

Center School Council Meeting Minutes June 3, 2020 – Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Jane DeGrenier, Principal; John Galluzzo, Parent; Laura Louko, Parent; April Sheridan, Parent; Elizabeth Wilcox, Parent; Jill Joy, Teacher Representative; Lori McKenna, Teacher Representative; Mark Lancaster, Teacher Representative; Russ Wilson, Assistant Principal, Ex-officio. **Public:** Karen Gordon, Gym Teacher, Center School. **Absent:** Jacqueline Porro, Parent; Alicia DiBara, Teacher Representative.

Principal DeGrenier called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Tabled.

Open Comment

Mr. Galluzzo stated that the Hanover Historical Society was filming a virtual tour of the Stetson House for the 3rd graders, in lieu of their annual field trip.

Ms. Sheridan said she was very happy with distance learning, Zoom meetings for her kids, etc. Daily plans have been very helpful, and it's been wonderful to see how hard everybody has been working. Ms. Louko said that it's been impressive to see that 2nd and 4th graders took to virtual learning so well, learning skills that they probably would not have learned for a few years. Ms. Joy thanked parents for their role in helping, troubleshooting, etc., and said that it seemed like kids picked it up pretty quickly, and became quite independent. Ms. McKenna said that she was glad the school had Chromebooks to offer, and that she has taken a graduate class on technology to improve her skills. Principal DeGrenier stated that the school is compiling a list of professional development opportunities the staff has undertaken to make remote learning work.

Remote Learning Update

Principal DeGrenier stated that the school was awaiting an announcement on the fall from the state commissioner of education. Ms. Sheridan said that with no kids with IEPs, she felt that the planning was great, structure was great, having consistent days and times. Ms. Louko said that the consistency was great, that her kids knew what to look for and where to find it. She felt that her kids could have benefitted from some one-on-one discussion with their teachers, even ten minutes, for direct feedback and reassurance. Mr. Galluzzo stated that his second grader did well, that he could see he had finished his assignments, but received an email saying his son hadn't turned anything in yet; he had simply not known to hit "turn in." Ms. Joy said that this was the biggest takeaway, that the whole second grade had issues with the "turn in" action, but that it eventually was fixed.

Ms. Louko said that the small group structures, like the "book club" her daughter was in, kept her engaged. She also said that her kids did not explore specialist classes like they should have, that they considered them more "at school" activities. Ms. Gordon asked whether or not specialists should have separate ZOOM classes, or should they be parts of regular class Zoom meetings? Ms. Louko said her kids loved seeing the specialists on Zoom calls. Ms. Joy agreed, but said that the teachers are always cognizant that while we combat screen time, we are trying to figure out how to teach through screen time. Ms. Louko said that when the subject is on the weekly chart, her kids do it; if it's separate at all, they don't. Mr. Galluzzo said that his sons were both doing virtual extracurricular classes, like taekwondo, karate and scouts, that specialist classes could obviously be held virtually.

Ms. Gordon stated that she had begun adding medals for work completion. Mr. Wilson stated that star certificates would be sent out during the next week or so to all students, and asked if there had been positive reaction to the science fair participation certificates. Mr. Galluzzo said his son had received his and was very happy with it. Ms. Sheridan said that she felt that the novelty of distance learning was wearing off for the kids, and that certificates probably would not be a motivator for hers. She said that direct contact from the teacher would be more of a motivator, part of a positive feedback loop. Ms. McKenna said that certificates can be created in Google Classroom that can be personalized.

Ms. Louko said that with parents' workloads, assuring that the core subjects - math, ELA, history/science – are done has been the first priority at home. Mr. Galluzzo concurred, offering his family's daily timeline. He also seconded Ms. Louko's ideas on small affinity groups and their engagement possibilities. Principal DeGrenier agreed that scheduling such live sessions with the kids could have a positive effect and Ms. Joy said that it would be an easy tweak for the future. Ms. DeGrenier stated that as long as students were accessing most of the plan during this unprecedented trial period, the school was happy.

Ms. Wilcox joined the meeting at 2:40. She stated that in her district (as a principal in Hingham), students took core instruction Monday through Thursday, and then specialists on Friday, also using that day as a catch-up day. They are awaiting feedback from a survey, but have seen increased completion of specialist programming.

Ms. Louko felt that there should be a focus on social-emotional needs of kids in the future should distance learning continue. She said that there are most likely emotional struggles happening with students that we cannot see now. Principal DeGrenier said that it was a topic of discussion already in the school, that counselors, school psychologists and teachers are already working on it.

Re-Entry Plan

Principal DeGrenier brought up the topic of re-entry. Questions remain as to what it will look like, that concepts of mindfulness and self-care will be top of mind, that physical education classes will not look like the gym classes of old. Mr. Wilson stated that the state department of education had talked recently about the creation of small "opt-in" enrichment classes. Principal DeGrenier said there had been no update from the government as yet, but that there would be some news forthcoming sometime during the weeks of the 8th or 15th. She stated that research is being conducted on schools in Europe that have returned. Ms. Louko suggested that students might show fear of returning. Mr. Galluzzo stated that his son was afraid to go back to his taekwondo class, though it was being held outside and socially distanced. Principal DeGrenier stated that it was obvious that large gatherings and events might be gone for a long time.

Ms. Sheridan suggested that if schools remained virtual, connections with new teachers in the fall might be difficult for many students. Mr. Lancaster said that there should be provisions for getting physical materials into students' hands, that had he known school would be virtual through the end of the year, he would have sent things home with students. Principal DeGrenier agreed that putting student packages together could be a priority. Ms. Wilcox stated that getting students together prior to the start of school, as has historically been done, would be important, in whatever form. Principal DeGrenier stated that she has reached out to Cedar School to help begin the transition for first graders who would be coming to second grade at Center in the fall, understanding that changing physical schools during this time could be confusing for the students and compound their stress.

Ms. Joy left the meeting at 3 p.m.

Hanover Historical Society grants update

Mr. Galluzzo reported that the STARS in Residence grant was safe, that the Mass Cultural Council had reached out and stated that they would not be taking any money back. The Mass Foundation for the Humanities grant program was fine as well, and the component being offered to the school was ancillary to the basic collections assessment the historical society was undertaking.

End of Year Celebrations

Principal DeGrenier stated that they were working on a grade 4 celebration, as well as a day of distribution for students to pick up the items from their locker. No one is allowed to enter the building, but teachers will be present to see their students. There is one more art show to go. On June 19th, all teachers will conduct a Zoom class with their students to mark the last day of school.

Budget

Principal DeGrenier stated that there would be coming reductions, as the schools have been asked to cut \$400,000 to \$800,000 across the district. Class sizes will increase. The superintendent would send out updates soon.

New Business

There was no new business.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Principal DeGrenier stated that if there are significant changes in the next few weeks, such as direction from the state for the fall, she will convene another meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.