

BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman
Karen Jew, Secretary
Rebecca Howie
Alison Marsano

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy
Amanda Morin, Special Education Administrator

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

NOMINATIONS/RESIGNATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Corey read into the record updated language received from the community members working on the Resolution on the non-discrimination and equity initiative:

“WHEREAS the District is committed to non-discrimination;

WHEREAS Hollis Brookline is an inclusive community;

WHEREAS the District recognizes that issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion affect all members of the Hollis-Brookline community regardless of their background;

WHEREAS many institutions of learning within the State of New Hampshire have developed policies regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion;

WHEREAS the current COVID-19 pandemic may bring unique challenges related to that are yet to be examined;

THEREFORE, may it be resolved that

- 1. The SAU #41 school districts will make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority by actively supporting such efforts.*

- 2. SAU #41 will review its policies and procedures relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and release a plan to address its findings. These actions may include professional development, drafting new or editing existing policies, programs, and procedures, curriculum review, etc.”

Having received an inquiry from the Chairman with regard to assigned seating on buses, Superintendent Corey reached out to Student Transportation of America (STA). They are doing assigned seating. One of the difficulties they are running into is that students are not riding the bus both ways. The first goal is one person to a seat then seating siblings together. What they are seeing are issues related to students taking the bus in the a.m. and being picked up by a parent in the p.m. and others who are dropped off at school in the morning and take the bus home in the afternoon. They are doing everything they can to clean the buses and maintain social distancing, but ensuring students have the same seats in the morning and afternoon may not be happening. Another issue that is experienced is that a student may be on a certain bus at the start of the week and another at the end of the week depending on which home they are traveling to/from.

Asked to provide additional information relative to cleaning procedures, Superintendent Corey spoke of the activity that took place following last week’s notification to families of a 3rd grade student having tested positive for COVID-19. The Facilities Director has in place a crew (from within the SAU) that responds to any of the school buildings when needed. They go from wing to wing cleaning bathrooms, classrooms, etc. (allows one room that has been sprayed to settle while the next is being cleaned/sprayed). They eventually complete one round of the cleaning. They then go into the impacted bathrooms and do another disinfecting of all high touch areas. At that point it is safe for the regular school custodians to go in and do their cleaning. Once that process is complete the sprayer is utilized again. The rooms are then closed up for the night. With this recent experience, also cleaned were the tent poles and playground equipment. The custodians finished the night by disinfecting the floors (not traditionally done every night).

The morning custodians are made aware of the activity, so they are aware they are walking into a building that was sanitized. Should the Principal have areas they want sprayed again, etc. the first custodians are in at 6:00 a.m. providing ample time to address any such requests.

All custodians have received training in cleaning procedures by the Facilities Director. They go through the same procedures, which is what allows them to transition from building to building.

Superintendent Corey expressed his gratitude to the community for supporting the position of Facilities Director. The training has been invaluable. He thanked the custodians who did yeoman’s work.

The buildings are cleaned every night. Faculty is asked to leave at 4:00 p.m. They go through with the sprayers as it immediately disinfects surfaces. The cleaning follows and then another disinfecting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brookline School Board August 31, 2020

The following amendment was offered:

Attach to the minutes a copy of the Memorandum of Agreement between the School Boards of SAU41 and all Teacher Associations within SAU41.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO APPROVE, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

PUBLIC INPUT

Diane Marsolini, 27 Laurel Crest Drive

Stated her support for the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative. It has been amended to reflect the intention to focus on equity and inclusion. As the mother of two sons one of whom is Asian and the other black, her family has experienced its share of bias, often unintentional. One of the issues of living in a community with little diversity is the children of color are almost always the only children of color in the room. Their history doesn't necessarily reflect the history of the majority of the class, and their experiences don't necessarily reflect the majority of the class or the teachers.

Projects and assignments such as immigration don't really reflect their history. Children of color are put in the position of having to navigate biases on their own and they often shrug things off and laugh about them just to try to fit in. This has a big impact on their identity and their self-worth. This initiative will open the dialogue to better ensure all voices are being heard and take some pressure off these students. This kind of work will benefit our community and schools by helping us to better understand each other and by having the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences.

We have an excellent school system, and this initiative will enhance the education for all of our students. She is hopeful the Board will support the initiative.

Helen Ballou, 38 Pepperell Road

Has lived in Brookline, NH for over 49 years. She requested the Board adopt the Hollis-Brookline Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative, and that the words "racism" and "anti-racism" be included at least once in the document in a positive way. This resolution asks the school boards to stand with the community and say yes we are against racism, yes we are inclusive of our entire community. We have no idea how many people are too afraid to speak up. She supports anti-bias teacher training so that issues can be recognized early and handled in a way that best supports students' social emotional needs. Everyone has a right to be respected and feel safe. It is the school's moral, civil, and professional duty to provide best practices for the students in our community.

Ms. Ballou spoke of her time in the Brookline elementary school, and provided detailed examples of the kind of hateful treatment she received, on a daily basis, at the hands of other students. When looking to her teachers for support she was told to stop being so sensitive, stop bringing it up, and forget about it. The harassment stopped when she became the school bully. She spoke of how systemic racism shaped everyone.

She was at RMMS in the last 10 years or so and saw a bulletin board in the hallway with a Native American caricature with his hand up saying How. That is inappropriate and racist, and she had to point it out to the Principal. If you don't understand where there needs to be improvement, nothing will change.

Racism and prejudice are still happening in one way or another in our schools; maybe not as blatantly as was her experience, but it is still real and valid. We have a responsibility to change this. Take the necessary steps to support all of the children in our community so that they may be the best that they can be, so that they can be prepared for life.

Representative Melanie Levesque, 2 McDaniels Drive

Spoke of her daughter who was raised in Brookline, was educated in SAU 41, and went on to college. She received an excellent education from these towns. Her daughter is the single best thing that has happened in her life and her biggest failure was in not realizing how alone her daughter was, as a person of color.

The resolution is a statement of our values, a statement from the SAU and our community. It is about diversity, but not just diversity of color, but gender and abilities. It is about valuing everyone's differences; teachers, staff, administration. It is also about finding those common values and bonds at the same time. She urged the Board to work with the resolution to make it a statement that really reflects our values and one that can make our community proud.

Kathy Leavitt, 2 Birch Hill Road

Wished to address the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative not just as a parent of two students in the District, but also as a new member of the Parent, Teacher, Student Association for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

During previous meetings, some residents expressed their belief that schools should stick to the basics; reading, writing, and arithmetic. The science of education has made tremendous progress in the decades since the three Rs were our standards. She has a master's degree in Secondary Education and over 12 years of teaching experience and all of the professional development and continuing education that comes with that.

Social Emotional Learning is an essential part of our whole child education. Without diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) education, we're failing to give our students a complete education. We're withholding instruction in essential skills. To clear up any misunderstandings, she presented the official definitions of DEI from the National Parent Teacher Association: "Diversity is representation of and respect for people from different backgrounds and identities. Equity provides fairness in resources, opportunities, and outcomes so that all communities get what they need to be engaged and successful. Inclusion consists of actions, behaviors, and norms that ensure all people feel they are safe, welcomed, and that they belong, This includes actively seeking out voices which have been traditionally under represented and/or marginalized."

Over the past several months, residents have shared their experiences of being targets of racial slurs and threats. Local anti-racism activities have been met with withering scorn. We are demonstrating our town's collective need for DEI education. We're harming our communities and hindering our children's growth by denying this obvious need. We can do this. We should do this. She thanked the Board for consideration of the initiative.

PRINCIPALS' REPORT

- Opening of School Update / Enrollment Update / Staffing (remote and in person)

As part of the agenda, the Board was provided an enrollment summary (in person and remote) as well as an updated staff listing inclusive of the individual class sizes.

Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA), noted grade 5 has a high population in remote, which was unanticipated. A seasoned Paraprofessional has been added to that class for the entirety of the school day.

Open House was recently completed, and was very successful with well over 130 participants in the CSDA Zoom session.

Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS), commented on the smooth start to the school year. He expressed gratitude to the Brookline PTO and the Before and After School Program in addition to the Board and SAU Administration for the incredible assistance provided to ensure a successful start.

The PTO helped outfit the kindergarten classrooms with yoga mats, scoop chairs, and desk trays for preschool. They also provided snacks for each classroom, Pre-K – 6, in the event that a student forgot a snack or needed a peanut safe snack. They also helped provide the dots that are located on the floors to assist in aligning desks. The After School Program was conducted this summer, and provided invaluable information when the District started to plan for the start of the school year. They started out with markings on the pavement and procedures for the playground. That information and the ability to see how it succeeded was helpful when planning the start of the year as were the videos that were produced. Principal Molinari spoke of the benefits derived by parents sharing the videos with their students; particularly in the absence of an orientation.

A fire drill was conducted at RMMS on Monday, and went very well. The Brookline Fire Department is always extremely complimentary of staff and students for the evacuation procedures. Everyone was out of the building in under 2 minutes. They were able to account for every single person in the building in under 4 minutes, which has never before happened.

He spoke of improvements since the first day of school; carpool and bus dismissal in Brookline was slow the first day of school (always the case). At RMMS, they ended buses and cars around 3:20-3:30 p.m. RMMS and CSDA have drastically improved upon their times. It has been cut down over 20 minutes.

Last Thursday was picture day at RMMS. They were incredibly pleased with the service provided by Geskus Photography. Photos were done only of individuals and were taken outdoors under tents. Remote learners were invited to take part. The Virtual Open House was very positive.

Chairman Haag commented on having seen a drastic improvement in the carpool and bus dismissal efficiency. He spoke of the procedure that followed the knowledge of a positive COVID-19 test, his opinion it was handled well, and questioned if the procedure that was followed is what can be expected moving forward. He questioned if the instance was that of a positive case or a presumed positive case, and was informed it was a positive case. He noted there are no confirmed cases listed on the State's website.

Principal Molinari stated it to be a positive case. Superintendent Corey noted one of the things we will have to work with is the fact that in Bedford and Nashua you can get the 15-minute test. That 15-minute result is the result brought to the school nurse. When the Administration called NH DHHS, they stated it had to be a presumptive case because they hadn't received the positive result as it takes time to upload in the system. Stating it to be a presumptive positive until the results are in the system is the procedure NH DHHS has followed since prior to the availability of the 15-minute test. Previously it would take 2-3 days before the results were known.

New Hampshire Superintendents are discussing this with the State because of the issue it creates. If the nurse, as a medical professional, receives a positive notification, the SAU will continue to refer to it as a positive case. Although the information has not been posted to the State's site, the previous day Principal Molinari received a notification of a positive result from DHHS.

Superintendent Corey noted had the SAU utilized the language "presumptive", technically it would have meant that that 3rd grade class could have come to school on Friday. He couldn't do that knowing he had a positive case, and that the first priority is safety of the students. He stated concern there is the potential for an increase in cases and an uncertainty of the bandwidth for DHHS. There have been cases in Windham, Salem, Goffstown, and Derry.

It was fortunate that there was an open house that evening, which allowed for the information to be shared in that way. The Administration has discussed that it may be best, when having a positive result that impacts a classroom, to be able to notify parents via Zoom as those families have questions. In a lot of ways, because of the way it was able to be handled, it eased people's apprehension and fears. From the Administration's point of view, they wish to communicate as many facts as possible. Another area of disagreement was that NH DHHS wanted to say it was just a case at RMMS. The Administration didn't want to create that anxiety for all of the families. The only time he would not make the level of detail known is when getting below 45 students where you would be opening up HIPAA issues. You would not want to inadvertently identify a family or student. When having 4 classes of students in that grade, it is the right thing to do. For some of our families, they are brand new to the District, and he wants to take that fear away. He also wants that 3rd grade parent to know they are likely going to hear something. The Administration will continue to be proactive and message it. It would be the same procedure across the SAU so that if there is a case in a Hollis school, Brookline families will know. One of the questions he received on Friday of that week was concerning sporting events over the weekend as many of the 3rd grade students in Brookline and Hollis participate in some of the same activities.

Chairman Haag asked for clarification the SAU is not mandating COVID tests. When they are done it is a personal decision to do that as opposed to the 14-day quarantine. Superintendent Corey spoke of the yeoman's work being done by the school nurses. He commented the SAU is fortunate in that it has 8 school nurses. There are districts that have 1 nurse and 1 LNA for the whole school system. In last year's budget, the community stepped up and approved that extra nurse position, and it is paying great dividends. The day the District had a positive case, the nurse was able to devote her attention to that instance, and the other nurse was able to come over and take care of the regular medical pieces that had to happen.

Vice Chairman Sarris commented on the situation having been handled exceptionally, and expressed her gratitude. She questioned if the actions of the District following what NH DHHS classified, at that time, as a presumptive positive case, were what DHHS would have ended up recommending. Superintendent Corey stated his belief their guidance was the same; they would have potentially adjusted the date it started.

Superintendent Corey stated the process to be that the school nurse is the contact person with DHHS because of their expertise. That is exactly what happened. The parent informed the school nurse of the positive result. The nurse contacted Assistant Superintendent Thompson. He obtained as many details as he could, then let the nurse go do what she needed to do; start gathering all of the contact tracing pieces (identify where the student had been in the building). They look at the classroom, notify the teacher, etc. Assistant Superintendent Thompson brought the matter to Superintendent Corey. The H.R. Director joined in the discussion (contractual matters with teachers) as did Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug. They reviewed the plan and the information that was known. They developed templates to notify families, ensure the message was accurate, and the SAU got the message out.

The Principal was made aware and notified building staff. While that is happening other staff members across the SAU are being notified. Once those messages go the SAU, families are notified. While that was going on,

Principal Molinari and the nurse were checking for siblings and obtaining information from DHHS with regard to the protocol for siblings. If we know there are siblings the nurses in their buildings are being called. Those students, if during the school day, go into the isolation room, and are picked up by a parent.

From an Administrative standpoint from about 2:00 p.m. when Assistant Superintendent Thompson walked into the office of the Superintendent, until about 8:00 p.m. notifications were made, and an update received from the Facilities Director that the building had been cleaned and could open the next day. Were there ever a case where the building could not open as a result of staffing, etc., it would be approached like a snow day and the call made that night.

Superintendent Corey spoke of questions posed of him relative to the State dashboard noting the SAU has no control over that. There is no way the SAU could not notify because the medical clinic that conducts the test is sending that information to the State. The SAU is getting it firsthand from a parent, but it is also going to the State. If for some reason the SAU was not notified by a parent, the Principal would receive notification of a positive case from NH DHHS.

Chairman Haag commented on the importance of families being aware of the lag time, and the need for parental notification to the SAU. He questioned the determination to have a class be quarantined for the 14 days. All students adhere to physical distancing requirements and are wearing face coverings all day/every day. NH DHHS has spoken of having to be within 6' for greater than 10 minutes for contact. Technically it is a very low risk.

Superintendent Corey stated when Principal Molinari and the nurses talked with the State, recess was the reason they wished to quarantine. Kids go out and play, and we haven't been requiring the masks at recess. He would struggle to have students putting the mask on at recess. When students go outdoors for physical education, we do a tremendous job of maintaining the 6'. The Administration had thought the issue would be the lunchroom as masks are off there. DHHS was very pleased with the lunch procedures (have the 6').

Principal Molinari spoke of having been able to provide DHHS with all of the information needed for them to be able to assist in making the decision relative to the quarantine. By having the cohorts, we have helped identify the group that would be quarantined; was at recess together in a certain section (not with another class).

Asked if it is anticipated, should there be a positive case, a class will be quarantined for 14 days, and only that cohort, Superintendent Corey stated his belief that would be the case. If the SAU began seeing that as the big catalyst and all of a sudden having multiple groups out, we may move to masks on the playground.

Chairman Haag questioned if the sibling of a student quarantined as a result of being in a class where a positive case was reported, would also have to be quarantined. Assistant Superintendent Thompson responded, in this case, there was no known exposure, but it could not be determined, because of the recess piece. The students in the class had to quarantine, but under DHHS guidelines, siblings of those quarantined children (not the presumptive positive), are permitted to go to school unless they develop symptoms. It is a recommendation of DHHS that those children are tested because their sibling may have been in close contact.

Chairman Haag asked if it is two weeks from last exposure. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented on having the same question as there is the last known exposure date and the date that the quarantine began. Her argument was for the 14 days because the definition that has been put out would put 14 days from the last known exposure, but then the recommendation that DHHS provided was an October 1st return. The District went with that because it was what was recommended. It is a little inconsistent based on their own definition.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the information sharing that is occurring with the Administration in the SAU. As part of his work with NH DHHS, Principal Molinari was made aware of a particular format DHHS wants utilized when providing information in regard to contact tracing. He shared that information through a shared leadership folder within PowerSchool so that all Principals within the SAU have the information.

Chairman Haag stated his appreciation for the level of communication that occurred noting, as a parent, he found the grade level information provided to be very helpful.

Principal Molinari commended Cathy Farwell, School Nurse, for her efforts commenting she has been a great resource and has great communication skills with DHHS.

Chairman Haag spoke of feedback received on how the teacher made a seamless move to remote learning. For a bad situation, a lot of good has come out of the hard work done over the summer in preparing for the opening of school and this possible scenario.

Principals Molinari and Bouley spoke of having dropped in on remote lessons, and of how well the start of the year has gone both in-person and remote. Just the day before teachers expressed that they and the students are finally feeling comfortable in the remote lesson.

Vice Chairman Sarris spoke of breakout rooms for the students and her opinion they are a game changer. They are talking to each other, without the teacher being in the room. They can call the teacher who will pop in in an instant if there is a question. The most speaking she hears her children doing is during breakout session.

Asked if there is less staff moving between the schools than in prior years, Amanda Morin, Special Education Administrator, responded that does continue to occur with the exception of the reading specialist position.

Member Jew commented on the frustration associated with the DHHS process for listing on the State site the school dashboard, and the example they give for the rapid test and going back for the PCR test; it was a full 7 days before it was listed, and that is an extremely long time to wait.

Member Jew spoke of having heard from some affected families who indicated they were not notified until about 7:30 p.m., and some people went about their afternoon, e.g., going to activities. She questioned if notification could have been provided earlier. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the first blast was sent out around 3:38 p.m.

Principal Molinari commented communication went out at 3:38 p.m. with Open House starting at 5:00 p.m. He spoke of the activities that were happening parallel to that, e.g., providing information to DHHS for contact purposes, etc. The particular class was notified at 7:30 p.m. of the quarantine. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug added that was a step of following the procedure of DHHS; they didn't want us to notify a grade at all. We were in communication, had all of the information, they analyzed our procedures and the safety precautions in place, and that is when they said to notify that one class. The Administration was following their guidance and recommendation. Had that information not been able to be shared, the District should not have notified the class until DHHS determined if it was the entire grade level or school that had exposure or the single class.

Members spoke of not being fearful understanding all of the safety measures that are in place and being followed.

DISCUSSION

- FY22 Budget Overview

Principals Molinari and Bouley have submitted their Round 1 requests. The Round 2 review will be scheduled to take place after which information will be brought to the Board.

Coming up in FY22 will be the bi-annual rate change for the New Hampshire Retirement System. The employee rate will go from 11% to 14.06% and the teacher rate from 17.8% to 21.02%. As an example of the impact, Superintendent Corey noted the rate change for the SAU resulted in a \$56,000 increase.

There will be seen an increase related to special education. In the current budget, unexpected costs associated with students moving into the District include an increase to the community agency in-district program (\$120,000 to provide needed services). A Case Manager was added at CSDA this year as a result of increased enrollment numbers (\$49,000). Contracted school psychologist cost is increased by approximately \$18,000. Those are three of the costs incurred that were not budgeted for in the area of special education. In a typical year, the Administration would likely have those costs encumbered or paid through the regular operating budget. Because of all of the other issues being faced by the District, it is likely the Administration will bring forward a request to utilize funding from the Special Education Trust Fund.

Not knowing what the direction of the pandemic will be, the Board may want to consider increasing the amount of funds allocated to the Contingency Fund (budget planning is done 18 months in advance). The buildings are being reviewed with regard to the Capital Improvement Plan. The roof at RMMS is being evaluated. If needed repairs have to occur in the coming year, the cost would be in the \$60,000 range.

Chairman Haag noted discussion at the previous meeting around the Board drafting a letter to the Governor and Legislature concerning COVID-19 funding and how the allocation of those funds is determined, and asked if that has been discussed with legal counsel. Superintendent Corey stated he had a communication with the Commissioner of Education, and the Superintendents organization was asked to put together costs associated with COVID. The Business Office submitted information on costs related to PPE, staffing, etc. that have been encountered as a result of the pandemic. They are still working with CARES Act funding. The Administration also reached out to the Town as the Town received CARES Act funds for which they have the discretion of using for the town and schools. The Town has been utilizing the funds they received, and it is uncertain if there is any remaining. One of the things that recently became known is that FEMA will not be funding some of those pieces.

Member Howie questioned if the Board wished to consider drafting a Resolution for consideration by the New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA). Chairman Haag stated openness to the idea; however, expressed concern between that and the time funding would be available. He is uncertain it would have a fast enough turnaround to be beneficial.

Chairman Haag stated a willingness to offer his time and efforts towards any endeavor the Administration believes would be beneficial in this regard. Vice Chairman Sarris suggested it would be worthwhile for a member to participate in the process the NHSBA goes through in preparing resolutions. There may even be another district that is going down that path, and could be supported. The Board would have to commit to participating in the process prior to understanding what resolutions would be proposed.

Member Howie stated a willingness to represent the Board and participate in that process.

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Update

Superintendent Corey remarked in the time since the last meeting, he has reached out to and been contacted by individuals willing to serve on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee (Committee). The Committee would

assist the Superintendent in going through topics, gathering and reviewing research, and making recommendations to the Board. Committee membership consists of Kylie Rasku (parent of high school student), Dr. Marie Ramas (parent of students in multiple schools), Andrew Scott (parent of current and former students), Gerrell Smith (member of HB Elevates and parent of students in the district), David Werner (community member), and Tiffany Testa. Since the time of the formation of the Committee, two additional families have reached out to him expressing an interest in serving. He will be adding them to the membership once he has had the opportunity to communicate with both. Committee members as well as others who have reached out, will have roles in the process. Although not all will be members of the advisory committee, some will help with public forums, data gathering, etc. Some have expertise (teaching credentials) and are willing to provide guidance around curriculum pieces that will likely be encountered. The primary role of the committee is to discuss the strategic opportunities and objectives for DEI for all students.

Superintendent Corey spoke of having done a great deal of reading in the past month. Understanding there will come a time when the knowledge gained will have to be explained to children, he came across an analogy provided by one of the individuals he has researched; Dr. Robert Sellers, University of Michigan. He compares DEI to a dance. He says diversity is that everyone is invited to the party, equity is that everyone contributes to the play list, and inclusion is that everyone has the opportunity to dance.

While walking down the hallway at the Hollis Primary School recently he overheard the P.E. Teacher playing the tambourine and instructing students to shake their arms, shake their legs, etc. He was getting upset knowing we are not supposed to be having P.E. in the gym. When he walked into the gym he witnessed the P.E. teacher doing remote P.E. He was the only one in the gym. He approached him and peeked over his shoulder to see that he was working with some of our youngest learners. It dawned on him that all children get the word dance. We teach them dance and movement.

The two programs that will be reviewed at the onset are programs already in use within the SAU; Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) Program and the Choose Love Program. Our teachers are familiar with both of these programs and they have each expanded to include DEI. The Committee will look to see how we can build off of these programs that are already in place.

At the 7-12 grade level, work is being done on what is termed “The Portrait of a Cavalier”. That work is based on identifying the skillset we want our graduates to have. One of the concepts being discussed is courageous conversations. A courageous conversation is any conversation where participants can commit to engage each other with honesty, open mindedness, to listen deeply to better understand each other’s perspectives, and sustain the conversation if it gets uncomfortable or sidetracked. If we can send our graduates off to college or the work environment willing to have these courageous conversations about any topics, then we have prepared them well.

The purpose of the Committee is to represent the diverse perspectives of our students and communities that make up SAU 41, to create a DEI statement with definitions for review by the school boards, and, with board approval, incorporate that into the Strategic Plan. This is going to become part of what we do. What we have traditionally done is embed our priorities in the Strategic Plan to ensure we have continuity of operation.

The Committee would serve as a future resource for the SAU to ensure future alignment and would inform the communities and staff via public forums, the Strategic Plan, professional development, etc. of the evolving role of the group and next steps. One of the initial activities the Committee will likely take on is the creation of a baseline understanding of what DEI means for SAU 41.

Some of the vocabulary doesn’t necessarily work well from community to community. It should be based on the values of our families. Information sessions will be conducted to gather input from the community-at-large. The Committee will identify DEI measures already in place; what we have for existing programming and

lessons. Principals will be asked to look at what we currently do from K-12 that addresses these topics. That will allow for identifying if there are grades where there is nothing or limited programming, and how we can put something in so that it becomes part of our standard curriculum, but is integrated into what we already want to teach. We are not looking to bring in something new, but rather incorporate additional items.

We need to look at clubs and activities to see what is already occurring that promote this and how we can utilize those groups to enhance integration moving forward.

Individuals who have reached out to him are passionate and excited about this work, and are looking forward to the process starting. His hope is to meet with them as early as next week via Zoom, and then move to in-person meetings. He intends to provide the boards with regular updates. The Committee will also examine the non-discrimination and equity initiative that was read earlier this evening.

Vice Chairman Sarris commented 100% of the public input provided this evening was in support of these efforts. That does not happen frequently. It is important to keep that in mind. She spoke of the idea of imbedding this into what we do already as an effort she is pleased with. This can come across with our teachers as an additional responsibility, but so many of our teachers are already doing this. She spoke of the idea of inclusion, in looking at what our teachers in the elementary schools have been doing for a long time from a different lens. She commented on having always believed the immigration lesson in 3rd grade was great because her ancestors were European. She is excited about this work happening.

Chairman Haag commented on being encouraged by the direction this is moving in. He views this as the social emotional piece; the foundation we are already trying to build upon. The dance metaphor is great for the younger children and the courageous conversation piece for the older students. He stated appreciation for the direction being taken.

Member Jew commented on appreciating the courageous conversations aspect. In the past, if something happened in school it was sort of hushed, you wouldn't talk about it, and you would get through it as quickly as possible resulting in a whole generation ill-equipped to deal with this. You can go home and talk to it, but if you address it right then and there and talk about it in the school, it is much more effective. This is basically an opportunity to have a generation raised being able to ask these questions and deal with them immediately.

- Annual Meeting Discussion

A great deal of planning will need to be done for the Deliberative Session in the social distancing environment we are in. Before the voters for consideration will be any open School Board positions, the District budget, the SAU budget and articles around the Special Education Trust Fund, Maintenance Trust Fund, and Contingency Fund, which are typically funded by unreserved fund balance. As we move through the current school year, the Board will be kept updated; however, there is concern there may not be an unreserved fund balance because of expenses associated with COVID-19. That will be a large concern with regard to maintenance items as there will be some needs that have to be addressed. It may be that the Board has to look at some of those articles being written as being funded through the tax base.

Another article is seeking the authority to accept Federal funds. We have seen residents voting against acceptance of these Federal dollars. Those dollars are tax dollars that went to the Federal Government and are being funneled back to the Town. It is a positive move as it allows the District to accept IDEA Grant funds (special education), Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) funds (used to enhance technology), Title II (traditionally used for professional development or reducing class sizes) and Title IV funding (traditionally used for technology).

Superintendent Corey stated the desire to engage in a discussion of whether there is a benefit to limiting the number of warrant articles considering March could be a difficult time.

The Administration has been working with the Town in discussions of an energy study. He may not recommend doing it unless there is the potential for the study to be grant funded.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy BCA – Board Member Code of Ethics

**MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, STATE AGREEMENT TO ADHERE TO POLICY BCA – BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Karen Jew, Rebecca Howie, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy DFA – Investment.

The State requires the policy be reviewed on a yearly basis. The intent is to provide an opportunity, at least yearly, to consider investments. In large districts that receive tax dollars in a single transfer, there may be a decision to invest as a means of generating revenue. As identified within the current policy, the School District Treasurer working in conjunction with the Superintendent and his/her designee and pursuant to RSA 197:23-a, is authorized to invest the funds of the District subject to specified objectives and standards of care.

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO ADOPT POLICY DFA – INVESTMENT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

ON THE QUESTION

Asked if the District has, in the past, invested funds, Superintendent Corey stated the District has not during his tenure. Currently there is a Hollis bond that was put out and the funds are gaining interest. Member Marsano questioned if funding allocated to trust funds could be invested, and was informed those funds are managed by individuals elected by the Town to manage them.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

Superintendent Corey informed the Board attendance at meetings by members of the Administration will be intentionally limited moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER JEW TO ADJOURN
SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The September 23, 2020 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____