

Town of Canton
Canton School Committee Minutes of the Meeting of February 25, 2021
Remote Meeting Zoom Webinar

- A. **Call to Order** The meeting of the School Committee is called to order at 7:01 pm by Vice Chair Merenda. Roll Call 4-0.

Kristin Mirliani	absent
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
Danny Erickson, Athletics Director
Donna Kilday, PreK Coordinator
Elias Jabbour, Student Member

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- B. **Student Member Report** Elias Jabbour gave a report on the Luce School. He talked about the upcoming Luce virtual “Dance Fit” that mirrors the game Just Dance. This activity will raise funds for upcoming field trips and activities. Luce is also planning a virtual Musical in the spring, “On the Radio”. Finally, through CAPT funding all students will be receiving Top Secret science kits. This is a hands-on way for students to learn.

- C. **Superintendent’s Report**
Superintendent Highlights

Black History Month: Black History Month celebration was held on Tuesday evening.

Thank you to the Canton Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee (CDEI) who sponsored this event and congratulations on a remarkable performance. The CDEI is a town committee whose mission is to celebrate and embrace the traditions and values of the groups within our community and advocate for the human and civil rights of all individuals in the Town of Canton through education, promoting community awareness and understanding of cultural differences, and eradicating barriers to equity and inclusion. Please follow their Facebook page for more info about meetings, programming and future events.

Minding Your Mind: The Canton Wellness Department is partnering with [KyleCares](#), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting open and honest communication about mental health. [KyleCares](#) helps connect schools with vetted service providers, facilitate sustainable mental health school-wide initiatives, and fund school based mental health programming. Through KyleCares we have connected with Minding Your Mind, who will be

providing a young adult speaker series to all of our freshmen and sophomore health classes and students. Here is a list of some of the speakers who will be working in our health classes with students: <https://mindingyourmind.org/our-speakers/>

GMS Stars of the Month: Each month, GMS honors students for their hard work, positive attitude, academic excellence and support of others. This poster is displayed in the GMS lobby. Congratulations to all students for this honorable recognition.

Updates

Pooled Testing: Yesterday, details regarding the District's Pooled Testing were shared with families via email and the [Superintendent's Blog](#). This pooled approach is an efficient and cost-effective way for the District to provide regular COVID-19 testing for students, staff, and faculty, and the information this testing will provide will be valuable as we continue to plan to safely bring students back to school to the greatest extent possible.

School Report Cards: On an annual basis, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) publishes District and School Report cards. The District and School Report Cards, which highlight several pieces of school-based data, will be sent home to families this Friday afternoon. Due to COVID-19, school closures, and the cancellation of MCAS, DESE did not issue school, district, or state accountability determinations. Click on the following link for the Canton Public Schools [District Report Card](#).

Traditionally, MCAS data is the centerpiece of the District and School Report Card; however, the 2020 MCAS was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so only the 2018 and 2019 MCAS data is included in the report. In addition, DESE included the 2019 Accountability determination.

Several other pieces of data are included: student demographics, attendance and discipline, educator certification, per-pupil expenditure. For the high school, the report features post-secondary enrollment, graduation rates, drop-out rates and the percentage of students taking higher level courses.

Luce Phonics: During Wednesday's collaborative time, staff has participated in professional learning around phonics. Implementation of our new phonics program continues in K-2 classrooms.

Indicators of Excellence

GMS & Project Lead the Way: Congratulations to Principal Shannon and her team on receiving the Project Lead the Way Grant in the amount of \$19,794. GMS will use the grant to re-engineer their computer, technology and engineering courses. GMS intends to offer a PLTW experience in each grade level at the end of a three year roll-out. This will begin with the sixth grade students with an introduction to PLTW and the design process by offering the

Design and Modeling course. Then, the seventh grade students would take a Computer Science for Innovators and Makers course. And finally, eighth grade students would wrap up their middle school experience with the Green Architecture course.

Important Dates and Events

March 5	Kindergarten and New 1 st Grade Student Registrations Due
March 10	Early Release, PreK-5 Conferences
March 11	PreK-5 Conferences, Evening
March 12	CHS Virtual Cabaret, 7:00 pm
March 18	School Committee Meeting, 7:00 pm

D. Old Business

1. **FY22 Budget Update**: Mr. Barry Nectow informed the Committee on the budget timeline and steps moving forward. The Town met last night, and as a result, budget targets were shared with Town Departments. The School's budget target reflects a 3.49% increase. In January, the School Committee voted on a 5.15% increase. This gap is equivalent to approximately \$750,000. The District will present its budget to FinComm on March 3 and answer any questions they may have. There is another placeholder for a FinComm meeting on 3/24. There is also a placeholder School Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 31 in the event the Committee needs to revisit the budget discussions. Considerations for closing the gap will be discussed at upcoming finance subcommittee meetings. There will be Federal, COVID expense-related funds coming to Towns. Timing and amounts of these funds are forthcoming.

E. New Business

1. **Winter Sports Update**: Athletic Director, Danny Erickson, provided a Winter Sports update. Winter sports just wrapped up and both girls and boys hockey teams were champions. The Fall 2, or wedge season just started this week. Unified Sports will roll out in early April.
2. **Preschool Tuition Approvals**: Ms. Donna Kilday presented the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 PreK tuition adjustments for a vote of approval. Rates were compared with surrounding districts. The current two day rate is \$2,203, a 2% increase would be \$2,247, the current three day rate is \$3,306, a 2% increase will be \$3,372, the current four day rate is \$4,407, a 2% increase will be \$4,495, and the current five day rate is \$5,507, and a 2% increase will be \$5,617. The Preschool tuition is based on a 9 am to 1 pm school day.

Move to approve the 2021-2022 tuition with a 2% increase: Chuck Rae

Second: Nichola Gallagher

Vote by Roll Call: 4-0

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

Move to approve the current 2020-2021 tuition: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Maureen Moran

Vote by Roll Call: 4-0

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

3. **Vaccine Resolution:** Vice Chair Merenda presented a School Committee Resolution prioritizing the COVID 19 vaccine for the class of 2021. After some discussion, committee members decided to change some language as follows. Change the words *as soon as possible* in paragraph 6 to *immediately* and in the first resolved paragraph, add *make vaccines available to educators immediately* and take steps to prioritize all Class of 2021 seniors.

Move to approve the COVID 19 resolution for the class of 2021 with the amended language above: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Maureen Moran

Vote by Roll Call: 4-0

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

4. **School Choice Vote:** Each year the School Committee must vote on whether or not to enroll school choice students. Districts may elect not to enroll school choice students if no space is available. Without a formal vote, the DESE will consider Canton to be a School Choice community. In past years, the School Committee has always opted out of school choice due to space constraints.

Move to not participate in the School Choice program for the school year 2021-2022: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Chuck Rae

Vote by Roll Call: 4-0

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

5. **2021-2022 Draft School Calendar:** Superintendent Fischer-Mueller presented the 2021-2022 draft school calendar for initial discussions. The draft has been shared with CTA leadership. Conversations will continue regarding early release days, start date and holidays. The CTA contract states that teachers do not begin before 9/1 each year. The Committee will continue these discussions at upcoming meetings.

6. **COVID Update and “All-in” Update:** Superintendent Fischer-Mueller, Assistant Superintendent Folan and members of the Central Office team provided a school department COVID update, including plans for testing, vaccinations, and plans moving forward including membership on the “All-in” Steering Committee. Pooled testing will be part of the mitigation plan for the all-in models. CHS and GMS plans will be brought forward on March 18.

Superintendent Fischer-Mueller shared state and community health metrics showing the continued improvement. Canton has moved to the yellow designation. Superintendent Fischer-Mueller recognized the profound importance of students attending school in-person. As a result, and with additional operations and mitigation strategies, the District is proposing a plan to shift to the All-in Model in the Learning Continuum through a phased-in approach.

The Remote Learning Pathway(RLP) will remain in place through the end of the year. There will be other remote options available. Any changes will involve a teacher change and will be final for the remainder of the year. Any family who would like to change from the Learning Continuum to fully remote or vice versa will be asked to complete a Model Enrollment Change form.

The District is proposing returning students in grades K, 1 and 2 to school fully in-person on Tuesday, March 23. Wednesday, March 24 would be a regular Wednesday Remote Early Release, and Thursday, March 25 and on would be an All-in schedule for K-2 students. Grades 3, 4 and 5 would be scheduled to return to fully in-person learning on Tuesday, April 6. Wednesday, April 7 would be a regular Wednesday Remote Early Release, and Thursday, April 8 and on would be an All-in schedule for grade 3-5 students.

Wednesday, April 14 would be the first non-remote Wednesday early release in the All-in Model for grades K-5. Wednesdays will remain early release days in the All-in Model to allow for enhanced cleaning and educator collaboration time.

As has been noted at previous School Committee meetings, the District still has two professional development days that may be built into this year's calendar for transition between learning models. With these available days, Friday, March 19 and Monday, March 22 are proposed to be staff prep days and there would be no school for K-2 students. Thursday, April 1 and Monday, April 5 are proposed to be staff prep days with no school for grade 3-5 students.

These dates are subject to change, and the All-in Steering Committee will work through the many logistical, educational, and safety-related considerations to promote a successful transition to All-in for elementary school students.

Across all models, the conditions for learning are examined from the lens of safety, teaching and learning, social emotional support, structural supports for students and technology and digital learning.

As the District prepares to transition to an All-in Model, additional safety measures will be implemented to enhance the current mitigation strategies. These measures include:

- Pooled testing, which will provide important health data for decision making
- Encouraging double-masking

- Adding a Parent/Guardian Self Attestation Form for the Daily Screener
- Expanding the Daily Screener questions to consider other symptomatic elements that may be present in the household
- Using outdoor spaces as the weather continues to improve
- Ongoing vaccinations as the state continues through its distribution plan

DESE continues to recommend a minimum of 3 feet of distance when all other precautionary measures — including masks, hand hygiene, cleaning and contact tracing — are in place and districts should aim for 6 feet when feasible. This guidance is supported by public health experts and organizations. The CPS Hybrid Model called for 6 feet of social distancing, while the All-in Model in August had used 4.5 feet as a parameter. As the District enters the All-in Model, students will be seated 3 to 6 feet apart, based on the classroom size and class enrollment. This proposed structure is aligned with the DESE and CDC guidance given the use of multiple other mitigation strategies.

The All-in Model will focus on in-person instruction, with the removal of the “window” into the classroom for elementary grades. Staff and student devices will still be utilized to support student learning. Educators will consider the best instructional strategies to maximize student engagement and small groups while maintaining safe social distancing and limiting the sharing of materials. The design of lessons, the preparation of materials, and staff collaboration will continue to be the focus of Wednesday afternoons in the All-in Model. Student schedules may also be adjusted to prioritize instruction while also allowing for additional mask and movement breaks which may be needed with more students in attendance in each classroom space.

The All-in Model provides the strongest social-emotional support for students because school is a place where students feel safe to learn and where the District can provide direct support. Many structures and personnel are in place and are able to work with students. School Psychologists will run mini lessons in classrooms with teachers and will provide student and whole class check ins. The Home-school Interventionists will run parent support groups and due to the increase in home visits to support families in need, they have been providing a monthly evening parent/guardian group session. EA’s will assist with behavior management to support the classrooms and nurses will continue to collect data on symptoms and monitor for social emotional concerns.

As the year has progressed, the District has received more requests to bring in students four days per week due to emotional concerns being observed by educators and reported by parents/guardians. Bringing back students to school

four days a week has assisted in the District's ability to provide direct social/emotional supports for students.

Schedules may need to be adjusted along the way. Enhanced cleaning will continue on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Staffing needs will continue to be monitored.

DESE updated its transportation guidance on February 11. The guidance lifts capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements for students on elementary buses. Though the District continues to plan for the eventual return of middle and high school students, guidance for middle and high school bus operations has also been updated. Capacity limitations and physical distancing requirements are lifted for middle and high schools except for schools in districts with high community prevalence. All staff and students on the bus, regardless of age, are required to wear masks at all times. Windows will be kept open at least two inches at all times during bus operation. In adverse weather conditions, every other window can be opened.

The goal of the District is to maintain a minimum of 6 feet of distance while students are eating meals. Masks are removed at mealtime and separating students and staff as much as possible will reduce the probability of spreading the virus.

Meals will be consumed in all available spaces, including in outdoor tents, as weather permits. Each school's mealtime operations may differ slightly, based on available space. Lunch will continue to be served in containers, making it easy to move to an assigned space.

Elementary school lunch distribution will follow the current GMS model, which has been a successful model since September 2020. This model consists of all students passing through the lunch line in the cafeteria and eating in an assigned location after picking up their meals. Meal delivery to classrooms will be discontinued.

Since September 2020, the District built a 1:1 program for students in grades K-9, created consistency in Learning Management Systems (Seesaw K-2 and Google Classroom 3-12), provided two instructional devices (Acer laptops and iPads) in each classroom setting for educators and created a digital toolbox of resources, applications, and instructional tools to enhance and support teaching and learning. The Technology and Digital Learning teams will be focusing on building upon a 3-prong approach to supporting classrooms:

- Teachers have digital resources, tools and devices to provide the enhanced and effective blended instruction

- Students have 1:1 devices and have developed routines and grown significantly in their skill level and confidence learning within a digital environment
- The Digital Learning Team, with which educators in each building have a dedicated faculty member to support their continued learning of blended instruction, their expansion of their own digital instructional toolbox and strategies, and their lesson development and continued professional collaboration

The District will continue to communicate with elementary staff and families, and the Learning Model Change Request form will be sent to elementary parents/guardians. A Steering Committee will also be utilized for stakeholder feedback and communications. The District will continue to collaborate with the Canton Teachers' Association and will evaluate building-based details regarding furniture inventory, class size and staffing. The School Committee's Policy Sub-Committee will also review and evaluate COVID-related policies and protocols to assist in facilitating a safe return for students and staff.

Some concerns raised by Committee members include staffing, timeline (there was a request to move up the date), GMS/CHS roll out, the elimination of the window into the classroom, early release Wednesdays, the return of the Senior class, pooled testing and other mitigation strategies. The Administration and the All-in Steering Committee will continue to work on addressing the above concerns. Planning is underway and ongoing. Superintendent Fischer-Mueller said the target for GMS/CHS is April.

Move to approve the all-in K-5 model: Chuck Rae

Second: Nichola Gallagher

Vote by Roll Call: 4-0

Kristian Merenda yea

Nichola Gallagher yea

Maureen Moran yea

Chuck Rae yea

F. Business Managers Report None

G. Public Comment None

H. Routine Matters

1. Approve Minutes dated January 21, 2021

Move: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Maureen Moran

Roll Call Vote: 4-0

Kristian Merenda yea

Nichola Gallagher yea

Maureen Moran yea

Chuck Rae yea

2. Approve Minutes dated February 4, 2021

Move: Nichola Gallagher

Second: Chuck Rae

Roll Call Vote: 4-0

Kristian Merenda yea

Nichola Gallagher yea

Maureen Moran yea

Chuck Rae yea

3. Announcement that the warrants dated February 26, 2021, will be delivered by Ms. Moran to the Business Manager tomorrow.

I. Sub-Committee Reports

1. CCPC - Kristin Mirliani - absent
2. BRC - Chuck Rae - nothing new to report
3. Wellness- Chuck Rae - nothing new to report
4. Finance - Maureen Moran/Nichola Gallagher - 2 upcoming subcommittee meetings over next few weeks
5. Policy - Kristian Merenda – will be working on COVID protocols as they relate to the all-in model
6. PRHC – Nichola Gallagher - have a fabricator, exhibits are being built
7. CDEI - Nichola Gallagher - encouraged the community to watch the BHM virtual celebration
8. Master Planning Committee - Kristian Merenda - committee started the implementation of the plan, working on prioritizing projects.

J. **Future Business** Next School Committee Meeting will be held Thursday, March 18, 2021, at 7:00 pm.

K. Other Business

L. **Adjournment** Nichola Gallagher motioned to close the Open Session at 9:38 pm. Maureen Moran seconded. It was voted by a roll call vote 4-0.

Maureen Moran yea

Nichola Gallagher yea

Kristian Merenda yea

Chuck Rae yea

Documents used during the meeting:

1. Superintendent's Report dated February 25, 2021
2. Rodman Early Childhood Tuition Proposal
3. Class of 2021 Vaccine Resolution
4. Draft CPS 2021-2022 Calendar
5. Elementary All-in School Committee MEMO
6. CPS Continuum of Learning Presentation for School Committee for February 25 SC meeting