

Town of Canton
Canton School Committee Minutes of the Meeting of January 7, 2021
Remote Meeting Zoom Webinar

- A. **Call to Order** Chair Mirliani welcomed Dr. Fischer-Mueller back from leave and thanked Assistant Superintendent Folan for filling in.

The meeting of the School Committee is called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Mirliani via a roll call vote in Executive Session 5-0. Attendance is taken again in Open Session. Roll Call 5-0.

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Chuck Rae	yea

Also Remotely Present:

Jennifer Fischer-Mueller, Superintendent
Derek Folan, Assistant Superintendent
Barry Nectow, School Business Administrator
Colleen Hutchinson, Recording Secretary
Debbie Rooney, Director of Teaching and Learning
Julie Shore, Director of Technology and Digital Learning
Dianna Mullen, Director of Student Services
Sarah Shannon, Principal, GMS
Kelly Cavanaugh, RLP Administrator
Elias Jabbour, Student Member

- B. **Student Member Report** Elias Jabbour gave a report on GMS. He spoke about grade level curriculum projects. Grade 6 is doing Bake for Good where they partnered with the King Arthur Flour Company to bake bread and give it away to friends and family. Grade 7 is working on a Natural Disaster unit where they have guest speakers come in to talk to them. Grade 8 is doing a project during community block about ways they can connect with other students outside of their cohort.

- C. **Interim Superintendent's Report**
Superintendent Highlights

CPS Visual Arts: Photos and images were shared that showed the variety of work being produced both in school and remotely. The images were representative of all of the schools.

Administrative Assistants: Interim Superintendent Folan thanked administrative assistants and office staff.

Updates

Remote Learning Pathway (RLP) Update: Ms. Kelly Cavanaugh presented an elementary RLP update. There are approximately 270 students with 2 classrooms per grade.

Approximately 24 staff members including teachers, EA's and support staff are working in the elementary RLP. The RLP is focused on supporting students in their academic and social development. There is regular materials distribution to ensure that students have the hands-on learning experiences appropriate to their grade level. There are virtual assemblies

and monthly spirit weeks to continue to support a sense of community. Quotes from families were shared.

Committee Members raised questions about RLP class sizes and supplies. Class size for some grades are large, however, the overall feedback from families remains positive. All teachers on the RLP received the same supplies like those on the continuum. All EA's have Acer computers. Specialists are available to students on the RLP if/when the classroom teachers reach out to them. Ms. Moran requested a follow up report regarding how students on the RLP are receiving support services in math and reading. There have been 14 transitions in and out of the RLP since mid-October.

Principal Shannon spoke about the Galvin RLP. The Galvin remote students are called the Remote Ravens. There are approximately 138 GMS students on the RLP.

It's a priority for the students' experience on the Ravens team to be aligned to that of students on the hybrid continuum. To facilitate this, teachers on the RLP attend grade-level PLC meetings with their content area colleagues. This also allows for seamless transitions between pathways if that has to happen. Ms. Shannon continues to try to work on ways to connect the RLP students virtually with the continuum students. Thank you to Ms. Owens for all her work on the Remote Ravens website.

The three week transition period for the RLP is working well at both the elementary and secondary levels. An update regarding the enrollment numbers will be provided at the next meeting.

Student Services Update: Ms. Dianna Mullen provided an update on the Student Services Department. Educators and specialists have been providing rigorous instruction and supports for all students. Communication with families or between students and educators is facilitated through virtual means, in-person and email. Parents and educators have been able to express themselves by responding to our district surveys.

Structured Learning Time Update: On December 31, 2020, DESE published the Structured Learning Time for each district, based on a data survey conducted by the department. Based on recently approved requirements, schools in the Hybrid model need to have at least 35 hours of live synchronous instruction over the course of two weeks. Canton Public Schools exceeded the requirement with 47 hours of live synchronous over two weeks.

MCAS Update: We received notification this week that DESE has postponed the MCAS make-up testing window for current seniors who were scheduled to take the exam between January 14 - February 5. The postponement was made public, but still required the Board of Education's approval. Current seniors will have a modified Competency Determination process that includes passing an approved course and demonstrating competency in that subject area in lieu of a qualifying MCAS score for ELA and/or Math. Seniors would still have the option of taking the traditional MCAS exam in the spring.

DESE is also adjusting the testing requirements for students in grades 3-8. The Department will significantly reduce testing time for students in grades 3-8 through a “session sampling” approach, in which each student will take only a portion of each MCAS assessment in each subject. The timeframe and additional specifics are still to be determined.

CHS Athletics Update: The CHS Winter Season is off and running with interscholastic contests this week in Gymnastics, Swimming, Ice Hockey and Basketball. Thanks to the fine work of Ed McDonough, Jim Duncan, Canton Community Cable and many others, we are able to live stream most home contests. All protocols around Covid-19 are working well.

Upcoming Flu Clinics: The state announced an extension to the deadline to receive the flu vaccine, establishing the new date of February 28, 2021. The Canton Public Schools Nursing Team will be working with CVS over the next month to schedule additional flu clinics at the Rodman Building. More information will be forthcoming.

Indicators of Excellence

CHS Honor Society Inductions: CHS recently held several virtual Honor Society inductions. The National Honor Society Induction was held on December 7, the World Language Honor Society was held on December 10 and the National English Honor Society will be held in the upcoming weeks. Thank you to Ms. Kristian Merenda for representing the School Committee at the National Honor Society Induction this year. CHS inducted 53 well-deserving students into the Robert W. Tighe Chapter of the National Honor Society this year. Additionally, there were 12 French Honor Society inductees, 18 Spanish Honor Society inductees, 2 German Honor Society inductees, and 3 American Sign Language inductees. Lastly, 48 students will be inducted into the Green Light Chapter National English Honor Society. Congratulations to all of these students for the hard work they put in to earn these distinguished awards.

Important Dates and Events

Jan. 18	No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 21	School Committee Meeting, Virtual, 7:00 pm
Jan. 22	CHS Virtual Talent Show, 6:30 pm
Jan. 29	End of Term 2 - CHS and GMS
Feb. 4	School Committee Meeting, Virtual, 7:00 pm

D. New Business

1. FY22 Operating Budget: Interim Superintendent Folan and Mr. Nectow reviewed the FY22 budget proposal. The FY22 budget reflects a 4.94 % increase, of which 3.11 % are contractual obligations. This is the second look

at the budget. The budget will be sent to the Town on the Friday following the next meeting, January 22. Mr. Nectow reviewed other budget timeline targets. Assistant Superintendent Folan talked about two requests made by members from the meeting of 1/7. The request for a breakdown of student services department staffing including job responsibilities was shared at this evening's meeting. The full report can be found on the website under the School Committee tab, Meetings/Agendas/Minutes. Assistant Superintendent Folan also spoke about the request for a PACE teacher at GMS. Although there have been preliminary discussions with Superintendent Fischer-Mueller and Principal Shannon regarding their experiences with accelerated/extension programs, it was determined that further, in-depth discussion of this request will take place during an upcoming finance subcommittee meeting, then be brought back to the full committee. There was some discussion about budget requests by members and the process and timeline for such requests in the future.

There was a discussion about the GMS therapeutic program. Clarification was provided with regard to the difference between sub separate classrooms, Homepage, and the new therapeutic program. There was a request to see the staffing makeup for each of these programs. Assistant Superintendent Folan cautioned members regarding confidentiality as the discussion continued on this topic publicly.

2. 2021 Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Articles: Interim Superintendent Folan and Mr. Nectow presented 2 articles for the 2021 ATM. The two 2021 ATM articles are to replenish the funds, which require School Committee approval prior to submitting the articles to the Town for inclusion in the 2021 ATM warrant. The two articles can be adjusted or eliminated if the additional funding is sufficient to offset all or a large portion of the deficit. #1 Increase Special Education Stabilization Fund, typically from free cash, the exact amount will be shared at an upcoming meeting. #2 Increase School Department Revolving Accounts, to replenish monies spent on the RLP. Both of these articles are placeholder and exact numbers are forthcoming. These actions allow the district to see what sums of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds or borrow pursuant to any applicable statute, in order to increase any School Department Revolving Accounts or to take any other action related as necessary.

Move to approve the two articles for 2021 ATM: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Maureen Moran

Vote by Roll Call: 5-0

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Chuck Rae	yea

3. COVID Update: Interim Superintendent Folan provided a school department COVID update and reviewed COVID Protocols. Canton, along with many other MA towns is in the Red. This metric is one of the metrics the district looks at in terms of our continuum model. A key factor in making decisions is transmission in schools. The district continues to have no school transmission. Assistant Superintendent Folan again expressed the need for all staff and families to follow the district protocols. At this time, Assistant Superintendent Folan said it is recommended that the district remains in

hybrid, but if the cases continue to rise, families and staff should be prepared to go remote. Daily tracking and monitoring continue.

4. Analysis of the Conditions for Learning Survey #2: Interim Superintendent Folan shared the results from the second parent/guardian Conditions for Learning Survey. The full report can be found on the website under the School Committee tab, Meetings/Agendas/Minutes. Approximately 1198 families responded to the survey which is about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the student population. Topics included Safety, Teaching and Learning, Social Emotional Learning, Technology and Digital Learning, Structural Supports for Students and Learning Models were reviewed. Overall, the responses were consistent with the first survey. Trends and patterns were shared. Parents/guardians felt that students have developed routines and feel more comfortable with their learning and parents expressed an overall feeling of safety with the protocols in place, however, current numbers are raising concern. Long remote days can be difficult for students, some requests for shorter remote days, comments varied about the amount of asynchronous work, some requests for more challenging work, screen time remains a concern, social connectedness remains a concern, connected to cohort but not to the school community. Next steps include: building level analysis, site council review, additional surveys in March, development of an Advisory Group, staff survey to be reviewed on 1/21/21 and there will be an upcoming student survey.

Questions were included for parents/guardians to indicate their level of comfort with a 4.5-foot social distancing protocol and a four days per week in-person learning model. Approximately 72% of survey respondents indicated that they would send their child to school for in-person learning, and 13% of respondents indicated that they would request a change for their student to be moved to the Remote Learning Pathway. However, many parents felt that the timing was not right at this time given the increase in COVID cases. Also raised as a concern was the RLP classrooms are already full. The District will continue to follow the recommendations of medical experts, as well as the capacity of classrooms, impact on transportation, and the capacity of the Remote Learning Pathway when evaluating any possible future changes. A member also posted a question about adding Wednesdays into the cohort's schedules as a synchronous learning day. This will be part of the Advisory Group discussion, the idea will be explored further.

5. Policy Review: Interim Superintendent Folan presented policy BEDH - Public Comment for a 3rd read. This document was reviewed by the attorney. There was a redundancy in #8 and #2 with regard to curtailing a speaker. It was decided that the sentence pertaining to this would be struck in #2 and remain in #8. Verbal statements can be curtailed if not within the scope of the School Committee and/or if the speaker goes beyond the 5 min. allotted time. It was decided that the policy allows for the public comment could come at the beginning or end of the agenda as determined by the Chair and Superintendent. It is at the discretion of the chair to extend the overall time allowed for public comment beyond 30 minutes.

**Move to approve policy BEDH with the strikeout to item #2
pertaining to interrupting the speaker as discussed:** Nichola
Gallagher

Second: Maureen Moran

Vote by Roll Call: 5-0

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Chuck Rae	yea

E. **Business Managers Report** None

- F. **Public Comment** Ms. Ellen Donovan made a public comment about the Conditions for Learning survey results and stressed that responses only captured $\frac{1}{3}$ of the student population, YRBS, and the 3rd party vendor who looks at data, could this be incorporated into the budget, could YRBS student answers be shared with the public and an AP comment that enrollment isn't just for college purposes but also as a student's personal challenge.

G. **Routine Matters**

1. Approve Minutes dated December 17, 2020

Move: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Kristian Merenda

Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Chuck Rae	yea

2. Approve Executive Minutes dated December 17, 2020

Move: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Kristian Merenda

Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Chuck Rae	yea

3. Announcement that the warrants dated December 24, 2020 are all set and January 8, 2021, will be delivered to the Business Manager tomorrow by Ms. Moran.

H. **Sub-Committee Reports**

1. CCPC - Kristin Mirliani - voted 9-0 to endorse Luce Playground
2. BRC - Chuck Rae - nothing new to report
3. Wellness- Chuck Rae - nothing new to report
4. Finance - Maureen Moran/Nichola Gallagher - upcoming meeting to be scheduled
5. Policy - Kristian Merenda – meeting next week
6. PRHC – Nichola Gallagher - Suggested a possibility of pulling in schools for their input on the materials for the exhibit preview rooms to gather different viewpoints.
7. CDEI - Nichola Gallagher - overlapping with the report above
8. Master Planning Committee - Kristian Merenda - nothing new to report

- I. **Future Business** Next School Committee Meeting will be held Thursday, January 21, 2021, at 7:00 pm.

J. **Other Business** Chair Mirliani announced that she will not be running for another term. She encouraged a CHS parent to step into the role so there is representation from all schools on the board. She invited parents to reach out to her for information.

K. **Adjournment** Nichola Gallagher motioned to close the Open Session at 9:44 pm. Chuck Rae seconded. It was voted by a roll call vote 5-0.

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Chuck Rae	yea

Documents used during the meeting:

1. Interim Superintendent's Report dated January 7, 2021
2. FY22 Superintendent Budget Message
3. FY22 Superintendent Budget Request
4. FY22 Budget Package
5. 2021 ATM Articles
6. Special Education Update School Committee document
7. Conditions for Learning Survey #2 Family and Staff Survey Results
8. Policy: BEDH: Public Comment