

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 6:00 PM remotely.

Board members present: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello (arrived late), Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino

Board members absent: Mr. Hicks and Mrs. Petrella

Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance.

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education special session meeting - July 15, 2020

Mrs. Geraci made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2020 special session meeting, as amended.

Dr. Taylor would like the following clarification made: “Dr. Taylor explained that it would be extremely unlikely that you could say that any lunch wave would be completely safe from another as there is mounting evidence that the virus is airborne in confined spaces.”

In favor of approving the minutes of the July 15, 2020 special session meeting, as amended: Mrs. Booth, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Board Meeting - July 29, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Strategic Plan for Reopening and Recovery Process

A. Review of plan to be submitted to the CT State Department of Education

Dr. Serino explained that final edits and the table of contents will be done tomorrow and a copy will be emailed out to the board members. Though the district is not legally required to have the Board of Education approve the plan, CABE has encouraged all of the boards to approve the plans.

The plan is divided into six core areas, starting with supporting the well-being of students, staff and families. Well-being is the foundation upon which all of the district's success is built and it wasn't a hard place for the team to start with the planning. The number one focus is to help protect yourself and others by following the CDC guidelines, which also includes a self-certified checklist that will be a ParentSquare app. They will recommend parents use the app to self-certify that their children do not have symptoms including a fever of 100 degrees or higher and that if they do, they stay home. ParentSquare hopes to have an app available by the middle of August. Very careful records will be kept on attendance and illnesses. They will also work to minimize the movement of students within the building, though they will build in mask breaks and movement breaks with opportunities for students and teachers to go outside. They will continue to partner with DMYFS and professional learning will be provided around recognizing situations of abuse and neglect and what staff responsibilities are for that.

Significant concerns have been voiced by teachers over returning to the buildings and the district is working to be sure that the same support is provided to staff. This will include extensive training before the start of school and the provision for a modified work schedule or potentially to work from home if they meet designated criteria. Dr. Serino thanked Mr. Yamartino for recognizing the hard work that the staff has put in and the custodial team has been incredible. She is hopeful that the clean and healthy environment will help contribute to the staff's physical and mental well-being. Dr. Serino explained that communication is vital at this point and they will implement Safety Ambassadors in each school. There will also be two people per building who will provide oversight of all of the training. The high school administrators came up with the idea of having weekly virtual office hours to talk about any concerns.

Blumshapiro is working with the district to create a staff re-entry plan that outlines all of the district's expectations. They will also develop an FAQ of that plan and the health insurance company continues to be a great support.

In terms of family support, the district will stay in close contact with parents including daily check-ins by school administrators if the students are back in the buildings all day. They will also work to keep parents engaged in a positive, proactive way.

Moving on to spread mitigation, the district will adhere to all DPH cleaning and disinfecting school guidelines. Cleaning and some sanitizing will be done while people are in the building, but disinfecting will happen when no one is in the building. Restrooms will be disinfected twice a day and there will be a sign-in sheet to note that the cleaning has been done. All classrooms and touch points will be cleaned and disinfected each day. Approved cleaners have been designated for staff use and others for student use at the high school. Dr. Serino reviewed some of the approved cleaners and explained that disinfectants also generally have ten minute dwelling times.

Dr. Serino went on to review how touch points will be cleaned and the need to eliminate touch points as much as possible. The head custodian created a system of color coding the various types of cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing agents with the various types of cloths that need to be used. They have also talked about keeping certain bathrooms closed in the mornings. Hand sanitizer will be readily available in all classrooms and entry ways, though hand-washing when appropriate is preferable.

Regarding movement, they will try to minimize face-to-face exposure to the greatest degree possible. One-way foot traffic patterns will be followed. All schools and offices will have signage and there will be daily announcements reminding everyone about the various guidelines and will also be available on the school reopening webpage.

Dr. Serino explained that there will be days in August designated for teachers to come into the buildings to arrange their furniture, with all desks facing in the same direction and the greatest distance possible between students. They will remove all extraneous items at that time. Parts of the gymnasiums will then be needed to store furniture. With regard to instructional design, teachers will wear masks at all times unless they are outside of the six-foot proximity and use a physical barrier of some sort. The district has not purchased Plexiglas dividers for classrooms as of now. Teachers will also be provided cleansers and sanitizers.

Currently, they are proposing that elementary students eat lunch in their classrooms. The Durham Fair Association has agreed to lend the district tables for outdoor eating. They are also looking at ways to use the cafeterias at Strong and Coginchaug. All drinking fountains and filling stations have been turned off. Water is available from classroom sinks and kids can bring water from home. The district will have cases of water available in classrooms as appropriate.

Students with certain identified symptoms that go to the Health Room will need to be in a supervised isolation room. Cots are available for the isolation rooms as well. They are working to maximize the efficiency of cleaning, the time for cleaning and the effectiveness of the cleaning bathrooms. Locker rooms will not be used and the entire lower level of Coginchaug will remain closed. They have looked at protocols for playgrounds and play areas and were initially told that a fogger could be used between cohorts. Disinfecting is not required for outdoor equipment and it has been suggested that the students wash their hands before and after using the equipment. They will continue to look at a cleaning protocol for this.

Ventilation is fully automated and can provide more fresh air from outside. Air filters have been changed in order to increase filtration. The system meets the Connecticut DPH ventilation guidelines and is monitored very closely. The water systems also comply with return-to-service guidelines as well.

In terms of PPE, staff are encouraged to purchase their own cloth masks and everyone who has come in to work has done that. The district will provide a mask with the district logo to each staff member. N95 masks need to be med and fit tested and the nurses and custodial staff will have those, as appropriate. Parents are asked to purchase masks for their children, but they will also be available at school. An order has been placed for 250 face shields as they believe staff will use them on a regular basis. Goggles and glasses are available, if needed, and gloves are plentiful. Gowns would only be provided for significant situations.

Part of the reason that the state has allowed additional days is to make sure that staff have adequate training. All recommended training will be provided. Social distancing will be maintained at six feet and staff meetings will be held remotely, even when staff are in the building. A big question from parents is about the practice of cohorting and to what degrees that will be able to be maintained. The district intends to maintain stable cohorts in grades preK-5, with teachers moving from classroom to classroom. Children will have other cohorts if they ride the bus or receive special services. Students in grades 6-8 will have cohorts for their core academics and then another for unified arts (art, music, phys. ed) and a third cohort for world languages. It will be very difficult to establish cohorts in the high school and they will focus more on other methods of mitigation.

Health practices and protocols will focus on wearing masks and frequent hand-washing and will be part of the daily schedule. Information was sent to all parents at the end of June about the requirements for immunizations and health assessments. They will also share information with parents about attendance and reporting illnesses. It is permissible for the district to ask staff if they are experiencing symptoms and they will complete the self-certified checklist. Dr. Serino stated that the Clinical Nurse Supervisor has been outstanding with her initiative, organization, skills and knowledge. If a case is reported, either she

or Dr. Serino will have immediate contact with the local Health Director. The district will also share what support is available for vulnerable populations.

Dr. Serino encouraged the board to take a good look at the Health Monitoring Checklist that is included in the plan and explained that all health expectations are being met.

The district will work to reduce and restrict visitors that come to the buildings, however service providers who support students' IEP needs will follow a protocol for entry and service delivery. Lobby Guard kiosk system will be installed which will prevent people from having to come into the office. Vendors and contractors will hopefully come into buildings outside of school hours and will be asked to self-certify their wellness with their employer. Dolphin Days is continuing to work on setting up a childcare area at Brewster and they will clean and disinfect those areas before and after use.

Dr. Serino has included a copy of the school calendar in the area of Operations and Logistics. Because the district is approved to have three less student days, they are proposing to move the start of school from Tuesday, 9/1/20, to Thursday, 9/3/20, with shortened days on Thursday and Friday. Staff will have those two days for professional development and the third day as a self-selected teacher work day in August.

Currently, bus transportation can go on without restrictions, but with additions of safely boarding, unloading, wearing masks and training protocols for drivers and monitors. Although monitors are not required, the district plans to ask staff members to ride as bus monitors. Dattco just sent very comprehensive protocols, but Dr. Serino has not had a chance to go through them completely. Dattco has looked very carefully at what makes sense and how students can safely ride the bus. Several parents have indicated that they will transport their children to school and that will reduce the number of students on the bus. This will probably mean that parent drop-off and pick-up patterns will need to be rearranged. They hope to allow earlier drop-off and later pick-up times.

CIAC guidelines from June 29th are still in play for athletics. Emergency drills will follow suggested protocols. Food service will still offer pick-up at Cuginchaug if the district is not in school. Mark Basil has created a comprehensive protocol for his staff which is available for the board to review. They are still looking at where lunch will take place at the high school and middle school.

Mrs. Neubig reported that she has reviewed the Dattco plan and gave them feedback, asking about some additional services and clarity. Dattco will clean and disinfect the bus at the end of every day. It was not in their plan to clean between tiers and Mrs. Neubig has asked for that to happen. They do plan to clean high-touch areas regularly. She has also asked if they would designate a quarantine seat on the bus and for hand sanitizer to be on the bus. All drivers, passengers and monitors will be required to wear masks, other than for medical exceptions, and they are also providing training. Drivers will need to self-certify every morning.

Regarding fiscal budgetary considerations, Mrs. Neubig reviewed that the CARES Act application just opened up again today. The district will only get about \$43,000 and 75 percent will be spent on curriculum and 25 percent on technology. An application has gone in to FEMA that will cover 75 percent of COVID-related expenses. They have earmarked the 2019-2020 surplus for the 2020-2021 year, but also will reallocate funds as needed. They would obviously inform the board and get approval for a line item transfer. Mrs. Neubig explained that ERC will meet every two weeks and the Finance Committee will meet as well. Funding priorities include health and safety, supporting daily practices, PPE and transportation. They do feel that salaries is the area that is best spent on learning loss mitigation. Professional development, technology and connectivity remain priority areas as well. Mrs. Neubig has let staff know not to buy supplies that will be needed in May now. MOUs with the unions will be an important issue.

Dr. Serino went on to mention that there are specific policies that relate to COVID and once they are adopted, they will be linked to the plan and shared with the public. Dr. Serino reminded everyone that they had instituted a Planning and Response Team back in March and reviewed the members of that team. They began school-based teams a few weeks ago and they include teachers, nurses, custodians, secretaries, speech and language pathologists, etc. The people who are participating and doing this work are all getting paid for their time.

Once schools are in session, Dr. Serino will send out staff updates on Tuesdays and a weekly update to staff and parents will go out on Wednesdays. The Director of Curriculum sends an update out on Thursdays and the principals also do a weekly update. All information is posted on the school reopening page and any questions can be submitted there as well. There is also a Distance Learning 2.0 team who began working before the school year ended.

Dr. Serino highlighted that a memorandum of understanding will need to be negotiated with the teachers' union. The union created a draft MOU and the CEA just published a Safe Learning Plan with specific requirements which includes allowing the school to begin the year with remote learning, where necessary. They would like COVID testing for all students, teachers and staff. They understand the importance of moving the economy forward, but feel that safety must be addressed first. Negotiations will be likely with all six of the district's bargaining units, particularly with the teachers.

Dr. Serino explained that if a case is identified, that person, and anyone who came in contact with that person, would be required to quarantine for 14 days. Contact is defined as closer than six feet for 15 minutes or longer with someone who does not have a mask on, but the Health Director feels that the criteria should be more stringent than that, to include contact in the same area with someone who has been identified even if everyone is wearing a mask. The plan indicates that more guidance is forthcoming from DPH on responding to cases.

In terms of in-person teaching and learning, the curriculum would be followed to the extent possible but following the health guidelines. One recommended strategy is to prioritize standards to accelerate learning which would mean curriculum would be compacted and Dr. Serino felt that would be a monumental task.

The State Department of Education and the district are also continuing to look at sensible assessment practices as well. Social-emotional learning lessons will be part of the weekly curriculum in every grade.

The in-person plan includes an option for parents to "opt out" and have their children taught remotely which would include teachers teaching in person with some teachers supporting students who are at-home. Parents would submit a form which would explain the reasons why their child should continue distance learning. They have considered various ways of delivering in-person and remote learning. Some teachers have worked with the tech team to find ways to engage students who are at home. The district will have a very clearly stated schedule that will include prerecorded lessons. Coaches will record lessons on skill-specific areas for the elementary students. They will provide live learning and check-in with the child's assigned teacher. They will create a buddy system for children doing remote learning to have a connection with a student who is in school every day.

For the full hybrid plan which would be implemented if it was deemed to not be safe for all kids to be in the schools and thus minimize the number of students in the buildings, they have looked at a few ways to address this. The district is part of the LEARN Region and Consortium area where these schools plan to follow the same design. Students would be roughly divided alphabetically. Students would be split between distance learning and in-school learning. They had also looked at running an AM and PM

session, with cleaning done in between. They would schedule all buildings to be empty on Wednesdays to allow the custodial staff to perform a deep cleaning and to try to avoid Saturdays for cleaning after the second cohort. This also allows cohorts to take a break from actually being in the buildings.

They want to support in-person teaching and learning to the greatest extent possible and give students as much one-on-one time with their teachers as possible. They hope to maximize the number of teachers that are available and hopefully teachers with compromised health situations can bolster the distance learning. Dr. Serino explained that this is a general design of the model, but will continually be modified as they watch the data and are able to make adjustments.

Looking at distance learning, the majority of feedback was that kids wanted to see their teachers and the district agrees as well. They will do asynchronous, prerecorded lessons as well as synchronized time that will be scheduled. Individualized feedback and formative assessments have been built in with an opportunity for more rigorous and accelerated lessons as well. Maureen Hamilton has been selected as the enrichment teacher and will be working with students and assisting in these lessons for other students as well. They will also be using grades, rather than pass/fail.

Dr. Serino then showed an example of a third/fourth grade schedule as well as the high school schedule. She also reviewed the district's assessment calendar.

Dr. Serino is extremely proud of the Special Education staff and the challenges that they met with great creativity to deliver necessary services. A lot of collaboration is necessary in supporting students. Mrs. Keane is trying to model the district's approach with cohorting. All students will have a Chromebook when they return to school. Dr. Serino also showed the hybrid plans for special education.

People have asked about student conduct relative to health and safety guidelines and a new policy will be adopted. Work continues on physical education, visual and performing arts and Dr. Serino hopes to finalize that within the next couple of weeks. Extracurricular activities have all been postponed. Staffing and personnel will need to adhere to any negotiated MOUs and they must meet all certification requirements. They continue to think about how to creatively use all staff to support a safe learning environment and high-quality education.

In terms of a potential second wave, the district has been working very closely with the Health Director and they are uncertain about if closure would be mandated if there were an increase of cases in another town. If another school closure was deemed necessary, a communication plan is already in place and will be further developed and any future openings would follow this plan with potential modifications.

Dr. Serino explained that she will include some resource documents at the end of the plan. She also explained that she felt it was critically important for the district to write their own plan rather than taking it from other communities. She suggested that the board dives into the health checklist at the next meeting.

Mrs. Geraci asked if there would be a Google doc and Dr. Serino stated that the board will be able to put their comments right into the shared document. Mrs. Geraci stated that Dr. Serino and her staff and everyone involved did a great job.

Mrs. Booth asked if the district's plan right now is for a full return if the teachers' union agrees to it and Dr. Serino explained that there is an executive order for school to return full-time in the fall. She was not sure if the teachers' union could divert that from happening.

Mrs. Geraci asked if they had discussed different technology platforms for distance learning. Mr. Pietrasko explained that he and Mrs. Parness collaborated on this and he runs the information technology part of the system while Curriculum is taking the helm for instructional technology. In terms of hardware, the Chromebooks, laptops, docking stations and document cameras will be the best tools because of portability. In terms of learning platforms, full licenses have been purchased for several apps and software. They are striving for as much uniformity as possible to minimize the amount of technology.

The plan will be submitted to the state on Friday as a draft plan. Dr. Taylor asked when staff contractual discussions will take place. He feels that the sooner they know how many staff members are returning, the easier it will be to plan. Dr. Serino stated that they wanted to know decisions from both parents and staff by August 1st so that there is time for planning and hiring that might be necessary. She noted that they are also looking at minimizing the number of students in the high school by not requiring 11th and 12th graders to take elective courses if they are meeting their graduation requirements. They are also looking at having all students come in late or leave early, according to their schedule.

Dr. Taylor asked if Dr. Serino has gotten a sense from the Health Director on what his stance is for future closure. He felt that it would be a shame to close the entire state if there is an outbreak in just one area. He would also like to know if there is a threshold for how many cases are identified before closure is required. Dr. Taylor felt that if one case was the trigger for closure, the inevitability of that is extremely high and they should start shifting the resources to distance learning. Dr. Serino agreed and stated that she has asked the Health Director for clear guidance and what the protocol would be. The Health Directors are trying to maintain continuity throughout the state and they are meeting with DPH this week.

The plan will be submitted to the state on Friday as a draft and will be available to the public at that time. Dr. Serino explained that the district can still make changes to the plan and it will come back to the board for approval.

Committee Reports

A. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - July 20, 2020

Dr. Friedrich reported that Student Achievement reviewed a list of new high school courses, including an EMT course, field experience in science and technology, field experience in careers in arts and entertainment, an equity course for all students, women's history, street law and the introduction of an algebra sequence which will run algebra over two years instead of one as an option. Some courses will depend on COVID (the EMT course has already been canceled) and other courses depend on student enrollment. The board will be seeing requests for three new textbooks, both physical and online.

Dr. Friedrich also explained that the transformation to a single academic approach is temporarily on hold.

B. Policy Committee Meeting - July 22, 2020

Mr. Yamartino reported that the Policy Committee voted today to send 17 policies to the full board for consideration and drafts will be forwarded to the board members. There were three new policies, one on health and safety protocols, one on personnel as it related to changes in regulations and one on temporary policies and regulations. There were also revisions to policies regarding meeting conduct, community board operations and green cleaning programs, including questions about material data sheets. Revisions were made to use of school facilities regarding the use may now be restricted by the superintendent and

whether the board should shut down the facilities to public use in general. They reviewed several other policies as well and included masks as part of the discussion about the student disciplinary process.

In the public comment section of the meeting, they received comments about the fact that the public had not had a chance to look at any of the policies prior to the meeting. The draft policies will be available to the public before the board meeting next week.

Communications

Mr. Moore stated that he received communication from Nicole Ercolani who is concerned about essential workers. Her basic issues are being there for distance learning when she is working and her kids are at daycare. She asked if daycare would provide the necessary support to do the distance learning when they are really just there to watch the kids. She was also concerned about the time and cost for daycare and indicated that Dolphin Days would be charged \$1,000 per month per child. Mr. Moore felt that most people who go back to work will deal with these same issues as well. He also mentioned that Mrs. Ercolani has received support on Facebook for the issues she raised. Mr. Moore also noted that the Senate is looking at additional monetary support for education and maybe some of that money should be focused on parents. Mrs. Geraci added that she thought it would become an issue for every working parent across the country. Mrs. Caramanello also felt that all parents will feel it and other families will choose not to keep a second income.

Mr. Yamartino noted that he had briefed the Middlefield Board of Selectmen on the work being done for returning to school and Carol Bufithis asked if there was anything that members of the community can do to volunteer to help. She would personally volunteer and felt that there were others as well. Mr. Yamartino did tell her that much of the current planning is very process-related, but that he would bring it up at tonight's meeting. He wondered if volunteers could be used to do bus monitoring or provide any help with setting up the schools. Dr. Serino thanked him for that and added that Laura Francis has also offered to help. They reached out to Mrs. Francis today and asked if the Durham Town Crew can deliver the tables from the Durham Fair.

Mrs. Geraci also mentioned an email from Kelly Davis and added that she doesn't believe parents have gotten their refunds from Middlefield Park & Rec for sports camp. She does not feel that Hannah Malcolm has been very responsive to those parents and asked once again for the Middlefield board members to help bridge that gap. Mr. Yamartino apologized for not reaching out about that.

Mrs. Caramanello saw on social media that there were essential workers concerned about what would be in place for them if school is closed and her concern was that it seemed as though they believed that the school district would be providing some kind of childcare if the district was to close. Mrs. Caramanello also felt there was miscommunication about the district's collaboration with Dolphin Days and that that began before the pandemic started. Mr. Moore confirmed that discussions began with Dolphin Days for a before- and after-school program. Dr. Friedrich reminded everyone that Dr. Serino brought a proposal to the board for that type of program years ago. Mrs. Caramanello felt that some parents did not understand that and believed that Dolphin Days would take on the role of helping students with their education in the place of the school district. Mr. Moore reiterated that that is clearly not the purpose of that program nor are they capable of providing that service.

New Business

A. Korn School Building: Utilization Committee recommendation to send letter to Town of Durham

Dr. Taylor reviewed that the Utilization Committee would like to send a letter specifying the district's intent to move forward with the demolition of Korn School and the financing around that. He explained that this was put on the agenda as a courtesy and for discussion purposes. Mr. Yamartino stated that despite the best efforts to maintain the building, mold has begun to build up and it is no longer a viable option to be used. The Utilization Committee believes that the district should move forward with the demolition and notify the Town of Durham as a courtesy. Mrs. Neubig had some additional information on costs associated with remediation that will be provided to the town as well. Mr. Yamartino believes that the intent of the Utilization Committee would be to put this item to a referendum to bond the cost of demolition in the next budget season.

Mr. Moore will write a letter to the Town of Durham, including the information provided by Mrs. Neubig, to ask if they are still planning to move ahead and would like the board to approve that.

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to authorize Mr. Moore to write a letter to the Town of Durham, as above.

In favor of authorizing Mr. Moore to write a letter to the Town of Durham, as above: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.

Mr. Yamartino then asked if that was a defacto vote for moving forward with the demolition in the event there is no response from the town. Dr. Friedrich felt that that would be a separate question, but the board already passed a resolution to choose a deadline beyond which they would develop a demolition plan. Dr. Taylor felt that they still needed a vote on sending it to referendum with more discussion about the financing.

B. Appointment of a citizen member to Well-Being Committee

Mr. Moore reported that Kirstin Olszewski has volunteered to join the Well-Being Committee. She did run for a seat on the board and has talked to Mr. Moore several times about volunteering for a subcommittee. She is a full-time licensed real estate agent with students at Lyman and Memorial. She has been the treasurer of the Lions Club and den leader of Cub Scouts. She has also been involved as a holistic health coach and works with individuals with various challenges.

Dr. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve Kirstin Olszewski to become a member of the Well-Being Committee.

In favor of approving Kirstin Olszewski as a member of the Well-Being Committee: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Mr. Moore reviewed that the board can accept public comment, but cannot respond during the meeting. He encouraged the public to write to him directly and he will respond. Mrs. Booth explained that she will time public comment and everyone will have three minutes, with a one-minute warning.

Nicole Ercolani, from Durham, wanted to address her specific email and conversation with Mr. Moore. In the informational meeting last week, Mrs. Ercolani specifically asked the superintendent about full-time, daytime daycare. In the response email that they received the following day, her question was addressed specifically as full-time daycare and the superintendent did say that the district was working

with Dolphin Days to expand available childcare by extending their setting to a site a Brewster School. The costs to participate will be determined by Dolphin Days and they are also working to expand full-day childcare offerings for school-aged children. Dr. Serino had stated that in the event of a school closure and/or children on non-school days, the hybrid model will be implemented which means students attend school on an alternating day basis. Mrs. Ercolani felt that her question was very clearly addressed by the superintendent and she specifically mentioned Dolphin Days in her response. During the phone call last week, Dr. Serino also made a comment about bringing in National Honor Society students to the daytime program provided by Dolphin Days to provide ongoing assistance. Mrs. Ercolani did not feel there was any misinformation in what she understood. She is an essential worker and has had over 80 families reach out to her with these concerns. She feels that if the district is going to promote Dolphin Days as a private environment for education purposes, which was very clearly stated by the superintendent, that it should be put into the budget. Mrs. Ercolani also feels that families will be financially impacted by childcare and it is honestly frustrating that the district is not addressing that. Mrs. Booth reminded the speaker that her time was up at this point. She also felt that it would be considered discrimination against these families if it is not specifically addressed. She also brought up the quality of education and time management for parents. Parents have also brought up the issue of mental health. Mrs. Booth reminded the speaker again that her time is up.

Gwen Hutter, from Middlefield, is a teacher in New Haven public schools and has at least 10 friends with students in this district who all teach in other districts. She felt there is an importance for the district to be cognizant of schedules in other districts. She also asked about the frequency of parents having to self-certify and if it would be per child or per household. Mrs. Hutter also felt that movement breaks should always be outside in a clockwise manner, weather permitting. Mrs. Hutter would also be willing to provide a 10 x 10 tent to go outside the classroom doors to enable mask breaks and potentially provide timers to the students as well.

Mariah Roy, from Durham, explained that she is a nurse in the emergency department and felt that everybody at Brewster School has gone above and beyond during this difficult time. She felt that every family has their own unique situation and reminded everyone that there are people out of work who may be having trouble paying their bills. Mrs. Roy felt that essential workers are blessed in that they have the capability to work and bring home a paycheck. She did not feel that this was an issue for the school district and that people should be contacting their employers about childcare. She did not feel it was fair to pit essential and non-essential families against each other. Mrs. Roy feels that the school system has done an amazing job and everyone has gone above and beyond for her son with special needs.

Candice Burritt, from Durham, has twins at Brewster School and felt that Seesaw did not work for kindergartners who cannot read. She felt that parents needed to be teachers and explained that she did not go to school to be a teacher and that is what the teachers are supposed to do. She felt that Google classroom is needed for the younger kids, not just Seesaw. Mrs. Burritt stated that she cannot teach what her children are supposed to learn. She also noted that Mrs. Ercolani was not just advocating for essential workers, but for everybody who has to stay home and teach their child while trying to work from home. She did feel, however, that the cost is more of an issue for essential workers than it is for those who have the privilege to stay home and work. Mrs. Burritt also felt that there should be something in place to keep twins together. She noted that they pay a lot of money in taxes for education, with 70 percent of the tax money going to the school district. If the district can't teach the younger kids, something needs to be changed. Mrs. Burritt had already sent an email and none of her issues have been addressed or even brought up. She would like to know how the district will provide distance learning for the younger kids. She also added the early education centers do not require masks for kids and wanted to know why it was necessary in the district. Mrs. Burritt felt that the science shows that the younger kids do not spread the virus as much as the older kids.

Nicole Ercolani, from Durham, asked if she could have more time to speak and Mr. Moore agreed that she could have two more minutes. She explained that she is also a nurse and has been contacted by several other healthcare workers. She felt it was admirable that Mrs. Roy was willing to work long hours and then come home to work with her kids. Mrs. Ercolani wasn't sure that was feasible long term. She also agreed with Mrs. Burritt in that they pay taxes for a reason and the school budget needs to be reassessed. The district just bought a playscape that they don't even know if kids can play on because of social distancing and the pandemic. She asked the board to look at the funds available and if not, if the issue can be extended to the state. Mrs. Ercolani explained that she is advocating for essential workers, but also for parents working from home. She would like to see a plan that works for families across the board, as best as possible.

Adjournment

Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Geraci, to adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Education.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Moore, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First