

Town of Canton
Canton School Committee Minutes of the Meeting of June 11, 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 7:02 pm by Chair Kristin Mirliani by roll call vote. Executive Session was canceled tonight.

Kristin Mirliani	yea
Reuki Schutt	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Maureen Moran	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
Donna Kilday, PreK-2 Early Childhood Coordinator
Yeshi Lamour, Dean S. Luce Principal
David Brauninger, Hansen Principal
Christine McMahon, JFK Principal
Sarah Shannon, GMS Principal
Emily DiDonna, new JFK Principal
Schutt Family
Senator Walter Timilty
Representative William Galvin
Helena Carrington, Community Member

Chair Mirliani started the meeting with a celebration for Ms. Reuki Schutt as this is her last meeting as a member after serving as a School Committee member for 16 years. Many guests spoke of Reuki's positive impact on them and on the school system. Senator Timilty read a State Senate citation honoring Ms. Schutt for her service and dedication. Mike Loughran, on behalf of the Canton Board of Selectmen, read a certificate into the record. Representative Galvin also read a citation from the House of Representatives offering their congratulations and appreciation for her service. Family members and previous School Committee members spoke and thanked Reuki for her service.

- B. Public Comments/Questions:

1. Dear Canton School Committee,

I am aware that the agenda for tonight's School Committee meeting has been amended at the last minute to include discussion of a proposal for a Juneteenth event on school property. I regret that another meeting (of the Community Preservation Committee's public information session on its proposed CPA projects) will prevent me from attending. In lieu of a personal statement at the meeting, I wanted to send a brief note in support of the proposal.

I was enormously proud of the community wide response to the STAND IN support of Black Lives Matter event last Saturday night. The size and diversity of the crowd, including representation from our police, fire, elected officials and faith communities, spoke volumes about an overwhelming pent-up need as individuals and as a community to make a public statement in support of racial justice and equality. Given some frightening recent events in Boston and nearby Brockton, I'm sure that more than a few families participated notwithstanding a tiny bit of trepidation about "what might happen." But courage prevailed. On magnificent display by those who spoke. But also by those who attended, to model values for their children and give meaning to what we say we believe. I hope it is not hyperbole to describe the event as a possible breakthrough for our town *if we can find a way to keep the dialogue going*.

It gives me great hope that the event being proposed is being organized by **young people**, and young people **of Canton**.

I defer to our health professionals the matter of specific arrangements to assure public safety for an event such as this while we are still in a pandemic. But surely the creativity and innovation borne of this new world we are living in can be called upon to allow us to move forward with important work that is at the core of who we aspire to be as a community.

With great respect for your decision and decision-making process,

Lisa Lopez

2. Dear Dr. Fischer-Mueller and School Committee Board Members,

Although I do not have a High School Student in my family, I would like to commend Mr. Folan and all those involved in the quick, creative planning to assure that the CHS Seniors were given an opportunity to graduate in person, including the parade which I was glad to be a part of...standing with my family cheering on many Seniors that we knew and many more we did not. Given these unprecedented circumstances, the graduation and parade seemed to lift the spirits of the graduates and the Town of Canton. Job well done!!

On another note, I would like to take a moment to shine the light on Reuki! If my research is correct, you have been on the School Committee since 2003. Wow! Although your own children have already graduated from the Canton Public Schools, you have cared enough for our Students and Schools to remain on the Board years after. It is very evident to me, and many others, that you care very deeply for our teachers, administrators, schools and most importantly our children.

I have truly appreciated the open line of communication that you have provided, always listening with an open mind.

Thank you Reuki for volunteering so many years, investing many hours and asking important questions that helped ensure that quality education would be provided throughout the Canton Public School System.

Sincerely,

Ellen Donovan

3. Dear Canton School Committee and School Leaders

I wanted to reach out as a parent of a Rodman Pre School student regarding the School Committee's decision on 5/14/2020 to uphold full pre-school tuition during these unprecedented times of COVID-19.

Upon inquiry, I was recently informed by Donna Kilday that full tuition for the April 1st payment date was expected to be paid in full with no refund of any type due to the pandemic. Upon further inquiry, I asked for her to explain the justification for this and she informed me that this decision was made by the School Committee on the 5/14/2020 school committee meeting. Parents of the Rodman program were not informed of this decision by the Committee and nor were we informed of the expectation of what our full April 1st tuition would be paying for.

Mr. Kilday explained to me that the Committee decided to uphold full pre school tuition reasoning "that they felt students continued to receive services and support from the program". Pre pandemic, my son was attending the Rodman for 3 days a week totaling 15 hours a week of in school education, guidance from teachers and social interaction with his peers. It is my understanding that this is what my full tuition was funding.

Unfortunately with this pandemic, the full mission of the Rodman, as well as many other intuitions and programs, has been halted. The Rodman is providing a website with activities for parents to do with the kids in the home; they are providing opportunities for Zoom calls as well; we are hearing from his teacher via email. This totals about 45 mins a week for school interactions. I wanted to ask the Committee and voting members if they could explain how 45 mins a week for school interaction in the house guided by a parent during a pandemic, where in many home situations have parents still working a full time job whether in or out of the home and have siblings home as well, compares to 15 hours of out of the house school education, guidance from teachers and social interaction with peers?

Mrs. Kilday also explained to me that Jeff Riley, DESE Commissioner outlined expectations of remote learning. Mrs. Kilday described to me that Mr. Riley determined that students would be expected to engage in remote learning for half the time students would have been in school. Mrs. Kilday described that the Rodman created a website as a resource for families to meet Mr. Riley's guidelines. I wanted to ask if the Committee could explain how these criteria would realistically be met during a pandemic when pre school aged children are now being home schooled by members of the family as we are all trying to navigate the realities of this pandemic and still work at our jobs?

According to this determination from Mr. Riley- my son would need to be completing 3 hours of pre school work at home, 3 days a week. My son is 5 years old; I work full time out of the house as an essential employee; my husband is working from home and he also has my 2.5 year old daughter home with him. Could the committee explain how this justifies paying full tuition for April 1st ?

The last point that Mrs. Kilday brought up to me, in justification for full pre school tuition for April 1st, is that "young children learn through play and expect that some of the time (half the time students would have been in school) to include that". Rodman did post a statement about play on their website. The resource on the Rodman website describes play

activities to include: bath time, building and Legos, playing with cars and trucks, coloring and art, dolls and stuffed animals, farm toys, Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head, musical instruments, playdough, playing kitchen, puzzles, reading books, singing. These are activities that I regularly participate in with both of my children on a regular basis, pre pandemic, year round. I wanted to ask the Committee and its members to explain the justification for paying full pre school tuition to the Rodman to play with my child at home, things that I do as a parent and never previously paid for?

This pandemic has brought many challenges to all of us in ways that we could have never predicted. Mrs. Kilday informed me of tuition assistance that is available, this is the Reduced Tuition program that has always been available to families; my family has never qualified for this and still does not. I am not requesting tuition assistance; rather an explanation as to why I am paying full tuition for services that I am not receiving in full during this pandemic and unprecedented times.

I would like to request, on behalf of the Rodman pre-school parents, that the decision to not reimburse full pre school tuition be revisited and discussed at the next School Committee meeting on June 11th.

I also wanted to ask if other payment scenarios were discussed such as pro rated payment based upon services that we are receiving (such as the Zoom meetings and emails and resources; which is at a very limited capacity compared to full time school which is 15 hours a week for my son) but not the full tuition, since we are not receiving the full tuition services due to the pandemic.

Thank you for your time

Respectfully,

Alyssa Perreault

3. Good morning,

I'm planning on listening to the school committee meeting tonight. I'm not sure how this process works, but I do have a comment regarding refunding the fall tuition. Since there is an uncertainty of how the school will reopen and function during the fall semester, as a parent and a nurse I do not feel comfortable sending my 4 year old to school. He would not be able to social distance and keep a mask on throughout the day. In addition, if the school decides to continue with its current online strategy in the fall, the tuition fees should be reevaluated since the online program does not reflect or is equivalent to what I know the Rodman program to be. Also, tuition should be the same for all families if the program is offered online. For the remainder of the year, I was charged \$1,400, while another family paid \$500 for the same online material. Yes, financial assistance is available, however, it does not make it fair in my opinion.

Therefore, the families that choose not to return to the Rodman in the fall, they should receive their refund.

Thanks,
Dr. Sicilia Montrond

4. Dear Reuki,

THANK YOU!!!

As your years of dedication come to a final wrap, I want to make sure you are aware that you are appreciated for your time, efforts and dedication to what can be sometimes a thankless unpaid job. In my years of attending school committee meetings, I have always found you very knowledgeable of past experiences as a reference, compassionate to others opinions and always willing to listen. Even hanging out in the parking lot to chat after a long night of meetings. I hope you take away great memories of all the fun events you were able to participate in from graduations, spelling bees, art shows, music counts and so many more. I'm sure you have your favorites. So as a mom who hung out in what I refer to as the cheap seats in the Distance Lab over the year, I want to wish you Good Luck in your next chapter and Thank you for everything!!!

Sincerely
Catherine Hoberg

5. First, thank you for your many years of service Reuki!

Secondly, The JFK school seems to frequently lose power as well as phone service. Is it understood why it is so susceptible to power outages? Is there anything that could be done to improve reliability?

Best, stay well.
Steve MacPherson

C. Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Activities Highlights**Superintendent Activities Highlights**

Reuki Schutt: Superintendent Fischer-Mueller thanked Ms. Schutt for her 16 years of service to CPS. She served as Chair from 2010-2013 and Vice-Chair from 2007-2010, 2013-2016, 2019-2020.

Educational Equity: Superintendent Fischer-Mueller shared a letter from building Principals and central office Administrators that was distributed to the school community on [June 1](#) expressing our thoughts as the district's leaders regarding the recent racial issues. As a reflection of the staff's care for every student this past week. Also shared is the message below Superintendent Fischer-Mueller wrote to staff:

Our Commitment to Educational Equity: *I want to let people know how proud I am of our school district and the work that staff and administrators are doing to ensure that every single student and staff member feels an authentic sense of belonging in our schools. Last week's message was clear – doing nothing is not an option. To that point, teachers used their professional judgement to determine how to engage students as developmentally appropriate. The stories shared with me about the various levels of engagement have been very powerful and inspiring.*

Your actions are further evidence of our system-wide unwavering commitment to educational equity. We have a strong foundation upon which to continue our work as described in our

Strategic Framework. Below is just one excerpt for the Strategic Framework on Achieving Educational Excellence & Ensuring Equity:

Our commitment to educational equity requires that we identify unconscious and implicit biases and the impact they have on our students, families, and staff.

As a school district, we have work to do and we are poised to do it - together.

CHS Graduation: Due to the efforts of CHS Administration and staff, our 2020 graduating class was honored in a very special way on Saturday, June 6.

Updates

Virtual Contact: CHS, Hansen, Luce, JFK and the Preschool have had contact with 100% of families since remote learning began. Teachers, counselors, and countless support staff have worked together to maintain contact as consistently as possible while respecting the individual needs of each family. Despite these efforts, there were still some families who did not engage in remote learning. JFK and the Preschool report that one student at each school did not engage. Hansen had four students who engaged in limited work, and Luce reports seven students did not engage in remote work across all grades. All schools met weekly to review cases and to create plans to engage these families by way of phone calls, house visits as needed, or email.

GMS had one student across the whole school whom they have had no contact with and six students who they had contact with however did not engage in Remote Learning.

CHS reached out (many times) to every family when a student did not engage in Remote Learning. Approximately 4% did not respond, despite repeated attempts; 39 students out of our 975 did not engage in remote learning.

Remote Learning Canton Public Library Partnership: Canton Public Library (CPL) thanked for their on-going support of our students, families and staff during remote learning. To date, 64 new juvenile library cards have been issued and 37 teachers and school staff got new library cards.

Indicators of Excellence

Unity Day Message: The cancellation of Unity Day did not stop our Wellness teachers from connecting with fifth grade students and welcoming them to GMS next year. Thank you to the Wellness teachers for their work in helping students feel welcomed and excited to attend GMS.

DESE Mental Health Grant: Thank you to Nurse Leader, Elizabeth Nightingale, for her time and efforts in writing this mental health grant. This is a one time grant for \$110,000 aimed to prioritize sustainable supports for behavioral, mental health and wellness. If the district is awarded the grant, the funding will provide enhanced curriculum, professional development, data tracking systems, and technology. The funding is planned to be used for grades K-12. It

would provide the opportunity to deliver objectives identified by the work of the district SEL committee and incorporate data collected during the district SEL assessment survey.

Kindergarten Welcome Letters: Kindergarten families will be receiving an electronic welcome letter soon. In past years, this letter was provided during in-person kindergarten screenings. The purpose of the letter is to provide a warm welcome in the absence of in-person screening and to identify and provide contact information for their building nurse, Resource Nurse, RN Case Manager and Nurse Leader. Included in the letter will be information about the necessary documents needed by new students i.e. medical records, the release of information forms, etc...

Important Dates and Events

June 18	Virtual School Committee Meeting, 7:00 pm
June 23	Last Day of School, PreK-12, Early Release
June 25	Virtual School Committee Meeting, 7:00 pm

D. New Business:

1. Introduce and Welcome New JFK Principal: Superintendent Fischer-Mueller introduced and welcomed Ms. Emily DiDonna as the new JFK Principal.
2. Vote of Approval Request for Public Space Use: Ms. Helena Carrington, on behalf of the Carrington family and friends, requested approval to host an event to commemorate Juneteenth and LGBTQIA+. The group's request is to use the space in front of the Rodman Building for a gathering. The event will be a mask mandatory event. They plan to hold the event on June 30 to accommodate health guidelines. They will continue to work with the Board of Health to keep all attendees safe. If the date needs to be changed to align with health recommendations, the group is willing to do so.

Motion to support the Juneteenth celebration to occur in the front of the Rodman Building: Reuki Schutt

Seconded: Nichola Gallagher

Roll Call Vote: 5-0

3. CHS and GMS School Improvement Year-End Plans (SIP): Mr. Derek Folan provided information about the CHS SIP. He shared demographics, student learning outcomes, AP participation and performance, student school experiences, and goals: cultivating a climate and culture, transforming teaching and learning, and achieving educational excellence and ensuring educational equity. CHS had to adapt greatly during the COVID 19 but were well prepared from a technological perspective. They loaned out 100 Chromebooks for students who could not bring in a device. This action was key to achieving educational equity. For a complete copy of the CHS SIP please go to the website, school committee/ meetings, agendas, minutes/ reports.
Ms. Sarah Shannon provided information about the GMS SIP. She shared demographics, student learning outcomes, student school experiences, and a summary of progress towards the 2019-2020 goals: school culture and student experience, transforming teaching and learning, ensuring educational equity and schedule and

structure. Despite the challenges that due to COVID-19 they have been able to make progress toward their vision to become a deeper learning school that prioritizes equity, practice project-based learning, social emotional learning and a purposeful culture of belonging so students can realize their academic and personal potential. Decisions made this spring were driven by this vision and the GMS Learner. Ms. Shannon reported that issues of internet were not a problem. Chromebooks were distributed to students. By team, the average across all subject areas was approximately 72.9-86.8% student engagement. For a complete copy of the GMS SIP please go to the website, school committee/ meetings, agendas, minutes/ reports.

4. School Closure and Reopening Update
Superintendent Fischer-Mueller and Mr. Nectow shared school reopening information. The decision of reopening is in the hands of Governor Baker, Commissioner Riley, health organizations, the Town of Canton COVID-19 working group and the School Committee. The district is in constant communication with all stakeholders. Currently, CPS is operating under the Governor's four-phase reopening plan. The district moved to phase 2 on June 8. Starting the re-entering of schools, school business offices opened, summer cleaning and projects began. Starting June 15 the process of picking up personal belongings and dropping off school supplies will begin. Safety equipment being purchased. Still waiting on guidance from DESE regarding the extended school year. Currently, communicating with Out of District schools, working on opening Canton Academy, Cole Harrington, remote driver's education classes, summer camps and building use aligned with the local Board of Health guidelines. Full year district staff attended training with Chief Doody and Cindy Bonner regarding safe reentry to the workplace. Working on summer curriculum/PD planning, and a DESE Summer Learning Grant. Framework for Planning:
 - School Operations (ex. Supplies and materials purchasing)
 - Whole Child Supports (ex. DESE Mental Health Grant)
 - School Personnel (ex. Hiring, HR processes)
 - Teaching & Learning (ex. DESE Early Literacy Grant)
 - Distance Learning (ex. Devices, curriculum software, data privacy)Now, working on tools for communication and staff and parent surveys.

Designated a COVID-19 Point Person - Elizabeth Nightingale. After the Commissioner's Guidelines are released, the district will push out with new information reach out to gather information.

5. FY21 Budget: The Board of Selectmen approved a 1 million dollar budget cut to the Town of which \$333,000 will come from the school district. In April 2020, due to COVID 19, the schools were already asked to take a \$250,000 reduction. The areas where the new/additional cuts will be made will be discussed at an upcoming meeting. Work will begin now to determine what areas the reductions will come from.

Motion to agree to take a \$333,000 budget cut: Reuki Schutt

Seconded: Maureen Moran

Roll Call Vote: 5-0

6. FY20 QIII Financial Report: Mr. Nectow reported that the district is in much better shape than if COVID 19 did not hit. Will move money into Circuit Breaker and rollover Special Education reserve to help with upcoming difficult years. \$200,000 in transportation savings after all reimbursements. Reductions in many categories as well

as COVID 19 related expenses in other areas. \$47,000 in donations. The complete report can be found on the website.

- E. Old Business: Preschool Tuition - Lengthy discussion about Preschool tuition reimbursement options. The district takes in about \$200,000 in tuition from PK. The district would need to deduct \$58,000 if a complete tuition refund was approved. \$21,000 in tuition already collected for the last payment. Not all parents have paid. Questions about the number of remote learning hours each preschooler is receiving. Without the full tuition, next year could be looking at layoffs. Options discussed were a full refund or prorated tuition for the period beginning March 13-end of the school year. Members discussed 50% prorated tuition for last tuition payment since remote learning is expected to be approximate ½ the school day.

Motion to prorate the last tuition payment for preschool at 50% the full amount: Reuki Schutt

Seconded: Nichola Gallagher

Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Members said this decision is not precedent-setting for the Fall.

- F. Business Manager's Report: Mr. Nectow shared that a contract has been awarded for the Luce slide. Ms. Merenda spearheaded this project and CAPT generously contributed \$8,000. The expected start date is August 1, 2020. Students will take a survey and choose the color of the slide. Thank you to the Paul Matthews foundation for their donation also.

- G. Routine Matters:

Approve Minutes dated May 28, 2020

Move: Reuki Schutt

Second: Maureen Moran

Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Maureen Moran reported that she signed the warrant dated June 5, 2020.

- H. Sub-Committee Reports

1. CPC - Nichola Gallagher - Mr. Nectow made a presentation this evening to the committee for the GMA basketball courts.
2. BRC - Kristian Merenda - nothing new to report.
3. Wellness- Maureen Moran - District will continue food drops throughout the summer. Food Service staff are doing work with joy and custodian Kevin Russell working with staff to unload and move food deliveries. Wellness staff did video for fifth graders. Dr. Muse said to keep wearing masks.
4. Finance - Reuki Schutt/Maureen Moran - nothing new to report. Ms. Schutt told Mr. Nectow that if a meeting was needed in light of the new budget information, she was available.
5. Policy - Kristin Mirliani – nothing new to report.
6. PRHC – Nichola Gallagher - working on the opening.
7. Ad Hoc Calendar Advisory - Maureen Moran - nothing new to report.

Ms. Moran announced that she would be attending a remote learning best practices webinar. She will report out at the next meeting.

- I. Future Business: Next School Committee Meeting will be held Thursday, June 18, 2020 at 7:00 pm.
- J. Other Business: Chair Mirliani reminded the Committee that the next meeting will be the Reorganization meeting.
Also, the district took a stand and made a public statement on racism. The Committee discussed bullet points to be put into a public statement soon.
- i. They denounce racism
 - ii. Affirm the Black Lives Matter movement
 - iii. Respect and Support all students
 - iv. Acknowledge that every member of the CPS community recognizes the problem and they are ready to listen.
- The Committee will be sending a statement out to the community.
- K. Adjournment: Ms. Schutt thanked everyone for such a special meeting.
Reuki Schutt motioned to close Open Session at 10:21 pm. Nichola Gallagher seconded. It was voted 5-0.

5 yeas 0 nays