

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 29, 2020**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was virtually on Wednesday, July 29, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** : The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Walter Kruzel.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE** : Walter Kruzel
3. **ROLL CALL** :

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY : Jonathan LeBlanc, Bill Salazar, Wendy Costa, Tina LeBlanc, Joyce Hall, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder, and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT : Chris Rutledge

ALSO PRESENT : Mr. Christopher Drezek, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

Suspend the Rules and move Item #5a .

Chairman Kruzel would like to suspend the rules and move Item #5a Review & Approve Final Plans for Henry Barnard Roof and Submit Form SCG-042 to the Office of State Construction Grants up on the agenda.

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education moves Item #5a up on the agenda for Board Approval.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** , passed unanimously.

5a. Review & Approve Final Plans for Henry Barnard Roof and Submit Form SCG-042 to the Office of State Construction Grants

Tom Hibbard from Hibbard and Rosa Architects updated the Board about Phase III project for the Barnard Roof.

Mr. LeBlanc asked when the project will be completed. Chairman Kruzel stated the plan is to be done by Labor Day. Mr. Cykley added we are still waiting for the completion date confirmation. The Building committee will need to meet again to review and approve proposals we have received. He is trying to get this done by the end of August.

Mr. Drezek asked how long have we been working on the Barnard roof? Mr. Hibbard stated we started Phase I in 2018.

Chairman Kruzel added Phase II was done in 2019 and Phase III in 2020. We will still need to replace the gym roof when that warrantee has expired.

Mrs. Costa moved, seconded by Mrs. Hall that the Enfield Board of Education approves Final Plans for Henry Barnard Roof and Submit Form SCG-042 to the Office of State Construction Grants

A vote by **roll-call 8-0-0** , passed unanimously.

4. SUPERINTENDENT 'S REPORT

a. EPS Reopening Plan

Mr. Drezek stated there still are a lot of unanswered questions and he is as frustrated as you are. He will hold more Q & A's. It is important that you hear the latest information from him. He will only share the facts and will explain the new buzz word "local control".

Mr. Drezek added his intentions are not meant to be disrespectful to anyone especially at the State level. The Governor has done a great job as well as our Education Commissioner. They did not sign up for this during a pandemic. He is not ignoring e-mails that have been sent to him. He asked everyone for their continued patience. We received a mandate on July 24th and were required to send 3 reopening plans (fully, hybrid and digital learning). These plans do not include our detailed reopening plans and were not required by the State. We were just required to submit 3 plans. These plans were sent to the Board and will be posted on our website.

Mr. Drezek added that what is said during a press conference is not legal, binding, or true. They are giving misleading information to the public. The State asked us to solicit input from parents if they would be sending their child back to school in the fall and for us to ask staff if they would be coming back. He added that it is important that you all understand this. We submitted our 3 plans to the State on July 22nd. The Governor held a press conference on Monday, July 27th where he urged flexibility. He understands that going back to school in person will not work for everyone. They are supporting K-8 full in person plan and a high school hybrid plan. It does not matter that this was said during a press conference. We need to do what the State has told us to do - return back to school 5 days a week. We were never told about flexibility.

Mr. Drezek stated that he is not aware of any area superintendent's that have received any PPE's that were promised. We will provide our students and staff with cloth face masks. We are working with Enfield EMS to make sure our nurses have the appropriate PPE's to protect them when dealing with sick children.

Mr. Drezek added we still have a lot of unanswered questions. Ours plans are draft and are a fluid document. Each district needs a COVID Liaison and he will be ours. He is required to notify everyone about the health matrix if we need to close. The guidelines for closing school have not been received from the State yet. We have been asked to reopen schools during a pandemic without knowing all the information. He made the decision to close schools on March 12th with the Town Manager. He does not have the right to shut us down if we have a confirmed case or our Health Director, Patrice Sulik. The State of Connecticut is making rules for businesses but is not telling us what to do. Local control will make the decision. We are not alone with this frustration. We are going to need to make this decision. He knows how important it is to get our students back to school. He has his own personal opinions on this and is wearing many different hats. He feels the decision will be ultimately left up to us. This is real and he will do what we are told to do, and we will try to keep everyone safe.

Mr. Drezek presented his draft school reopening plan that covered the following: Staff Survey Results; Parent Survey Results; Fall Reopening Model; Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate; School Liaison, communications Plans, and Data Collection; Facilities; Daily Operations; Child Nutrition; Transportation; Health Practices and Protocols; Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations; Social Distancing; Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields; Planning and Distribution of Information; Containment Plan; Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans; Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning; Special Education; English Learners (ELS); Family Support and Communication; Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health; After-school Programming; Career and Technical Education; Certification and Personnel Planning; Professional Development; and Q&A. The complete power point presentation can be found on our website at www.enfieldschools.org.

Mr. Drezek can address any Board member questions. He also added that he welcomes questions and can attend any upcoming School Reopening Committee meetings to address questions from committee members.

5b. Approve FY2020/21 School Calendar Revision

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the FY2020/21 School Calendar Revision as presented.

Discussion :

Mr. Ryder asked for us to explain why we are revising the calendar for the people watching this at home.

Chairman Kruzel asked Mr. Bourassa to bring the calendar up for people to view it. The State has changed the number of required days for students to attend school from 180 days to 177 days. The first day of school is being moved from Tuesday, September 2nd to Tuesday, September 8th.

Ms. Hall added the State is allowing us three days for faculty and staff training. School will open the day after Labor Day.

Chairman Kruzel does not believe there are any additional changes. The last day of school will be held on the 178th day - June 16th and graduation is still being held on June 22nd. The three days are to be used for faculty training.

Mr. Drezek stated the last day of school and graduation will remain the same. The State requires 177 days, we list 178 student days.

Chairman Kruzel stated we still have one additional day that can be addressed at another time if needed.

Mr. Ryder stated our students will attend school for 178 days instead of the mandated 177 days. Does this now mean that we will no longer be having the need for snow days? We will now be a 1:1 device district. He thanked Mr. Drezek for this. We can assume that snow days will now be distance learning days.

Mr. Drezek stated theoretically yes. The State has not ruled on this yet. For now, the State is just concerned with reopening schools. If snow days occur, he knows districts will petition the State to allow for distance learning on those dates be counted as student days.

Mr. Salazar asked what training will be covered during these three days. Mr. Drezek stated there is a plan. It depends on how we go back. Health and safety need to be included in the training. We have some staff that will need to learn how to use an iPad. A lot of our PD training has already been based on enhancing distance learning for staff.

Mr. Salazar stated we had previously discussed staff training at a Curriculum meeting to be done during August 31 - September 4 for teachers. Now we need to use this time for other training.

Mr. Drezek stated we had already planned for technology training for distance learning for our staff prior to school opening. We now have three additional days that the State is telling us we must conduct health and safety training. Technology training is vital. We have an obligation to make sure our teachers are prepared for distance learning and health and safety training.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mr. Bourassa for putting the calendar up on the screen for everyone to see it. As you can see, August 31st and September 1st are professional learning days for staff. September 2-4 will be used for staff training.

Mr. Drezek stated Tuesday, September 8th will be the first student day regardless of what method we are using.

Mr. LeBlanc asked about student training.

Mr. Drezek stated we need to provide training for our students on how to use the iPads. We can get a jump start by making remote training videos for those that are willing to participate. We are supposed to have in-person training but where could we hold it. We are waiting for clarification on this. We can make training videos available before they arrive to back to school. We will do as much as we can before they come back. We will need to review this with the students once they are back in school. We will also need to train parents to be able to trouble shoot any problems the students may have. We need to have resources available for parents. Instructions will be given with each device. iPads will be distributed to students before the first day of school. We are waiting for the cases to arrive. We have the iPads now.

We want to give parents and children the opportunity to practice on them before they come back to school on September 8th.

Mr. LeBlanc agreed that students will need in-class instruction. The first week of school can almost be used as a training week for students.

Mr. Drezek stated he has seen models from other communities for a hybrid plan opening. Only certain students would come back so they could transition back to school. We will need to adopt a plan for the Enfield Public Schools. He is going to recommend a plan but will also need input from the Board on what you would like to do. We could do something like half days the first week to help transition the students. We can discuss this later. He would have been prepared to discuss this tonight if we were not just thrown a curve ball on Monday. Last week we were ready to reopen 5 days a week. He is not confident with this now. We can discuss this further in the upcoming weeks.

A vote by **roll call 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS :

Mr. Ryder thanked Mr. Drezek for your honesty and your presentation. He has 2 children in the Enfield Public Schools and he also takes this personally. This will be a personal decision for parents to make about sending their children back to school.

Mr. Ryder stated if you get clarification, he will feel more comfortable going with a Hybrid plan model for reopening schools. This would eliminate some of the exposure for students and staff.

Mr. Ryder thanked the community members that took the surveys. There will be more opportunities for additional feedback from every stakeholder. Half of our parents responded to the survey. We can hold more surveys. He is pleased that we are taking learning for our special education students seriously and our plans for all our student learners that learn differently. We are planning for teachers to use clear mask shields when giving instruction. He thanked them for planning for this. Students learn by watching our mouths and expressions.

Mr. Ryder hates that this is becoming political. He is people over politics. If masks are the reason you are not sending your child back to school, he is okay with that. He just does not want politics to be the reason. Wearing masks are mandated and are required for students and staff. He stands with our teachers. When we open, we will do it as safely as possible. He wished everyone the best.

Mr. Drezek stated he thought we would be told what we needed to do and was not planning on voting on reopening. When the conversation changed to local control, the decision was taken away from us. He will make a recommendation for the Board to consider. The community will decide what we will do. Politics is the furthest from his mind. Now we are told there are options he feels it is only fair to vote on this. We will call for a special meeting in August regarding reopening and the plan we will use.

Mrs. Thurston thanked Mr. Drezek for everything you have been doing. Our first priority is to make sure the students and staff are as safe as possible. She has a personal stake in this. Whatever is decided, you will have our support. Thank you for all your hard work and for keeping us informed.

Mrs. Hall stated she has serious concerns with reopening school with everyone in the building. There are many details that will cut into the student day like using staggered times for starting and leaving school, training students on washing hands multiple times during the day, lunch, and restroom breaks.

Mrs. Hall asked if we have received approval from the Fire Marshall about using hand sanitizers? Are the masks students will be given washable? Since the water fountains will be closed, will we provide bottled water, or will the students be allowed to bring it from home? Will we receive full-day credit for distance learning days? Do we have room in our buildings for isolation rooms? What about students going to magnet schools and students that come from other towns?

Mr. Drezek stated staggered start times will be required. We cannot have student bottled up in the hallways. Social distancing is required. Students will wait in their classrooms until their bus is called.

The principals are working on these plans now. We cannot use temperature scans because we would be bottlenecking students at the front door.

Mr. Drezek stated our fire chiefs have been remarkable to work with. We can have hand sanitizers in the classrooms. They are discussing how much can be in the classroom. Hand sanitizers cannot be in the hallways. Some classrooms have sinks, so we can use soap to wash the hands.

Mr. Drezek stated the masks are washable. Parents can hand wash them to keep them clean. We do not have the resources to provide students with a new mask every day. So, they will need to be hand washed.

Mr. Drezek stated we are currently discussing water bottles. We can ask parents to send their child into school with water. What about the students that cannot bring water in. We are still discussing this.

Mr. Drezek stated we will supply students with materials like pencils, crayons, etc. to be kept in their desks. They will not be going to the art room anymore. This will be done in their classrooms so materials for each student will be kept in their desks. We will have a mandated list they will be supplied with. We are eliminating transient components.

Mr. Drezek does not believe CREC's half day programs will exit anymore. Students will need to go to one program. Tough decisions will need to be made about certain programs.

Mrs. Hall asked about receiving full-day credit for attendance for distance learning. Mr. Drezek stated this was addressed in the materials he received today but he has not had the chance to completely look at it. Board members were also sent this information today.

Mr. Drezek stated we will not be using art rooms and can reutilize them. These rooms can now be converted into isolation areas. Each school will be set up differently and can setup isolation rooms to use at each school.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Drezek for everything he is doing. She appreciates the comprehensive three plans you submitted and presented to us tonight. She is sorry you are dealing with frustration from the State. She has also received questions regarding clarification from the State.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about Eagle Hour? Mr. Drezek stated this will be gone. All students would eat in their classroom. We are working on this now. This will also affect the teacher's day.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about A and B schedules or will this be changed. Mr. Drezek stated this will stay the same.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked if seniors could leave during the day? Mr. Drezek stated if a student leaves, they cannot come back into the building. This is all being worked out. Mrs. Clark and her team are doing a wonderful job. Mr. Longey has been working with Principal Clark on these plans. We are fine tuning our plans so all these concerns will be addressed.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about high school and middle school students switching classes. What cleaning will be done? Mr. Drezek stated you can not cohort at the high school. We are looking at what materials will we provide. We are trying to be creative. We cannot just give out Clorox wipes and we cannot ask teachers to do this. We are looking into this. This will become a staffing issue.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated parents had concerns with TEAMS and utilizing TEAMS differently. This was discussed at the Reopening Committee. Mr. Drezek stated we have been looking into this and are trying to make TEAMS as user friendly as possible. We will be using instructional videos because we cannot bring everyone back into the same room.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked if a student comes down with an illness, can they become a virtual learner? Mr. Drezek does not have an answer to that question at this point. He is not sure if this would count for attendance.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about bus driver and lunch aides that bring their children with them. Will this be impacted? Mr. Drezek believes this will need to change. Smyth Bus will need to make this decision about bus drivers.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that even though we do not have the answers to these questions, we are being supportive of our parents. Every family situation is different. Parents are feeling that they are being heard even if you do not have the answer available.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about lock down drills and fire drills. Mr. Drezek stated lock down drills will continue. He is not sure about fire drills. We will figure this all out. The fire chiefs are meeting today. They are great to work with. We are in this together and will figure this all out.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about early childhood programs for PK students? Mr. Drezek stated everything from the State has been for K-12 students. Pre-K programs were not previously included in anything. Today, there was guidance regarding Pre-K. Pre-K is not mandatory. Our Stowe's play lab is great. Everything is hands on. How would we run it now with social distancing and not being able to touch? Education will not look the same when we come back.

Mrs. LeBlanc agrees with Mr. Ryder about politics. She added we will be working with Enfield Youth Services. A lot has happened since we went out during March nationally. The Black Lives Matter, diversity and equity should be discussed with our students. Our kids were distance learning when this was happening. They are unsure of the world we are living in and have concerns. This is important.

Mrs. LeBlanc would also prefer the hybrid plan when we return. She believes parents would also support this plan. The hybrid model will show us how coming back in person and distance learning is working. If the need comes up again for us to go out again, the transition would be more seamless. The hybrid model is her personal preference and it allows for flexibility. We do not want to make parents lives more difficult. Thank you for answering all her questions.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Mrs. Hall for her questions. She thanked the members on her team. She looks forward to future updates.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Drezek for what you are doing. You answered all his questions with your presentation. We all know safety and a well-rounded education are needed. Sports and club activities are important for our students. Socialization is important to our students. He does not have any children, but he coaches our youth and sports are very important. He would never put any child in jeopardy. He knows we need to get our kids back to school. We need to listen to each other and work together for the safety of our kids.

Mr. Salazar thanked Mr. Drezek for addressing this situation we are faced with without all the information. We are heading in the right direction for us to make a decision based on what is best for our kids since the State is not giving us clear guidelines. He is here to help and contribute in any way that is needed. He looks forward to more information so we can do what is best for our kids.

Mrs. Costa thanked Mr. Drezek for everything your team is doing. It has not been easy and the next 4-5 weeks will not be any easier. We all agree that safety is important. Everyone will have their own comfort levels about what to do with their child. We will also have different opinions including the parents. We need to keep in mind what is best for our students and staff.

Mrs. Costa stated the next School Reopen Committee meeting will be held on August 4th. Please send her your questions for our Q&A. Mr. Drezek can address these questions. Please e-mail her with your questions.

Chairman Kruzal stated you all addressed his questions. Since March, we have been told many different things from the State. Monday, everything changed again. Businesses were told what they could do to open for business. We have been following the rules that have been provided. We need the rules for reopening, so we know what to do in September. We need this information asap. We need to address many issues that need to be address and there are still many unknowns. We need a list of rules.

Chairman Kruzel thanked the 400 people that are watching the Board meeting. This meeting will be replayed on ETV.

Chairman Kruzel added the School Reopen Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 4th . Please send your questions to Wendy Costa.

Chairman Kruzel thanked the Governor for the job he has been doing, but we need a list a rules.

Mr. Drezek added that superintendents will receive a call on Friday regarding clarifications. He will know more on Friday.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mr. Drezek, Mr. Longey and all the staff for everything you have been doing.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa to adjourn the Special Virtual Meeting of July 29, 2020.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 8:21 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary