

**FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**March 20, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Bueno, Mrs. Kuechler, Mrs. Powers, Mr. Veitch, Mrs. McKenna,  
Mr. Monroe

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Baldwin, Mrs. Kohler, Mrs. Potter

STAFF ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT:

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:02p.m.

The Chair informed the audience that the meeting was being videotaped. The Chair also explained the use of Zoom for this particular meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair moved public comment to the end of the meeting to allow for people to ask questions. He explained how that would work and indicated there will be a 2-minute limit for each speaker.

Roll Call: Bueno, Powers, Kuechler, Monroe, McKenna, Veitch

The School Committee and staff are adhering to social distancing rules. They will not be approving any minutes due to the current situation.

Dr. Baldwin went through the timeline starting March 13, 2020. He began with a recap starting with the conference call with the state and the administration was not calling for a statewide closure at the time. However, superintendents started to close by region. Old Colony Superintendent's Association (which is a collective group of schools from Seekonk to Provincetown) started to close 1-2 weeks. Fairhaven Public Schools decided to close for a week. Dr. Baldwin indicated to the Fairhaven Public Schools Community that Monday through Thursday (3/16-3/19) would be considered use of the remainder of the allotted snow days. Dr. Baldwin then moved on to Sunday, March 15, 2020 and discussed the Governor of Massachusetts' announcement to close all schools statewide through April 7, 2020. Dr. Baldwin addressed the announcement with correspondence to faculty, staff, and families. He also indicated that buildings would be close with absolutely no admittance. Dr. Baldwin stated an all-call went out on March 16, 2020 at 8:45am as well as an email that confirmed that Fairhaven Public Schools would be out for the 3 weeks. Dr. Baldwin also indicated that on March 16 he met with the town of Fairhaven at 9am to discuss plans. It was decided that the Administrative Center would be closed to all visitors however, the staff would be allowed in to work. He also stated that Zoom meeting would begin taking place. The teams began coming up with resources and enhancement activities ideas. He also indicated that DESE is creating statewide plans for schools to use as resources. Dr. Baldwin indicated that we are following the state's lead and the state also partnered with WGBH in Boston for programming. This programming will be broadcast on both TV and the internet by DESE. The state is also trying to utilize Telemundo and Univision for the ELL population. Dr. Baldwin also indicated that DESE will be releasing a letter to families and it will be released to our families as soon as possible. Dr. Baldwin also indicated that the

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resources and learning activities are not intended to replace a school day. He also wanted everyone to know that we will do what we can, as best as we can.

Dr. Baldwin also continued to speak regarding the timeline of events. He stated that on Tuesday, March 17 there was a conference call with the State. They discussed equity in connectivity for all students. He also stated that they have a Zoom meeting with the Executive Administrative Council. The Commissioner of Education has set forth a regulation so that makeup days will not exceed our scheduled 185<sup>th</sup> day. Dr. Baldwin stated that the last day of school for the 2019-2020 school year will be June 22, 2020 for students and June 23, 2020 for staff. There will be no Saturday makeup days and April Vacation will go on as scheduled. He also stated that this has been communicated to everyone.

Dr. Baldwin went on to discuss nutrition services. He indicated that we are not eligible for reimbursement as we do not meet the 50% threshold for free & reduced lunch. We have begun providing breakfast and lunch for Fairhaven. We are tracking our usage and costs.

Mrs. Kohler spoke and commended the efforts of Felicia Connelly and her team regarding the nutrition program. She stated that they were practicing social distancing and tracking names. She also stated that we may qualify for some reimbursement as Hastings fits the eligibility.

Dr. Baldwin stated that the safety and health of everyone is first and foremost. He also discussed that we are working through the hierarchy of needs and number one is safety for all and number two is how can everyone be fed. The next subject he discussed was how everyone work remotely and maintain their pay and the only ones who can make those decisions is the School Committee. He stated that the decision to have this School Committee meeting was to take votes and update everyone on what is going on. Mr. Monroe recused himself at this time. Mr. Monroe turned the meeting over to Ms. Kuechler to chair in his absence. Dr. Baldwin stated that he met with the president of the Fairhaven Educator's Union. The motion regarding staff work and pay that is being presented has been drafted by legal counsel. Ms. Kuechler read the motion in its entirety. Mr. Veitch motioned to approve, Ms. Powers seconded, motion approved, unanimously, 4-0.

Dr. Baldwin discussed the long term outlook. He stated that the superintendents do not have any more power to return or not return. He stated that this could end on April 3<sup>rd</sup> or it could extend, although he stated he has no knowledge of an extension at this time. He stated that if this happened, MCAS for grades 3-8 would be cancelled and the focus upon return in May would be on teaching and learning. He also stated that the school year could end as school could be closed for the rest of the year. He also discussed the 3 options regarding MCAS. He stated it is possible that they could move the testing windows, they could possibly reduce testing, or they could possibly waive testing for the year. Currently, the grade 10 MCAS have been postponed and at this point will be rescheduled. He went on to discuss the 2019-2020 calendar and stated that unless the School Committee chooses to change this then the calendar will remain the same and we will have April vacation. We are trying to give clear direction and not have added stress.

Mrs. Kohler reviewed the impact of everything going on and the timeframes. She indicated the focus on connecting the community. She stated that the lead nurse has been great with communications. The plan was to get food up and running and meet with the administrative staff with Zoom and Google Hangouts. She also went over the "What Now?" She stated the next two weeks will be positive messages to



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students from teachers and that they will have something from each content area about one hour per week for students. She also indicated that Erin Costa has created a survey regarding tech access and connectivity. She stated that this survey gives us an understanding of what Fairhaven needs and how we can meet them where they are at. Mrs. Kohler also stated that Erin is creating a site where all the content will be posted. Everyone is working on the content. She stated that the Commissioner is setting the hours for school. We are using Google Classroom to be able to see who has received information and who hasn't. We are also working on counseling sessions. She discussed the families that would be the most elevated in terms of stress - mostly little ones who are new to school and high school families in terms of graduation, college, etc. She stated that we are discussing credit or no credit if we can't finish as well as credit recovery for those who need it. She stated that we are trying to focus staff on bits of information at a time. We are also using Google forms for staff to reach out with questions.

Dr. Baldwin asked Mrs. Kohler to speak of the mindset and what the meetings were like with the staff. Mrs. Kohler said they were positive, happy to see each other, and that they are eager to stay connected to the community so the kids know they are still important. Dr. Baldwin said that people do not need to be bombarded right now. He said we are here to provide, but not overwhelm. He also stated that these plans were to begin on Monday. He recognized Mrs. Potter as being amazing for her efforts.

Mrs. Potter spoke regarding nutrition and what is being served for breakfast and lunch. She also acknowledges the community for volunteering to help, but we are trying to adhere to social distancing guidelines. She stated that there is food service information on the website. We are also doing updates via social media. She also acknowledged the tech staff as they have been troubleshooting remotely and coming up with a punch list and internet access options. She also acknowledged the cable access staff and town hall employees for their efforts as well. She said they are all working together to send one important message in a timely manner through social media. She went on to speak regarding the custodial staff and that they are working on deep cleaning. She also stated the playgrounds were closed effective Wednesday, March 18. We are also working with a translation company so that all communication is effective.

Dr. Baldwin stated that this is all brand new. He stated that we are trying to do what's right and morally correct. He wants us to lead, but acknowledges that this takes time and that we must do what's right for all. He stated that leadership doesn't have all the answers but we will try to address things with the information we do have. He mentions Advanced Placement and asks Mrs. Kohler to speak regarding that subject. Mrs. Kohler stated that they have a meeting scheduled on Monday about AP. They are working with the College Board as this affects the entire country. She stated that they are under the impression that they will be held online. There will be more information to follow and it will be communicated as soon as we are sure.

Dr. Baldwin stated that Mr. Mota sent over information regarding the counseling staff. He stated that Mr. Mota said that the counseling staff is concerned with the social emotional health and well-being of students and their families and how they can help. Dr. Baldwin said that we are working towards a plan for them as well. Mrs. Kohler mentioned they are also working on stress management resources and wrap around services for families in need as well.

Dr. Baldwin discussed athletics and drama. He said we do not have any answers on this. MIAA has pushed the start date to March 30. He also said that this is not spring break and families should not be

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suggesting captain's practices or clinics. Mr. Monroe stated that the MIAA has actually pushed it to April 27.

Dr. Baldwin also discussed high school seniors. He said that we are looking into credit recovery and meeting competency determinations. We do not have answers yet regarding graduation or junior day, etc. Counselors will be contacting kids and families who need credit recovery and make sure they are in line to graduate.

Dr. Baldwin discussed medications. He stated we are making plans to be able to safely get medications that were in the schools to families.

Mr. Monroe read the Warrant Law Ordinance in its entirety and explained how this affects the meetings and warrants to pay the bills during this time. He then asked for a motion to appoint Ms. Kuechler to sign on behalf of the School Committee during this time. Mr. Bueno motioned, Ms. Powers seconded, 5-0, approved, unanimously.

Dr. Baldwin discussed SpEd services. He said that Mrs. Sullivan is involved. He stated that schools are not required to provide services when schools are not in session. The state is putting out information for everyone and the number one priority is keeping everyone safe.

Mr. Monroe acknowledged the entire team for everything they have done. He stated the next meeting will be on April 8, 2020 however, the logistics are in the air including the date. He spoke regarding holding the public budget hearing and that it will be held remotely if we need to.

Mr. Monroe opened the meeting to Public Comment. He stated it will be 2 minutes per person. He also stated that we may not have the answers. He asked that everyone state their name and address and be respectful and patient.

The following people called in: Drew Furtado, Michelle Souza, Sonya Beausoleil, Scott Francis, Amber Roderick, Carol Tynan, Renee Bradshaw, Paula Jardin, Monica Landis. There were no questions from any of the callers. Comments received were positive and appreciative.

Mr. Monroe gave everyone the opportunity to speak. Mr. Bueno spoke regarding the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the situation. He spoke about relying on the process and we all need to try to focus on the present. We will get through it. He thanked everyone for their leadership and promoting what is best.

Ms. Powers acknowledged that we recognize how stressful this can be and that steady leadership is calming. She stated she is happy we are doing that. She said that what she has received from us so far is commonly worded guidance. She suggested we remain conscious of the fact that we should be easing the kids into this and that kids are missing each other. She also suggested using Zoom for the kids. She is appreciative of what we are doing.

Mr. Veitch stated that he is appreciative of the way we attacked priorities.

Ms. McKenna spoke and shared her appreciation. She stated that resources are important, and the we should all be safe. She spoke of taking it one day at a time and offered to help if we needed anything.

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Ms. Kuechler thanked everyone. She said this is a testament to how great and resilient the district is. She recognized the huge shift that this has caused. She acknowledged how open and willing everyone is to innovative options. She also stated that this is an opportunity to show how good we really are. She stated we have their support.

Mr. Monroe stated that every generation goes through something. This country has faced adversity before and we will get through it. Stay the course and thank you.

Dr. Baldwin spoke regarding putting people first. He stated that people need to trust us and we've got this. We will make mistakes, but things will be ok. We are grateful for the relationship with the town and we are all one.

Ms. Kuechler motioned to adjourn, Ms. Powers seconded, approved 5-0, unanimously.  
Adjourned at 5:40pm.



Robert Baldwin, Ed. D  
Secretary to the School Committee  
Fairhaven Public Schools