from Chairman LoVerme, motion carried.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristina Fowler*

Distance Learning Effectiveness Committee

Committee Report and Holiday Break Proposal





Objectives and Principles



Objective: To ensure academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of all students are met during the pandemic

Goals:

- Minimize educational and social disruptions
- Minimize academic loss
- Ensure continued health and wellness of all members of school community
- Preserve continuity of all essential district functions

Guiding principles:

- **Health and wellness of students, staff, and community is our highest priority**
- **Recognition that learning needs vary student to student and school to school**
- **Recognize that family circumstance also vary**
- **Due to the unpredictability of the virus the plan must be fluid**
- **Decisions will be based on data and guidelines obtained from NH Department of Education (DOE), and NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)**



Findings and Feedback To Date



Parent and staff feedback regarding distance learning trends *

- Internet connectivity issues and/or technical issues during class time
 - Dual platform teaching creating difficulties for staff and students
 - Hybrid students struggling with inconsistencies r/t remote vs. in person instruction
 - Attendance accuracy related to technical issues
 - Parent compliance with guidelines put forth by district and the state has varied, non-reporting has caused some concerns
 - As student in-person attendance has risen ability to maintain recommended distance has decreased
 - Kindergarten, first grade, and some middle school classrooms are at maximum capacity.
 - Student enrollment has increased by 20 students district wide since first day of school
 - Second grade has now exceeded capacity
- * According to the feedback inquiry sent in September and discussions from committee meetings

Areas identified in need of immediate review:

- 1) The benefits vs. risk associated with families and staff traveling and socializing during the holiday season and develop a proposal to present to the School Board
- 2) Reevaluate the current model for sustainability throughout the school year and create a new model that will
 - a) Provide a more equitable education for all district students
 - b) Allow all students to attend in person while still providing a safe environment as described in guidelines put forth by the Department of Education
 - c) Ensure appropriate staffing coverage to prevent loss of direct instruction hours



Holiday Break Proposal

Holiday Break Concerns

- The district cannot legally restrict families, students, or staff from traveling or hosting events while on their **PERSONAL** time
- In the event that any member of the school community (staff or student) leaves New England a quarantine is required prior to return to the buildings in accordance with state and local requirements and District protocol
- As stated in the State issued guidance documents*
 - “Exceptions to quarantine requirements following close contact to someone suspected or confirmed with COVID19, or travel outside New England for non-essential purposes are not recommended and should not be standard practice.”
 - In order to qualify for quarantine exception “The employee cannot conduct essential functions remotely”

*<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>.

Holiday Break Concerns continued

- The district currently has 2 substitutes willing to cover staff absences
 - Community outreach has one promising lead that could results in additional substitutes
 - Staffing agencies stated they are unable to provide coverage due to “liability concerns”
 - **Substitute information:** <https://www.sau63.org/domain/73>
- With area schools going remote teachers who are also parents may no longer be able to teach in person
- According to Dr. Chan state epidemiologist “It doesn't take traveling outside of NH or New England for someone to pick up COVID-19 and bring it back to school... the risk increases locally as community transmission increases”

Community feedback regarding holiday break*

- We received approximately 88 responses which represents approximately 15% of our student population
- 53 respondents did not agree with going remote (9% of student population)
- 35 respondents did agree (6% of student population)

*Number based on information included in board packet and enrollment number as of 10/27/20

What staying in person may look like:

- If additional staff absences occur related to illness, family need, other districts closing etc. the Superintendent will be forced to move to remote without notice
- At WLC if there are more than 3 absent teachers the space in the gym needs to be used and students are supervised but direct instruction does not take place. This already occurs weekly
- At FRES teacher absences have been covered by specials teachers and specials classes do not meet and classroom teachers go without PLC time
- If we do not teach PE, Art, Tech, or Music we do not meet our state standards from the DOE
- LCS has a bit more flexibility since PARAs are not part of any individual students IEP and therefore can cover a classroom, however lunch and recess time do not have adequate coverage within that scenario



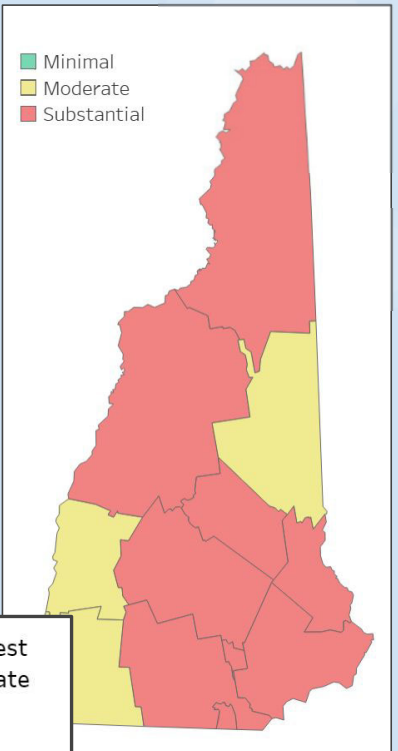
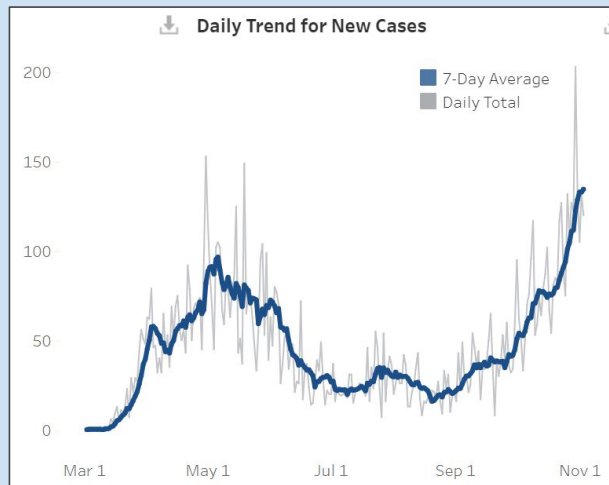
Supporting Data



Current Coronavirus Data in NH

All data represented here was obtained from NH DHHS website 11/05/2020

-The high risk of spread with small home gatherings (ie. the holidays) is currently a real concern, according to Dr. Chan, State Epidemiologist, NH DHHS



Level of Transmission	New Cases per 100k over 14 days	New Hosp per 100k over 14 days	7-Day PCR Test Positivity Rate
Substantial	123.4	1.5	1.8%

Models Currently used in Area Schools*

- Bedford: Hybrid model, recently decided not to continue to phase 3 of reopening related to increased community spread
- ConVal Regional: Hybrid model, all students remote from Thanksgiving Recess through January 15th. Winter and spring vacations combined with a 3-week period of remote learning after.
- Hillsborough/Deering: Hybrid model, going remote two weeks following December break
- Milford: Hybrid model, going remote as needed; last meeting canceled due to a positive case, no decision yet
- Souhegan: Hybrid, actively discussing holiday break no decision yet
- Mascenic: Hybrid, actively discussing holiday break no decision yet
- Manchester: Going full remote
- Timberlane: Going full remote
- Hudson: Currently remote, discussing going full remote
- Nashua: Full remote

* According to Department of Education website and SAU Superintendent Offices



Conclusion



Recommendations:

- Students will receive remote instruction Monday November 30th through Monday January 18th
 - Special Needs students will be given the opportunity to come into school 4 days per week while they attend classes remotely along with their peers
 - District will create a plan to address needs of students with no internet access
 - Co-curricular athletics could still be run if the NHIAA moves forward with the season
- School Board to consider increasing the daily substitute rate*
- Committee will work to create a recommendation for a more sustainable year long model for the School Board to consider. Presentation will be completed for the School Board Meeting on December 15th
- Committee to create a decision tree for the Superintendent to utilize in the decision to go remote due to COVID; Board to review at November 24th meeting

*See handout for district comparisons regarding rates



Open Discussion



Family Programs Available

- ★ Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 :
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave>
- ★ Holiday Drive supported by WLC and the Wilton-Lyndeborough Women's Club. Families encouraged to contact a.kovaliv@sau63.org if interested
- ★ Open Cupboard Pantry in Wilton if interested please call Linda and Roger Ladouceur at 809-6114
- ★ SHARE <https://www.sharenh.org/share-services/important-contacts-and-services/>