

Town of Canton  
Canton School Committee Minutes of the Meeting of May 14, 2020  
Remote Meeting due to COVID-19 School Closure  
Google Meet Streaming

- A. Call to Order: The meeting of the School Committee is called to order at 6:49 pm. Motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing issues related to contractual matters made by Reuki Schutt. Seconded by Maureen Moran. It was voted by roll call 5-0.

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Kristin Mirliani  | yea |
| Reuki Schutt      | yea |
| Nichola Gallagher | yea |
| Kristian Merenda  | yea |
| Maureen Moran     | yea |

- B. Open Session: Chair Mirliani called the meeting to order at 7:13 pm by roll call vote. Chair Mirliani apologized for the meeting starting late due to technical difficulty.

Remotely Present are:

Kristin Mirliani - yea  
Nichola Gallagher - yea  
Reuki Schutt - yea  
Maureen Moran - yea  
Kristian Merenda - yea

Also Remotely Present:

Dr. Jennifer Fischer-Mueller, Superintendent  
Barry Nectow, School Business Administrator  
Colleen Hutchinson, Recording Secretary  
Julie Shore, Director of Technology and Digital Learning  
Debbie Rooney, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Debra Bromfield, Director of Student Services  
Derek Folan, CHS Principal  
Dianna Mullen, new Director of Student Services  
Donna Kilday, PreK-2 Early Childhood Coordinator  
Bridget Wade, Teacher  
Patty Willis, Teacher  
Claire Lund, Teacher  
Kaitlyn Sweeney, Teacher  
Kim Willett, Teacher  
Becky Reinhold, Teacher  
Jackie Abrams, Teacher  
Kerry McCarthy, Teacher  
Yeshi Lamour, Dean S. Luce Principal  
Nora McClean, Student  
Foina Trendell, Student

- C. Public Comments/Questions:

1. Have discussions started for the return to school in the Fall (or sooner if need be)? If not, when will they? If yes, what is the status? Will parents be included in those

discussions and what role does the teachers' union play into these discussions? How much input did or does the union have into the re-opening decision and plans?

Most importantly, will the committee be transparent and allow the public to have access to all notes and materials that will be reviewed during these planning meetings prior to decisions being made or announced? Steve Wolfe

Chair Mirliani responded to Mr. Wolfe earlier in the day. She explained that discussions regarding the return to school have started and that the district is exploring all options. As with all public schools, the district awaits the directive from the Governor and Commissioner. It is possible CTA will be involved. All decisions will be shared with the public.

2. The JFK has recently had a lot of information going back and forth on what is allowed and what is not as far as social distance with staff/teachers/students. There seems to be information going back and forth on the parent page as to it only being the JFK not allowed. I would like the school committee to confirm what is the law and information around this issue. It appears stoughton is having a mini parade with teachers, staff, police, fire etc. through each elementary school district. This makes me think there is no actual law saying Canton can't have the same types of interaction so to speak. It seems like parents think all this is coming from one person's personal view on school committee, on what they deem safe and now really what parents/town people think is safe and ok to do. I would like clarification on this to clear up what is fact and what is speculation of parents.

One last thing I feel like issues like this and any potential debatable types of new rules/changes etc. should really be coming from higher ups and not pushed on CAPT to give information as they have nothing to do with the information. CAPT purpose is to enrich a child's experience and not be the middle man. Priscilla Lourenco

In addition to the above email, Ms. Lourenco included several comments posted on Facebook. Chair Mirliani did not read the comments that were posted on Facebook as she did not have permissions to read them. Chair Mirliani's response to Ms. Lourenco is here: *I will omit the negative comments directed at a school committee member as an individual. Please let me know if this email answers your questions and you no longer have a need to have your email recorded. If I do not hear back from you, I will definitely read at the meeting tonight.*

*I am also happy to reply to your question directly about what is being conveyed with the comments you attached. There is no district directive or state law that prevents any sort of drive by actions by teachers. These have been happening as teachers elect to participate and are permissible unless there is a change in MA directives from the Governor. I, for one, think these connections are great! However, as you know, we are under a stay-at-home order from the MA government and there are limited exceptions within those guidelines.*

*I recently heard that Stoughton is organizing such a parade and think that is fantastic. I am unsure if that is something that will be occurring in our district but I can assure you that it is not prohibited by the School Committee. Our teachers are hard at work providing. If that were the case, you would have seen that information discussed at a public meeting.*

*I am concerned by the comment you copied above from someone stating that they reached out and did not receive a response. I monitor my school committee emails closely and only received emails regarding this issue starting yesterday - I have received two other emails in addition to yours and neither want to be part of public comment.*

*I can assure you that we are all working very hard to find any and all opportunities that are safe, within the government guidelines, to connect with kids. We know how important their school connections are for each of them.*

*Please let me know if you have any additional questions. Be safe. Kristin Mirliani*

3. Where are the 100 tulips that were planted at the JFK last year by the outgoing 5th-grade class? Catherine Hoberg  
Ms. Mirliani explained that the custodians accidentally mowed the field of tulips. If these tulips do not grow back next year, the district will replace the bulbs..

D. Superintendent's Report:

**Updates**

"School These Days": Students are being cared for remotely through connections with their teachers and support staff, both academically and emotionally. The remote learning activities vary throughout the grades with an increased focus on the priority content standards defined by the Commissioner of Education. With attention to students' social emotional wellbeing, teachers across the district continue to reach out to students virtually whether it's individually or in groups. As well, some teachers have worked with their principals to add a very special touch when needed. For example, teachers have connected with students and families to send a birthday message live from their cars with a birthday sign and the student at their front door or window. Also, all past and recent district communications, including the May 11 letter to families from Commissioner Riley, can be found on our [website](#).

PreK/K Last Day of School: Given the COVID-19 school closure, we will not be conducting Kindergarten screenings on June 17-19, as previously planned. As a result, the last day of school for preschool and kindergarten students will be June 23, 2020.

Senior Update: Principal Folan and his design team reviewed the results of the senior survey and have begun making year-end plans for our seniors. As Mr. Folan said in his previous presentation to the School Committee, a letter to seniors and their families was distributed on May 7 and can be found [here](#).

**Indicators of Excellence**

Hockomock Scholar-Athlete Award: Congratulations to Caroline Tourgee and Nathan Quan on earning the honor of Hockomock Scholar-Athlete. This annual award is given to a male and female senior from each of the twelve Hockomock League schools as a special recognition of excellence in athletics and academics.

Special Day for Seniors: Thanks to the time and efforts of our CHS Staff and Administrators, School Committee Chair Ms. Mirliani and Ms. Gallagher, and Senator Timilty, signs were delivered to every senior at their home.

CHS Performing Arts: Even though the production of "Mamma Mia" was canceled due to the ongoing pandemic, rehearsals left the cast and crew with many fond memories. Also, in the weeks leading up to the show and before the close of school, the cast had the opportunity to perform a show for the Canton senior community. A glimpse of that performance can be found [here](#).

### **Update on Hiring Processes for Administrators**

CHS Principal Search: Led by Ms. Shore, the Interview Committee finished conducting interviews and recommended potential finalists. Superintendent Fischer-Mueller is closely reviewing each candidate and will make a decision on finalists very soon. Finalist Days are scheduled for May 18 and May 20. Virtual forums will be held for the community, staff, and students. The schedule can be found [here](#).

JFK Principal Search: After combing through multiple applications, Ms. Rooney facilitated the discussion that helped the committee identify candidates to be interviewed which began this week. The Finalist Days are tentatively scheduled for May 28 and May 29, at which time we will hold virtual forums for the community and staff.

#### **E. New Business:**

1. Director of Student Services: Superintendent Fischer-Mueller introduced and welcomed Ms. Dianna Mullen. Ms. Mullen expressed her gratitude and excitement for the opportunity to join the Canton community.
2. Literacy Update: Ms. Debbie Rooney provided literacy updates. Teachers and students shared their experiences as Early Adopters. Due to gaps within subgroups and the limitations of the previous ELA curriculum, Journeys, the district instituted new literacy goals. Now, Early Adopters use the Calkins Units of Study to help support reading and writing workshops. As a result of this, teachers reported that students are becoming stronger readers and are building good reading and writing habits. They reported that engagement has increased. Students reported that they like that they are reading whole books and that the readers and writers workshops connect to real life and has opened them up to different genres; they love book clubs. The early elementary grades have introduced a phonics piece, combined with reader and writer workshops teachers report higher reading levels earlier in the year than previous years. Teachers report seamless transitions when Educational Assistants and/or Reading Specialists come into the classroom during literacy blocks. Areas where teachers report as need improvement are: phonics, grammar skills, access to books/more developed libraries, and time constraints given the short amount of reading time. Superintendent Fischer-Mueller assured the Committee that funding has been built into both the operating and capital budget for books to improve and continue to expand the literacy program. The next phase of the literacy program involves tracking data, assessing students when school opens, engaging teachers, and planning for professional development.

## F. **Unfinished Business**

1. Preschool Tuition: Superintendent Fischer-Mueller, Mr. Barry Nectow and Ms. Donna Kilday updated the Committee on the Rodman Preschool. Ms. Kilday informed the committee that the preschool staff developed a google site, they continue to advance the curriculum, follow FAPE, and continue to engage families. Students continue to engage in read alouds, dance groups, small group activities, and individual zoom meetings. Ms. Kilday explained that tuition assistance is offered to families. Given the pandemic, this information was shared again in March to let families know this assistance was available. The final tuition payment was due on April 1. There was no motion for a refund of PK tuition.
- G. Business Manager's Report: Mr. Nectow reminded parents that bus applications are due back tomorrow, May 15. The second deadline is June 12. The base rate is \$285. After the June date, there is no guarantee of a seat on the bus in September. 75% of families have responded so far and 55% are requesting transportation (1663 students). The district continues to deliver approximately 225-250 meals/day. Costa Foods won the bid, therefore, the week after Memorial Day, the district will be making available 56 20 pound boxes of produce. This will be given out on a first come first serve basis. The district will not be participating with the dairy company as they did not win the bid.

## H. Routine Matters:

Approve Workshop Minutes dated April 30, 2020

**Move:** Maureen Moran

**Second:** Nichola Gallagher

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0

Approve Minutes dated May 4, 2020

**Move:** Reuki Schutt

**Second:** Maureen Moran

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0

Approve Executive Meeting Minutes dated May 4, 2020

**Move:** Reuki Schutt

**Second:** Maureen Moran

**Roll Call Vote:** 5-0

Maureen Moran reported that she signed the warrant dated May 1 & May 8, 2020 and the Food Services warrant of May 1, 2020.

## I. Sub-Committee Reports

1. CPC - Nichola Gallagher - The committee has not voted on the housing article yet for the rental property to supplement the income. Voted to allow it procedurally, will entertain at the next meeting.
2. BRC - Kristian Merenda - nothing new to report.
3. Wellness- Maureen Moran - held an interim meeting. The homeschool interventionists and wellness staff continue to find ways to stay connected with students and families. Data being inputted for newly registered kindergarten families. Connecting with these new kindergarten families ahead of schedule.

Wellness staff working on a surprise to make up for 5th grade Unity Day and they are planning for a virtual field day for June.

4. Finance - Reuki Schutt/Maureen Moran - nothing new to report.
5. Policy - Kristin Mirliani – nothing new to report.
6. PRHC – Nichola Gallagher - nothing new to report.
7. Ad Hoc Calendar Advisory - Maureen Moran - nothing new to report.

J. Future Business: Next School Committee Meeting will be held Monday, May 28, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

K. Other Business: none

L. Adjournment: Reuki Schutt motioned to close Open Session at 9:22 pm. Nichola Gallagher seconded. It was voted 5-0.

5 yeas                      0 nays