

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
Greenfield MA**

Note: This meeting was held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20.

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson-Mussad; (GJ); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Absent: None

Also present: Judy Houle, Interim Superintendent; Allen Himmelberger, TMS; Liz Lafond, MASC; school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

JW moved to approve draft minutes of February 10 and March 1, 2021. GJ 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW; Abstain – RW (absent March 1). Motion passed 6-0-1.

III. Public Comment

Doug Selwyn, Greenfield, expressed health concerns re: schools re-opening, questioned state government's motivation.

Melissa Webb, Greenfield, spoke in support of redrawing district map, desire to help.

Brittany Cooley, Greenfield, Four Corners parent, spoke re: parent survey, concerned that parents don't have enough information to decide in-person vs. remote.

IV. Reports

A. Chair – AP

Planning in process to return School Committee meetings to in-person. Challenging to find larger meeting space, meet health standards for public meetings. Working with GCTV to continue public access.

B. Superintendent – JH

Supt. Houle commented on long workdays, with progress coming as quickly as possible.

C. GHS Student Reports

Students S.T. and D.T. reported on GHS activities, including Polar Plunge, Taste of World Cultures, virtual Best Buddies. Winter sports concluded; football, cheer, soccer practices underway. Mayor will help promote food drive.

D. City Planning & Construction – SH

Under-road repairs to Sanderson Road, next to GMS.

Recommendation for School Committee to make earlier, more detailed presentations of capital requests to City.

E. Racial Justice Advisory Committee – GJ

Planning for evening forum. Welcome comments: racialjustice@gpsk12.org

F. Policy - GJ

Policy affecting online learning platforms on tonight's agenda.

Subcommittee in process of revising emergency cancellation policy requiring superintendent to seek School Committee permission for closures of 3+ days.

V. Business

A. Superintendent Search Committee – JW

JW recommended special School Committee meeting to plan criteria, strategy for search. Planning online community focus-group discussions, online survey. Selected 16 people for search committee, based on letters of interest, need for diverse representation. Strong community interest: twice as many had applied.

JW moved to approve the membership list for the Superintendent Search Committee, as presented. RW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

AP will schedule special meeting. Requested GPS website include superintendent search information. Advised smaller committee.

Liz Lafond, MASC, will schedule individual interviews with School Committee members.

B. Donation from Dean's Beans

AP presented \$500 donation to school food program from Dean's Beans, with thanks for their continued generous support.

SE moved to accept the donation from Dean's Beans. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Policy IJNDB

Supt. Houle introduced proposed changes to Policy IJNDB "Empowered Digital Use Policy," formerly called "Acceptable Use." Directs what students can present on-screen in digital classrooms.

Recalled incident of GHS students using confederate flags as avatars. Houle requested waiving first and second reading to allow quick implementation of this policy.

RW moved to waive the second reading of Policy IJNDB. GJ 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion:

- IJNDB-R are regulations detailing the policy. Important to consider, publish both together.
- Concern that expedited process doesn't allow think time; recognition that policy discussion has been delayed, need for quick implementation.
- Concern that regulations are at college-level readability. Houle will ensure "kid-friendly" version will be prepared for students to sign.
- Reminder that School Committee needs to approve the student handbook.

RW moved to endorse the proposed changes to policy IJNDB and regulations IJNDB-R and have the Superintendent develop changes to the regulations and instruct her as part of the student handbook review to translate into language that could easily be understood by students. GJ 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes - KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW; Abstain - SH. Motion passed 6-0-1.

D. Redrawing District Map: Goals and Timeline

- Complex, multi-year project needing community input
- Inequality between different elementary schools. Strategy to put all elementary students together at single schools by grade levels. Financial implications; effect on neighborhood schools.
- Request for comments from community via email: SchoolCom@gpsk12.org
- Suggestion for separate administration building, not at GMS.
- Need to include educational research – e.g., effect on students changing school buildings

E. Green River School Project

- School needs new heating system. City approved \$460K, about half of cost. GPS needs to find approx. \$430K in own budget. State funding requires it be used as school building.
- Referred to Budget Subcommittee.
- Recent history of building, repairs, delay due to pandemic; Student programs: K-5 elementary school; Math Science Academy; proposed alternative high school program.

F. Update on In-Person instruction

Supt. Houle provided overview of return to In-Person Learning (IPL), including:

- DESE Commissioner requiring IPL 5 days/week: – elementary April 5; middle school grades 6-8 April 28; high school TBA April. Remote/hybrid hours no longer count as structured learning time.
- Parents have option to continue remote learning for their children.
- DESE says 3-foot separation is adequate, no need for 6-foot separation.
- GPS has In-Person-Learning Command structure.
- Some in-person already happening: instruction for high-needs students, athletics, GHS AV Club.
- Daily 4: Mask, wash hands, stay apart, stay home if you don't feel well
- Mitigations: Staff vaccinations; school/classroom capacities; HVAC & air purifiers, grab & go meals; cleaning; pooled testing; transportation with capacity restrictions lifted but windows open, masks.
- Allen Himmelberger reported on pooled testing.
- Preliminary results of family survey

Discussion:

- State funding for pooled testing ends April 16. How will GPS pay for this?
- Disagree with state requiring IPL, but support GPS efforts to comply.
- Families do not need to apply for “waiver” to continue remote learning this year. Remote option fully available in GPS.
- If parents request later to move child from remote to in-person learning, lead time needed (4-6 weeks?).
- DESE grade-level timeline does not match GSP grade configurations.

SH moved to authorize the Interim Superintendent to request a waiver from DESE to delay the implementation of full-time, in-person learning for grade 5 until the middle school implementation timeline begins. GJ 2nd. Decision about 8th grade at GHS to come later. **Motion passed unanimously.**

G. In-Person Instruction: Policy EBCFA Face Coverings

SE moved to waive the first and second reading of Policy EBCFA Face Coverings and to approve the policy as presented. GJ 2nd.

- On agenda as part of in-person learning discussion
- Concern for unclear wording re: consequences

- Concern re: families' expense to provide masks
- Roll call vote: Yes - KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW; No - SH. Motion passed 6-1.**

H. DESE Program Review on April 5

Bad timing: Supt. Houle will request to reschedule not on first day of IPL.
Preparations will require work by Policy Subcommittee.

VI. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2) and (3): (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

RW moved to open executive session. 2nd SH. Motion passed unanimously.

Entered Executive Session at 8:13 p.m.
No intent to return to public session.

Meeting adjourned from Executive Session at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda: March 10, 2021
2. Minutes: February 10, March 1, 2021
3. Financial Reports (March 4, 2021)
4. Dean's Beans, donation letter, February 15, 2021
5. Policy EBCFA Face Coverings
6. In-Person Learning Command Center organizational chart
7. School newsletters
8. IJNDB Empowered Digital Use Policy
9. Addendum: Acceptable Use Policy for Students and Staff
10. Superintendent Search Committee list of members
11. IJNDB Empowered Digital Use Policy