

## SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD

March 23, 2021

Black Box Theater

7:00pm

**PUBLIC HEARING-** Hanlon announced beginning with public hearing to approve the CRRSA. and ESSER II funds. Supt. Gadowski indicated that is part of the Coronavirus Response Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, which Somersworth has been allocated \$2,267,700.15. Those are funds that can be utilized in variety of different way specifically related corona virus relief. He states in the near future, if accepted they will bring forward ideas and bids to the school board for consideration. Tonight, is public hearing to hear feedback from public and later tonight will be up to school board to accept those funds. Hanlon asks feedback from public to come forward. No one had input, and the board meeting commenced.

1. **CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Hanlon called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Upon call of the roll, the following members were present: Matt Hanlon, Steven Potter, Tom McCallion, Coty Donohue, Ed Levasseur, Gerri Cannon, Maggie Larson, John O'Brien, and Todd Marsh.
  
2. **COMMENTS BY VISITORS:** Elizabeth Kent of 8 Wilson St. read a letter from a community member who could not be present at the meeting, Rachel of 28 Myrtle St. indicates that she is done fighting this cause. She is done emailing school officials hoping they hear her plight. She is done with family struggles falling on deaf ears and their cliché remarks during present times. She is done purchasing new laptops for her children and seeing tears and disappointment from her children because she must leave them at home. She is done explaining to her children why it is okay for mom and dad to go out in society but not for them. She is done with stressing about absent notifications for all 3 of her children's schools because she is not home to monitor login, and the struggle to juggle 3 different school schedules that change constantly. She states that she is done begging school officials to help with her son's failing grades in high school, including having to involve the truancy officer because the principal ignored her request for support. She is done asking for in school options for her son, who has a learning disability according to his 504 plans, since last August with not much help. She states even if it was just for math because math online has been the most challenging. She states their solution has been to offer a minimum requirement diploma at the end of this year instead of helping. She is done with worrying about her son missing crucial hours at the automotive shop at the school's brand-new CTC because he is about the graduate, so it does not even matter now. He has missed out on all the opportunities, and she mentions especially wood working experience that our taxes paid for. She notes his time in public school is about the end and this year has been a total waste and he has been abandoned by the Somersworth school district. She states she will just have to settle with the minimum requirement diploma. She is done hoping the Somersworth Superintendent will give another 2-week update. She is done with searching for homeschool options or moving options. She is done with people calling her selfish and insensitive for wanting the best learning experience for her children. She states she is in coast mode now, has no fight in her and can only focus on kids daily immediate needs. She states it is because the board will do what they want despite the communities wants and need. Elizabeth Kent of 8 Wilson St. spoke on her behalf. She states she has stood up here for many months now for her kid's needs. She believes they need to be in school and socialize and need to live. She has been called selfish and evil because she wants more. She states people think she should be happy with two days given, but she is not happy, she states she wants more. She said her children need more and

she is not happy with these two days because as a mom she knows her children need more. She states she is not a teacher and never wanted to be one. She states if you need someone to deal with some blood, she is your girl. But teaching someone something, that is not her. She states she can honestly say without her children's teachers this year, who have been nothing short of amazing, they would be lost. She said the teachers are the only reason they have made it this far, not the school board and not the administration. She says they all have a long way to go, and she is tired, her children are tired. She is tired of fighting people who are not listening. She is tired of speaking up and petrified to stand up here and speak. But she knows she cannot stop fighting because no one else is going to fight for her kids needs other than her. The kids need to be in school, and not part time but full time. She states other schools have done it, and even other states with much higher numbers than ours. She states nothing holding back the little town of Somersworth but the school board. She indicates a month, and a half is all the children will get with the current plan, and that is not good enough. She states she wants more, and her children want more. She knows she is not alone in this fight, so the school board needs to stop ignoring the needs of children and the community. Mandy Demers of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street states that apparently people listen to this because she got an anonymous letter mailed to her house from a teacher that she thinks is sad. She is willing to share in a private setting what the teacher said as they were not comfortable saying it to the administration's face. Some of the board members have heard some of this because she has emailed them individually, but she has not spoken publicly about it and wants to get it on record. She states out of 365 days, her fifth-grade son was only offered in school learning 5 time total. She said that she sees the board's "it's a pandemic face." She states let she will present more numbers reflecting schools within a 5-7-mile radius of the city that have had full time in person instruction for all or majority of this year. In South Berwick, her niece has had over 100 days of in person learning as they have had their kids back in grades 1-5 since September compared to her fifth-grade sons 5 days in person this year. Her other niece in sixth grade in Rochester has had 80 days of in person instruction this school year compared to her sixth graders 12 offered in school learning days within 2 school years. She states the question to the board if they are okay with that. She goes on to say even Dover, who was with us among handful of districts made to alter reopening plans by executive order, had their grades K-8 back 5 days a week on 2/8. She states all these districts provided chrome book or iPad in case the kids needed hybrid model or revert to remote. She states this district has been virtual most of time and did not give children anything unless hoops jumped thru. She acknowledges funds went to cleaning supplies to keep the facilities clean and safe, but there were no kids in the building. She states she understands they were hard to find at beginning of this pandemic but wants to know one other district locally or statewide that did not pull it off before now. She states you cannot because there is not one. She indicates for the record this is not for her kids to get a chrome book. She states that we have had almost a whole school year to work on this and funds keep coming in, so what is the plan to help with technology and if there is not a plan, why? She states academic research shows remote learning is not as effective and is a detriment to mental health. She states the board got cc'd on citation for this and assume they all looked at this and indicates she is not just spouting things off. She states that she wants to be clear, she is talking about virtual learning as a modality, and not specifically because our teachers are doing it wrong. She goes on to say even the most robust virtual learning platforms are inferior for more kids, especially elementary age. She states they were told each building could take their own path forward and Idelhurst has their kindergarten in person four times a week. She states that science has shown it is time for children to be full time in person learning and they can safely do so. The state has shown how, as she has said before getting left behind compared to other students in seacoast area. She indicates this point teachers are half vaccinated, which is amazing, but nowhere in the science does it state they should be two weeks post second shot to be back to school. She states they are the last district to have grades K-4 back full time

in the whole state. She said at the last board meeting the board had a chance to change the course and they doubled down. She goes on to say speaking of the last meeting, she encourages the board to watch it back and look at their interactions. She notes if hostility and agitated physical posturing were presented in a classroom or professional setting that they saw in the meeting, it would be addressed immediately. She said when the board sees the children here tonight, and there are a lot, remember that if they can act civilly in an elementary school setting then the board can keep it together during a board meeting. Barbara Wentworth from Hawthorn Circle stated there was some misinformation from their gathering last week that she wanted to clear up where a group of students and parents held signs at Idelhurst that said, "We support school staff" "Yay for teachers getting vaccinated" and "I want to go back to school." She said her daughter never thought she would say those words, but she did. She said supporting the school and wanting to go back full time are not an opposition. She said you can support the school and love our teachers and want to go back to school full time because that is exactly how she feel. She is asking for phase 4 to begin on April 5, because we deserve a choice. She is in ward 4 and the numerous neighbors she has spoken to are desperate for their kids to go back full time. She tells the board to represent their word, not their personal opinion because that is what we voted for. She closes with stating it has been a very long year for every single one of us. She will always speak up for what is right whether popular or not. Her daughter, Emily Wentworth, overheard a conversation that she was having with her husband that she was unaware her daughter was listening too. She stated on social media after this display in front of Idelhurst people were calling her shitty, a total D-bag, stupid, and uneducated. She states people can think she is wrong and disagree- that is fine, but she states people can disagree and be respectful. She states we do not need to be cruel to each other. She urges people to be authentic, and there is no reason that we need to be disrespectful. She urges the community to conduct themselves as though our children are watching us because whether we think they are or not, they are. Nick Watson of 3 Albert Street started by saying he appreciates all the teachers have put in since remote learning started. He knows it has been hard and takes a lot of time and they have had to be creative. He states his kids want to be in school. He was also one of those parents sitting in front of the school last week and his children had signs that they made uninfluenced. His second grader had one that said, "It is easier in person" and his fifth-grade daughter had one that said "This is my life" with a laptop on it. He said this is how people and kids feel. He states if people are upset about that, they must deal with it, they are children, and this is how they feel. He states we are adults, and we had our education and our time to experience this, now it is time to think about the children. He said he is thankful for the Governor for letting our kids go back to school at least 2 times per week. His second grader is on an IOP and has been back to school less than 5 das, as has his daughter only been back 5 days. He appreciates that teachers got their vaccine but Thursday and Friday his daughter missed school two more days. He asks since the Governor put out the order what is being done for our students, besides sports, because it feels like nothing. He indicates the CDCs new guidelines of 3 feet apart have come out so what is the point of waiting now because it is more of a reason to go back to school. He states at those board meetings the members need to represent their constituents, not their personal opinions or their family's needs. He said that needs to be set aside. He urges everyone watching to wake up, realize what is going on, and speak up. He said anyone willing to fill these seats, he encourages them to do that. Michelle Nash 78 Wilson St stated that she is not going to be popular with everyone else who just spoke and knows there has been a lot of talk of tentatively the phase 4 schedule from the planned May 3<sup>rd</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>. Her daughter is a senior at Somersworth High School recently changed to attending classes 4 days a week a week. She states she does not know about anyone else but getting a high school student up in the morning is not easy. She feels it is especially important that students who have not had a full day of school or attending a full week to ease back into full time learning. She thinks the current plan for phase 4 will allow students and staff to

adjust slowly to attend school full time. She says waiting the extra 3 weeks will allow staff working with smaller class sizes to continue giving extra support to students if needed. She states April 5<sup>th</sup> makes it a big adjustment to students only attending in person 2 days a week and doubling length of school day for those in high school. She states since there was a recent schedule change that happened a few weeks ago, she thinks they need to wait until May 3<sup>rd</sup> to have everyone adjust. She works at Idelhurst and she wishes everyone could hear the joy from the staff walking back into building after getting the first vaccine. She says she feels confident that being in phase 4 two weeks after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose on May 3<sup>rd</sup> is the best decision. Amber Ridings 15 Ron Wyn Drive who attended the last school board meeting and was taken aback by what she witnessed and wants to applaud the Somersworth powers that be for allowing the teachers to receive a vaccine so quickly. Second, she wants to comment on idea that it would be shocking that at a school board meeting a request for in school learning came up to return on April 5<sup>th</sup>. She is surprised why that is so shocking. She poses the question that is that not the goal? At the time she is writing this, there were 26 cases and today there are 30 cases in Somersworth. She asks were we not told at the beginning of year the board would examine the plan every 2 weeks. She notes thank you to board members who keep coming back to this and keep up fight for our children's mental health and notes the community is them. She understands the board members want to wait until teachers are fully vaccinated but science has proven time and time again that is not necessary, and even the CDC has stated it is not necessary. Science shows that the vaccine is effective 10 days after the first dose. She notes high risk population have gotten the vaccine and transmission is so low that it is not unreasonable to go back to full time learning. She does not take this lightly as she is an elementary school teacher in MA at a school that has been "in the red." She states that they were teaching in person when there were hundreds of cases reported in their city daily. She acknowledges that there were a few times teachers and students have had COVID, but not once was it spread at their school since it was always spread outside of the school. She posed the question was quarantine an inconvenience, yes, but he states that is the model we must deal with now. She states hybrid is a challenge, and she has been teaching for 20 years and is putting in the most hours she ever has. She looks forward to having her students back on April 5<sup>th</sup> full time, and she will only be planning for one model. She said it is not just the vaccine that is an answer, and there are many other mitigation safety measures put in the schools and she is here to tell you they work. She said the board spent all this time making all the plans so let us put them to use. At her school's board meeting last night, something the mayor said struck her and it was that he would rather have the kids in school now because we know how to keep them safe. She said it is spring, and they are intermingling anyways, and if they are in school, we can keep them safe. She also understands it is more difficult to get the middle and high school back because departmentalization but asks if it is possible to bring back just elementary school now and work on middle and high school after. She wants an equal opportunity for in person instruction just like the rest of the schools have in the surrounding area. Carolyn Cafelle at 45 Otis Rd. who notes she has a 9- and 11-year-old. She states she is here to ask the school board to return the students to in person learning. She states when she moved to Somersworth, they bought a house intended to fix it up and sell the house before her children entered the school system. She indicates that they found an adorable house with a red flag, it was the schools, as looking at the school ratings it is not great. She stated word of mouth is not great and that should not surprise anyone. She goes on to say as they met people, they learned that reputations are usually unkind and untrue. She found out that the education of your children depends on how invested the parent is. She states she is invested in the town, she is involved, and he is here for Somersworth. She said looking at the board she thinks it is hard to say they are here for Somersworth. She states back in the fall they sent surveys looking for data that ended up showing parents wanted in school learning. She indicates they asked for that data that has been ignored, and what the board has done is largely inconsistent with what a majority of

what the constituents want. She has watched kids leave their schools for private school or homeschool. She asks how do you think these parents will reflect on Somersworth schools. She reports the CDC has changed the contact precautions from 6 feet to 3 feet, and teachers have had their first vaccine. She notes everyone up here has admitted that in person learning is far superior to remote or hybrid teaching. She states we know teaching is easier in person and teachers want to go back, parents want to go back, and teachers want to go back. She asks what are we waiting for, and how long does the board want our kids to be put last? She states her family believes in this town and the schools but please let our students, teachers, and administration do their work of keeping Somersworth proud. Taylor Cafelle at 45 Otis Rd. states that remote school has been hard for her and math especially because it is a new way to do it. She said it is hard because she does not get consistent help. She said she only gets two days a week and so far, only 4 days in school. She states everybody is having a hard time. She says that she wants the school board to know that and need more options. Ashley living at 92 Rocky Hill road stated that she has a 10-year-old in fourth grade and six-year-old in kindergarten. She will keep this short and sweet because she knows some of you, stressing not all the board members, but some of them do not have the community's best interest in heart, just their own families. She said since the beginning of the school year, the school board has not lived up to word of updating every 2 week leaving families very much in dark and with little answers and more questions. She indicates it was stated at last board meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> that it is disappointing that we have had course of action that was clear but are looking to switch gears mid-stream. She reiterated, a course of action determined in the best interest of some of the board members and their own fears rather than community. She said it is disappointing to kids that the board is dragging its feet and makes it clear that in person learning is not a top priority. She also stated that it was said moving forward does not come without sacrifices and challenges, much like most things in this world, but again our kids have had to sacrifice more in the last year academic, mentally, emotionally than any children their age should have to go through. She states it is time to start making sacrifices for our kids and give them some normalcy for the very short remainder of the school year. She said it is a little sad and a little embarrassing to see how some of the board members have pushed thru challenges to push thru sports, but not academics that will benefit all students more in their lives than the few student athletes that will leave and go pro. She urges the board to let us get kids back to school for future of this town. Sophia at 92 Rocky Hill Rd. stated we are all board of doing school at home and school should be about experiencing all the little things. She expressed you will learn more with teachers around you and talk to you and explain it better whatever it is. She said something that was hard for her was not interacting with other people which makes school board and sad.

### **3. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

#### **Removal of items from the Consent Calendar**

##### **3.2 Approval of Consent Calendar**

##### **3.3 Minutes from the Somersworth School Board meeting March 9, 2021**

##### **3.4 Discussion Summary of the Somersworth School Board Ed. Prog. & Community Outreach Committee March 9, 2021**

Motion made by O'Brien to accept the consent calendar as presented, seconded by Marsh. Motion unanimously passed.

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Superintendents Update:** Supt. Gadomski noted there are a few quick comments, but most of what he has to say will coincide with the reopening remarks later in the meeting. He said as they move thru the year and planning for more in person and remote learning opportunities, they are spending a great deal of funds keeping staff and kids safe. He mentioned they have purchased additional desks for the middle school, they are replacing tables so students can distance further, and obtaining plex dividers throughout the district in all settings. He indicated one of the situations they need to use funds for is to rent a storage unit or two between now and end of year because getting additional desks means they need to move furniture, like bookshelves, to make as much room possible in the classrooms. He stated they are also in process of purchasing picnic tables for high school to have students outside distancing in the nicer weather. He said they are basically trying to get as much space in building as possible. He mentioned another area they are spending time and funds on is that they anticipate gaps in learning and remediation that needs to be done, so one opportunity they have is to create a more robust in person summer program. He requested Lori Lane to speak regarding the plan now. Lane indicated it is still in the planning process, and summer school is something they offer every year but this year they are trying to expand how to approach it differently. She noted grades K-8 will have a 5-week program, and they are looking to expand special education, ESOL, Title 1. She remarked about expanding the SYC as there is a lot of enrichment needed to engage the students socially and for project-based learning. She said they are hoping to use additional funds that were mentioned during the public hearing had hearing to provide additional staff, bussing, and support services. She stated they are expanding high school summer program, and she has spoken to Principal Tebo about this and finding other options for credit recovery. She stated her team has met every Monday for many weeks now in preparation for this and more information will be coming out in the next few weeks. Supt. Gadomski noted those are the types of opportunities that conversations will continue so they can expand and have more robust learning for the summer and fall as well. He wanted to thank everyone that organized and assisted with the vaccination closed pod on March 17<sup>th</sup> for all staff. He especially pointed out the Seacoast Public Health representatives, Chief Kramlinger, and their school nurses. He said as of right now they are planning for the second vaccine on April 16<sup>th</sup> for a closed pod for the entire staff in one day. He said that is a Friday, and they may need to make some adjustments and do a remote day on that day to ensure the entire staff get vaccinated at one time in one day.

## **5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **5.2 Standing Committees:**

1. Budget & Revenue – Not Met
2. Buildings, Grounds & Transportation – Meeting 4/13
3. Educational Programs and Community Outreach – Not Met
4. Legislative Advocacy – Not Met
5. Policy Committee – O'Brien stated that they do have a couple of items up for second reading tonight and met this evening prior to this meeting. He said they went thru several policies related to nursing staff considerations. He said they are reviewing the back log policies still needed from prior NH School Board Association dating back to 2019. He mentioned there are about 30 to go thru and they will be meeting twice a month in April and May to get thru the backlog as quickly as possible. They are prioritizing those related to nursing, things required for creating student handbook, or legal in nature from the NH School Board Association.

6. Joint Commission of City Council – Hanlon reported that they discussed the school advocacy funding, and the SCU agreement with Rollinsford and that financial impact. He mentioned that the SYC subcommittee will come to the next board meeting to report on that.
7. Joint Building Committee (JBC) for City Bonded School Projects- Not Met

5.3 **City Council Update:** Don Austin reported that there are a couple things to update. He said budget ordinance 1320 was introduced and tabled. He said the council will be presenting the budget to public hearing on April 5th at 6 p.m. prior to normally scheduled council meeting. They will then bring it to workshop on April 12th to discuss the budget in full and hopefully take final action by end of April but certainly be deadline end of May. He also noted there was recreation department unanimous support for use of Malley Farm softball field while the normal one is under maintenance.

5.4 **Re-opening Update:** Supt. Gadomski reported there is updated timeline information in the packet received tonight. He stated from the beginning the administrative staff's main priority is to increase opportunities for in person learning, and they will continue that conversation ongoing. He reported his team is trying to deal with not only the safety measure, but the logistics. He expresses they need to have enough staff to have cohesive and robust academic delivery. He stated presently in each building they are having students 2 days a week and Kindergarten 4 times a week throughout the district. He also stated food service delivery is being conducted with 2 locations for remote pick up and food service operations for students in person. He stated as they look forward, there are challenges to consider when looking what to do next and how they can do it in a safe manor. He reported that on April 5<sup>th</sup> grades 6 and 7 will be 4 days a week, and grade 8 they are looking into 3 or 4 days a week. He said on April 7<sup>th</sup> they are looking for additional target days for students in Maplewood. He reported on April 16<sup>th</sup> is scheduled for the second shot for staff in a closed pod. He said presently the biggest challenge of many is that he has 20 staff members on an alternative plan because of MOA. He said 17 of those staff have said they would come back after the second vaccine. He said going from 20 down to 3 will mediate that staffing concern. He also pointed out that this does not consider where "life happens" as there are maternity leaves, paternity leaves, and has had open positions for most of the school year. He pointed out he has already had to move staff around to cover gaps. He said the conversations will continue with his administration team on how they can get more kids in the school in a safe manor and how soon they can do that. He said ultimately phase 4 will be as planned on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Marsh said he will go thru the memo provided and noted with respect to Idelhurst, he sees preschool has two cohorts coming in 2 times a week and it appears the administration is looking for opportunities to expand that. He is not looking for exact dates but wants to know what an expected timeline is the administration team is looking into for the next 2-3 weeks to increase that, and other grades as well. He states he is seeing middle school is expanding to 4 days for grades 6 and 7 and 3 to 4 days a week for grade 8 which he is pleased, but his question is more for elementary levels. Supt. Gadomski states regarding preschool expansion that why they have done so far is as they get more kids coming in as parents get more interested and juggle handling protocols they will evaluate on weekly basis. For all levels respectfully, they will have to have a remote option as well as in person because in each level there are several parents not comfortable sending their kids to school and this doubles the workload on the staff, which will remain for the rest of this school year. O'Brien stated that the first thought that came to his mind when talking about summer school option is when you find yourself in a hole, you should stop

digging. He said he will not rehash all the facts, data, and the studies because he said people have already discussed that here tonight, and he can talk about this for hours. He said everyone has talked about the effectiveness of the multi-layered safety approach within schools, the struggle of students learning online, the complexity and constant disruption of hybrid models to students and staff. He points out there is 7 different schedules in their packets and 3 updates to that. He said they have seen declining enrollment, increase absentee, major negative impact for mental health leading to nationally significant increase for emergency room visits to children up 25% to 30% showing impact on social and emotional wellbeing. He stated they see the inequality towards the minorities and marginalized community in our district and there are legal concerns with not returning to in person learning. He points out that none of that is unclear or in dispute because it is supported by facts and data. He poses the question so why are we not in person learning, and states about 90% of the city is asking that question including teachers, parents, and kids. He states he is trying to understand this and understand the point of view of the administration. He believes it comes down to a management decision, not an educational one. He said it is one fundamental principle of organizational capacity and he does not dismiss that. He goes on to say that with the mix of in person and remote today we have 80% to 90% of people opting into in school learning but they are only there 40% of the time roughly. He said when phase 4 comes to light it will be 90% of the people opting into in person, and that changes the mix. He said there are real risks there about gaps of in person staffing coverage that are outside those people's control, but this is a management issue. He is not placing blame saying this, but it is a fact. He notes every district employee regardless of health have had to deal with unprecedented stress and they cannot eliminate health issues and reduce their anxiety and should be empathetic as a district. But he states the current plan prioritizes the mitigation of those operational staffing gaps over all that litany of issues that we have heard from people today, my outline, and supported studies and data. He said the recommendations are not wrong but are misaligned. He knows staffing is important and will have a real impact to education and staff's ability to do their jobs and the administrations jobs, he is not dismissing that, but notes it is a matter of what is the higher priority. He further points out the data shows the downside of hybrid and remote learning and the fact that thousands of schools and hundreds in NH have successfully gone in person learning during the pandemic. He indicates clearly that the priorities of the current plan are not aligned with the with priorities of Ward 3 constituent who he represents. He says as a board it is our responsibility to correct misalignments and provide direction to the school district administration. He notes we do this all the time in every meeting whether it be sports guidelines, when to build a fence, calendar approval, etc. He notes his motion in last meeting was not an overreach or out of order and his responsibility to uphold oath of office advocate for Ward 3. He said it might have been a little of an unwelcome surprise for some, but that goes to show how misaligned we really are as a city and a district. He is asking to put another motion forward.

Motion is made by O'Brien to amend the current back to school schedule and move phase 4 up from May 3<sup>rd</sup> to no later than Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Levasseur.

Larson states that would like a definition of phase 4 because in the packet it says all students back to school phase 4. She asked Supt. Gadomski for guidance asking if it would be any hybrid remote, full days, etc. Supt. Gadomski states that phase 4 all students back 5 days a week and because of the emergency order there would be an opportunity for remote learning for students not choosing to come back to in person. Marsh asks if they need a motion to suspend rules for Supt. Gadomski to speak



and Hanlon advised they had legal clarification they do not. Supt. Gadomski further stated that he wants to say that he could not disagree more that the administrations motives were misaligned and meaning for making these recommendations were misaligned. He stated to be honest he finds that insulting. He said the staff and administration have had countless hours of discussions on what is best for all students and trying to reach those goals. He acknowledges there is a management aspect and challenges come with that, he will not deny that fact. He states he thinks with every single conversation and with all the administrations extensive experience in the field and their thought process is what can we do for the kids with what is available to us in the middle of a pandemic. He said as much as he would like to sit here and say the pandemic is over, it is not, and they have those challenges that come along with that. He states he knows everyone is frustrated, he states he is frustrated, and everyone wants kids back in school. But he notes the challenges they are experiencing are not going to go away and although he certainly appreciates everyone's opinion and thanked them for showing up and being a part of the process, he has also heard from countless parents who are asking for the complete opposite and want to continue the course. He reiterated that every conversation has been and will continue to be what is best for the children. Potter stated that he will be right up and front, thank you to everyone who spoke, there is no right and no wrong and we all have our priorities, and it is a very delicate situation. He states he will be voting against this because he is a staunch proponent that we voted in January on a revised plan that passed to look at this methodically, look at priorities, and make sure each piece is working. And we have heard from Supt. Gadomski that this is on target and it is best to keep phase 4 on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Levasseur wants to thank everyone to who come and spoke, it is not easy. He stated that when they were discussing initially how to go about being remote, they said they wanted to strive for consistency, and we chose to keep people out of the schools for that reason. He is hearing loud and clear the impact that this long year has had on our children and had their on mental health and development. He notes he has friends that are teachers in other districts, family that have children, and he himself did remote learning in his secondary education did not do too well with that. He expresses he hears everyone loud and clear that kids do not do well learning online, especially math and it is not that easy. He notes during his educational journey, it was instilled to never settle for mediocrity, and he thinks that is what this motion does- it is striving for more. He did agree in January about some timelines they established but hearing loud and clear from his constituents that they want direction, he will be moving in that direction. Cannon states that she is struggling with this because she knows what they have all agreed to as a plan makes sense. Her concern is that if they move this forward, they will not have enough teachers or space. She indicates they recently found out the guidelines from CDC moved to 3 feet but there is still that concern of will they have enough space for all the teachers and even then, will they have enough teachers. She believes if they make this choice tonight for the plan to move forward, then they will not serve their students and she is voting to keep the plan the way it is. McCallion states he understands the situation, he has a child in high school. He notes that you must take a step back and put your school board hat on here and parent hat on when at home. He states what he loves here more than anything is there are children here and they are seeing democracy in action. He notes that we have people attack people up here and make it look personal, it is not personal. He said they do what they do for the community. He notes that he never had son play football yet coached for 10 years because he loves the kids and seeing what they do. He acknowledges is not about sports, but sports do play a factor in developing our children, it is about school, and he expresses that is why he worked hard to get on the school board and worked to do things for building in grounds. He notes the school is much better after his sixth year being on this board and that is a testament to staff and all the people who work hard and attend meetings. He said he is sorry that Supt. Gadomski is frustrated because he is frustrated, and it is not right. He notes we are not listening to him. He notes Supt. Gadomski is trying to

do things methodically and right. He knows there are teachers out there that are upset and do not like him, but the goal is to keep these great teachers to help our children flourish as the years go on and it is frustrating because to him this is not something he wanted to go forward with tonight and he believes they are on right path already. He notes the huge enhancement to summer programs and that everyone is trying to make those steps to catch up to what the students have missed and to rush things is the wrong action. Overall, he notes he is glad the kids are here and get to see this in action and hopes it goes the right way, but he understands. Donahue notes he has gone back and forth on this as well. He noted when member O'Brien made the motion, he supported it because he wants to get kids in school faster. He noted when they had workshops to come up with this timeline, he was against phase 4 and vocal about it as he wanted to be more aggressive. He said that is not the direction they went but with that he thinks under the current plan they are moving in the direction to get all the kids in the school for phase 4. He said he thinks it is easy to say 90% want this and he believes 90% to 100% of people want their kids in school and want things to go back to normal. But he thinks saying 90% of people want these 3 weeks to move up is not necessarily correct. He said he has heard from staff, teachers, administrators, and parents and there are mixed views about changing the timeline. He thinks everyone feels it should be kids first and this plan is keeping that in place. He notes there is a plan to keep kids in but there are other things that are easily being minimized by a lot of people. He said there needs to be a balance between staff and students and if you want to put students first then look at who is taking care of the students. He answers it is the staff, so their needs must be met too, and he reiterates that there are 17 staff members who will come back with the current plan for phase 4 but will not if it is 3 weeks sooner. He thinks another thing minimized is the vaccine piece. He states the CDEC guidance does talk about 95% efficacy after the first shot, but it also talks to the point of being fully vaccinated. He states he does not put it past the staff members of anyone to make medical decisions for themselves until they are fully vaccinated. He said that because of this change school operations will be affected negatively more, as they are even now where staff and building needs must shift from planning their current curriculum to another change. He said that they have had this timeline for a few months, and he does not disagree it is impossible to change it, but at this point it is not where he is at. He reiterates he is getting strong feedback from professionals that they as a board pay to run the districts that are in the mud of it every day in the buildings and running the school. He stated he knows parents are in the mud on the other side and he does not minimize that either. He says that hearing from professionals who are begging to stay with this plan because if you do not it will impact this and that, he does not want to breeze pass those things and just have the administration and staff figure it all out. He said they have already figured a lot out this year already. He notes he is not being accusatory or minimizing what people are expressing but notes we must realize all the points and because of this he is going to vote no. Marsh states he has acknowledged the totality of challenges from remote learning to in school learning. He said he knows the challenges on health and logistic concerns of in school learning; and the academic, mental health, and financial insecurity concerns of remote learning which affects children's most basic psychological and safety requirements including in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. He notes this includes friendship, personal connection, food, and housing security. He notes all this circles back to academic performance. He states that we are a nation and a community of majority rule, but also one that listens and does not dismiss the thoughts and concerns of the minority. He notes in many cases, and he suspects all are aware, that laws are written to protect minority in certain situations from being ignored. He said no doubt the increasing drum beat of increasing in school learning is worrisome to some with return to school concerns and it may no doubt it seems insensitive. He notes history is full of noteworthy leaders who have voted against the trend of public opinion. He states now that being said, he is going to vote for his constituents, and will vote for Taylor and for Sophia tonight. He said he respects the management of the administrators and

knows it is not about motive, and he is confident administration's motives are good. He notes as a resident said earlier that 80+ percent indicated in that survey they wanted to go to in school learning and they may perceive the board of being wrong right now. He notes that they have a right to be what they perceive as wrong. He respects those who are voting no for the reasons stated, but he will vote for his constituents including those who spoke tonight. Larson notes that in the fall she advocated for children to be back in school. She said 87% of students are coming back to in person learning and wants to know how they are doing. She said it is a high percentage who want in person learning and her focus is on the students and asking and wanting to hear if they do better in person, are they thriving, are they achieving more in person, or is virtual satisfactory. She notes those answers are really everything that they should ask themselves. She asks if she should be one of those people who should not ask for more despite the kids thriving in school. She acknowledges there is a staffing concern, and it is real, but she will advocate for what makes the students thrive. Levasseur notes that regarding the concerns about space and staffing, he notes it is lucky that we have had amazing weather and hopefully it will continue. He notes that the Festival Association has great resources like pop ups and picnic tables, and we could potentially make an outdoor learning environment. He notes along the lines of staffing they discussed in the prior meeting about an opening that it was reported they have had the most applicants ever for a position in the school district, and he believes that shows that people want to work for Somersworth and a testament to the school district and the community. O'Brien notes he wants to make one final comment after hearing everyone speak. He notes he meant no disrespect to Supt. Gadomski or any of the administration and he did not choose his words carefully. He notes that they need to balance the needs of the staff and having the capacity to educate the kids in person with the concerns that are critical, and he would even say creating crisis for the students. He wants to apologize for any offense, that was not his intent. He said he wants to point out there are things that we have not talked about, which is how did the other schools do it. He goes on to say our concerns are not unique and every single school in the country has had to do the same thing. He has not heard local stories that schools are saying "this did not work." He reiterates there have been no failures, just challenges and intermittent adjustments to overcome. He notes that we have some of the best administrators, staff, and schools in state, we are award winning. He notes so with this exceptional administration and staff have we not overcome this. He has more confidence in everyone. He believes three weeks is three weeks that we would cut this crisis short. He states he does appreciate everyone's different opinions and holds much respect. Supt. Gadomski notes that he has had many professional conversations with colleagues throughout the state and he has asked them for a "golden nugget" answer on how to deal with this situation and he said he gets back from many of them that nothing is working. He said if you are in it is not working, if you are out it is not working. He notes this is a pandemic and it is extremely difficult. He notes he has heard horror stories of thirty or fifty kids in a cafeteria with a supervised adult and a teacher streaming for instruction. He asks are they in, yes, but then they are in and out and quarantining. He notes all these things were discussed by the administration in this district to make their current plan, and furthermore he states that other superintendents have reached out to ask what they are doing because it seems to be going smooth with what they have done and are getting praise from his colleagues because of it. He notes it is not perfect, nothing is, and he notes every single school in the district is struggling in some way. He notes none of us asked for this or chose this and he firmly believes the administration is doing an outstanding job and making the right decision. Larson asked Supt. Gadomski to define what working means. Supt. Gadomski notes that whether in or out there are gaps in instruction, supervision, academics. He said when he says "working," he looks at entire picture of a child and has been asking his colleagues around the state what is and is not working. He stated he has seen the news and heard reports of things

working in other places, but when he hears feedback from colleagues, they report a list of things that do not work. He notes they do not take this lightly and believe they are on the right course.

Roll Call- Hanlon N, Potter N, McCallion N, Cannon N, Donahue N, Levasseur Y, Larson Y, O'Brien Y, Marsh, Y.  
Motion failed.

## **6. New Business:**

**6.1 Long term automotive substitute request:** Supt. Gadomski notes in the packet there is a request where the current automotive teacher needs to be out, and they have a pretty good plan for coverage except for one block. He said the board has a policy that long term substitutes are paid at a rate of \$95 a day. He is asking for consideration to waive that policy and pay a first-year teacher per diem salary for that block which would be \$67.06 for that block. He states that this is an experienced educator, and this requires specific skills, and it would solve a big hole. He asks for a motion to suspend rules.

Motion to suspend rules made by Donahue and seconded by Potter. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the long-term automotive sub request- made by Levasseur, seconded by Donahue. Hanlon requested any discussion, of which there was none.

Roll Call- Hanlon Y, Potter Y, McCallion Y, Cannon Y, Donahue Y, Levasseur Y, Larson Y, O'Brien Y, Marsh, Y.  
Motion passed.

**6.2 Phase 4 Re-opening discussion:** Supt. Gadomski stated most of this was discussed thru the other agenda items. He wants to say again that the staff and administration are continuously holding conversations about adjusting and improvements to be ready for May 3rd. Marsh notes he noticed from the beginning it has been tentative and asks Supt. Gadomski to be clear if we are on track for that date. Supt. Gadomski reports they are on track. Larson notes that we have all been over phase 4 but she would like to either make a motion or a suggestion to have a new business item to direct the superintendent to explore every opportunity to get the children back to school at any point in April if it is feasible. She notes there may be alternate ways or activities that might be possible in the buildings. She notes that she is not making a motion, but she does want the board to have some direction to the superintendent to explore every option to meet that goal. Hanlon asks to clarify if she is saying she wants to continue to push forward toward phase 4, as stated in the current plan. Larson said right now they are not at 50/50 quite yet but she wants to explore every option to bring as many students in as possible. Supt. Gadomski notes that has been the goal from the beginning and every discussion with the administration team every week has been around this goal and will continue to be the main topic on their agenda. He said they also are paying close attention to identifying kids that are struggling too.

### **6.3 Acceptance of CRRSA. ESSER II Funds**

#### **6.4 IC ESSER II Funds Program Assurances approval**

Katie notes that in the memo included in the packet it was discussed in the public hearing that they are due to receive 2.2 million dollars in ESSER II funds. She notes they would need a motion to accept the funds so they can investigate and bring back expenditure proposals to the board for acceptance at a later meeting. She notes it is required that the board accept these funds as revenue. Supt. Gadomski notes they need them to accept the funds and accept the assurances of the IC ESSER II funds, which is in item 6.4. He notes they want to get this moving forward so they can bring back recommendations, so if the board could suspend rules that would be great.

Motion to suspend rules made by Potter, seconded by McCallion. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made to accept CRRSA and ESSER II funds if IC ESSER II funds Program Assurances by Larson, seconded by Donahue.

Larson noted that she would like to see as much of these funds as possible to be put towards staff and students for new activities and pay for everything a student needs for things like sports, or extracurricular activities. She expressed really anything that would bolster the students and what they lost in the last year. Supt. Gadomski noted that they will be exploring a lot of options with these funds. He said they have been told they will get additional revenue, but he has not seen details on that yet. He assures his team will come back with some plans on what they recommend for expenditures at a later meeting.

Roll Call- Hanlon Y, Potter Y, McCallion Y, Cannon Y, Donahue Y, Levasseur Y, Larson Y, O'Brien N, Marsh, Y.  
Motion carries.

## **7 OLD BUSINESS:**

### **7.1 Policies for Second Reading:**

- ADC/GBED/JICG Prohibitions Regarding Use and possession of Tobacco Products, E-Cigarettes and E-Liquids in and on School Facilities and Grounds
- BEDC Quorum
- IHCD/LEB Advanced Course Work/Advanced Placement Courses & Stem Dual & Concurrent Enrollment Program
- KEE Website Accessibility and Grievance

O'Brien notes that there are the following policies: ADC/GBED/JICG Prohibitions Regarding Use and Possession of Tobacco Products, E-Cigarettes, and E-Liquids in and on School Facilities and Grounds; BEDC Quorum; IHCD/LEB Advanced Course Work/Advanced Placement Courses & Stem Dual & Concurrent Enrollment Program; and KEE Website Accessibility and Grievance.

Motion made by Levasseur to have BEDC policy read aloud, seconded by Marsh.

Roll Call- Hanlon N, Potter N, McCallion N, Cannon N, Donahue Y, Levasseur Y, Larson Y, O'Brien N, Marsh Y.  
Motion failed.

Motion to accept the policies as presented made by Donahue, seconded by Larson.

Marsh stated he appreciates all the hard work and been following it in the minutes and believes the members have given a lot of thought to and he will support it.

Roll Call- Hanlon Y, Potter Y, McCallion Y, Cannon Y, Donahue Y, Levasseur Y, Larson Y, O'Brien Y, Marsh Y.  
Motion carries.

**7.2 2020-21 Budget update:** Katie noted that the budget does not have a lot of updates, but members can see them in the packet. She notes they have begun the process of looking for long term substitutes to cover staff absences and the open positions. She notes two buildings have secured someone to come in from now until the end of the year, but they are still looking for subs and have ads for people interested. She said there has been no revenue changes since the last update. Hanlon asked for any questions or discussion, which there was none.

## **8 ACTION ITEM:**

**8.1 Meal prices increase:** Katie notes this was in the packet at last meeting. She stated as known we are required to increase the price of breakfast and lunches up by 10 cents each year to closer match what the federal government is reimbursing them. She states they are requesting the 10-cent increase for that reason, and a 25-cent increase for adults' breakfast and lunch. Larson asked Katie when the USDA vouchers providing free lunches expires. Katie reported it is thru the end of this year, which is December 2021.

Motion made by Marsh to accept the meal price increased as presented, seconded by McCallion. Motion passed with one opposed, Levasseur. Motion carries.

**8.2 Personnel:** Supt. Gadomski has two pieces for personnel updates. He notes the first is the announcement of the retirement of Elizabeth Tormet effective the end of the school year.

Motion made by Larson to accept Elizabeth Tormet's retirement effective the end of the school year, seconded by Donohue. Motion unanimously passed.

Supt. Gadomski notes that they were very fortunate to get the opening for the associate principal of the high school open early and had a great pool of candidates. He said it is open as of July 1<sup>st</sup> and would like to bring forward Liza Marckaridge for nomination.

Motion made by Donahue to bring Liza Mockridge's nomination for acceptance to assistant principal of the high school, seconded by Potter. Motion passed unanimously.

## 9 FUTURE MEETING DATE/SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS:

- April 13, 2021 Somersworth School Board Buildings, Grounds & Transportation Committee meeting 5:30pm
- April 13, 2021 Somersworth School Board meeting 7:00pm
- April 20, 2021 Somersworth School Board Budget & Revenue Committee meeting 5:30pm
- April 20, 2021 Somersworth School Board meeting 7:00pm
- May 3, 2021 SAU56 Board meeting 6:30pm
- May 11, 2021 Somersworth School Board Buildings, Grounds & Transportation Committee meeting 5:30pm
- May 11, Somersworth School Board meeting 7:00pm

Hanlon read off the upcoming future meeting dates. O'Brien added in the new policy meetings added in tonight of April 5th, April 19th, May 3rd, and May 17th.

## 10 CLOSING COMMENTS

**Visitors -** Michael Cafelle of 45 Otis Rd. notes he did not want to come up and speak tonight about going in or out of school. He notes we have dissected that, but something came up tonight that he cannot go home tonight and sleep without saying something. He first wanted to thank Lori for all of the summer programs and activities they have started to plan, and acknowledges it is a great opportunity. He notes as a parent and a person in the community he cannot help but feel insulted when he hears the administration say, "you can go to summer school, it will be great." He stated this is not a solution and they have earned their time off. He said he believes there are plenty of other parents that feel this way, and the idea of having a great summer program is not compensatory to kids being in school when they are supposed to be in school. Barbara Wentworth noted that this might be too late because it was a good question before they voted, but when it was mentioned that 6<sup>th</sup> grade will go full time, could the middle school go full time since they are in a different building than Maplewood. She said Idelhurst is back, and middle school and high school are getting there, but meanwhile the many 10-year-olds of grades 4 and 5 are not and she asked if it was space issue. She also mentioned it was stated that with staff not returning, she asked if in theory those staff could teach the kids that do not want to go back to school in person because she thinks that would be an awesome solution. She mentioned to her if 90% of people want it a certain way, and the vote went a certain way, it does not seem the two click together. She notes she is moving past it; everyone has had a horrible year with the pandemic, and it has hit every single person. She said she appreciated everyone working so hard, and everyone being there tonight at such a late hour. Ed Olsen states he is the president of the Somersworth Teacher's Association and he notes he would like to thank the school board for staying the course.

**Board Members-** O'Brien notes that he is obviously disappointed, but this is democracy in action. He said he will not talk about phase 4 or his opinion because he already has. He wants to thank everyone for coming tonight and remind folks watching at home too that this is democracy so what you see on CNN or Fox have very little effect on our lives, but what is happening here in the community effects your cross walks, fire hydrants, etc. He said he is disappointed in result of tonight's meeting, but he feels encouraged and pleased to see so much engagement and involvement and hopes that continues when there is not a crisis. Levasseur notes that he would like to request a future agenda item to include a phase 5 to help them learn from this and mentioned it possibly could be a workshop setting for the board. He said they should learn more about how to

adapt to education in the future. He wants to thank everyone who came out and said this is the best attendance he has seen. He notes he wonders though how many people would contribute had they had a Skype or call-in option. He stated he apologizes if he frustrated anyone at the prior meeting, but he sustained a concussion a week before. He ended his statement with he looks forward to moving forward. McCallion noted that he would like to thank the staff that is present for being there, and for Ed Olsen for stepping up to represent the teacher's union because that is not an easy role. He noted this is democracy, and one of the things he was shocked about is saying no to free money. He said he does appreciate the kids that stayed up late to be here, that is great. Cannon noted that this has been a tough year for her on the school board. She said her job at the state house is difficult but this more so and is most important. She said there are people on this board really concerned about getting kids back to school and keeping the community safe and healthy. She said these are decisions they do not take lightly and are very difficult because they must think about the entire community. She said the same is true for the rest of the state and the whole country. She noted she is working with a good group of people who work hard, and she is glad to be a part of this school board. She thanks everyone for sharing their words because they keep that in consideration and asked them to keep speaking to them. Marsh noted that he thanks the residents for coming to our space, meaning all our space, not just the boards. He notes democracy can be disappointing, but it is the best form of government that we have. He is especially happy the students came tonight, and think it was a great in person education. He wants to thank the school teams for being present as well. He said it was heartening to see our teachers and support teams receive their vaccinations. He said he lives close to Idelhurst and while driving by it was heartening to see our team get vaccinated. He said we move forward, and he is confident that this administration will continue to find ways to move forward as quick as they can as the current plan indicates. He notes he looks forward to starting out phase 4 on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He said he knows many find it insufficient, but it is good to have that date. Potter stated he wants to congratulate the Somersworth Co-Brown hockey team on their making it to the finals in Division II. He said regarding policy BEDC; he takes his role very seriously. He said he backed that policy prior to the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. He said he is very up front and honest and explained the week before the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, he had surgery and had notified the appropriate parties he would be excused. He stated BEDC is important as it means it is their duty to be there, and if he could have that night he would have. Larson noted she wants to thank everyone that came out and every student that is listening and self-advocating by taking care of themselves. She said she will quote what she has been looking at as a steering her views and decision making from the CDC published on March 19<sup>th</sup>. She read that the findings suggest virtual instruction might present more risk than in person instruction related to children and parents' mental health and emotional health. In March 2020 efforts to slow progression of the virus resulted in widespread closure of school buildings, shifts to virtual educational models, modifications to school-based services, and disruption in the education of children. She goes on to quote that changes in modes of instruction have created psychosocial stressors to children and parents, that can increase risk to mental health and wellbeing as well as exacerbate health disparities. She notes that she is pleading for us to come together and talk to each other. She said we can be together, and we do not need to exist in virtual world all the time. She asks that we all be present with each other, and that everyone take care of themselves. Donahue said he would also like the thank everyone for coming tonight, especially the kids that spoke, he notes they did a great job. He thinks that this pandemic has brought a lot of mental health aspect to light, but we were already in this mental health crisis beforehand. He said he sees that in his line of work firsthand and knows there is shortage of resources for people needing that support and encourages everyone here tonight and the community to continue to think about the aftereffects of this pandemic. He notes there is this light at the end of the tunnel, and we are certainly turning a corner, but this pandemic has brought to light things we can improve on moving forward that is within the school buildings and district. He stated he encourages people to reach out to other levels of government too regarding these things and their opinions. He said summer school is extending and that might not be the solution, but it is the first step of what comes next.



## 11 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Donohue to adjourn, seconded by McCallion. Motion passed unanimously.

Pending Board Approval

Somersworth School Board      Nonpublic session March 23, 2021 RSA 91-A:3,II,b,c

Motion by Ed, Second by Coty to enter nonpublic. Role call:

Matt – Yes

Tom – Yes

Steven – Yes

Gerri– Yes

Coty – Yes

Ed – Yes

Maggie – Yes

John – Yes

Todd – Yes

Motion passed 9-0.

Entered Nonpublic session at 6:46pm

Also Present, Superintendent Dr. Robert Gadomski

Assistant Superintendent Lori Lane

SHS Principal Chris Tebo

In nonpublic personnel matters were discussed.

A motion to exit nonpublic session was made by Coty and seconded by John. 6:50pm Roll call vote:

Matt – Yes

Tom – Yes

Steven – Yes

Gerri– Yes

Coty - Yes

Ed – Yes

Maggie – Yes

John – Yes

Todd - Yes

Motion passed 9-0

**Somersworth School Board Policy Committee**  
**March 23, 2021**  
**5:30 PM - 6:30 PM**  
**Mulligan's Grill, Somersworth Career Technical Center**

***Discussion Summary***

Present: John O'Brien (School Board, Committee Chair), Matt Hanlon (School Board), Lori Lane (Assistant Superintendent), Gerri Cannon (School Board), and Steve Potter (School Board)

**IHBAB – School District Criteria for Special Education Evaluations/Parent Request for Independent Evaluation**

This policy is being reviewed at the request of Student Services Director, Nancy Michaud. She has seen a slight increase in the number of parents who were requesting independent evaluations to assess their children's needs. Director Michaud is looking for a policy document that can be shared with parents that clearly outlines the school district's responsibility in this area, what the criteria are for evaluations, as well as when parents can request an independent evaluation.

The current policy was created by the legal firm Drummond Woodsum and is a policy that has been adopted by districts around the state of NH. Before bringing this policy for the Committee to review, Lori explained that she and Director Michaud consulted with both the attorneys at Drummond Woodsum as well as the NHSBA's attorney to confirm that the policy language still followed the law.

Lori explained although the current policy is still valid, it is awkwardly written. She reorganized the language to add clarity and separated out the evaluation criteria from the requests for independent evaluations.

The Committee asked for clarification on the necessary certification an evaluator needs. Lori explained that the NH Department of Education has a list of who can conduct different evaluations. Our school psychologists conduct many of our evaluations, though other specialists such as speech pathologists or vision specialists, for example, might be also involved in the process, depending on the nature of the student's suspected area of disability.

The Committee agreed to move the policy forward to the full Board for first reading at the next meeting.

**JLC – Student Health Services and School Nurses**

This policy was first reviewed with the school nurses before coming to the Committee for review. Though this policy has been recommended by the NHSBA to be updated, there are very few actual language changes. The most significant change is that school nurses, aside from their professional certification/license to practice, also now need to hold a NH DOE credential. All of our school nurses are NH DOE certified and have been for a few years. Lori explained that during her review with the nurses, they suggested that the language about the multistate license be added since it allows a nurse who lives in Maine or Massachusetts to practice in NH without having to obtain a separate NH license.

Gerri said that there currently is a bill in the House (HB 345) that is seeking to remove the NH DOE certification requirement. We will see in the coming months if this passes or not.

The Committee agreed to move the policy forward to the full Board for first reading at the next meeting.

**JLCE/EBBC – Emergency Care and First Aid (these are identical policies)**

This policy was also reviewed by the school nurses before coming to the Committee for review. Like JLC, there were no significant changes to the current language.

Lori explained that the nurses felt that the language on the CPR requirement for schools needed to be strengthened. A number of years ago, the law changed that required that schools have more staff than the school nurse trained in CPR so that someone would be available to perform this life-saving act at any school activity, including field trips. Coaches participate in CPR training. Currently, our staff are not required to be trained. Should they be? Who would do this training – the ambulance service? Perhaps, our nurses have provided this training in the past. The Committee asked if this training was budgeted for. Lori said that she did not think that it was. Perhaps it should be so that we can get as many staff trained as possible.

The Committee also discussed the optional language that the NHSBA provided on Narcan. A number of years ago, the district decided that it would not keep Narcan on site, primarily because EMS services are so close to all of our schools, that it was felt that it was best to have emergency services administer this drug if needed. The Committee discussed whether having Narcan in the schools would be a liability concern. The NHSBA recommends that districts consult with their attorney if they are going to have Narcan on site. The Committee also felt that this would be a larger conversation that should include EMS, Fire, and Police Departments. Lori explained that she wanted to re-activate the “active shooter” group this summer which included all of these stakeholders when it was meeting a few years ago. She felt that this conversation would be appropriate to bring to that group for further discussion.

The Committee agreed on the language presented. The policy will move forward to the full board for first reading at the next school board meeting.

**The next meeting\* will be on Monday, April 5, 2021, 5:30 PM. The agenda will be determined.**

*\*Members will participate electronically as allowed by the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. The Somersworth School District will be utilizing zoom for this electronic meeting.*

**The Committee set the following additional meeting dates: April 19, May 3 and May 17.**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lori Lane  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools*

Somersworth School Board      Nonpublic session March 31, 2021 RSA 91-A:3,II,b,e

Motion by Tom, Second by Coty to enter nonpublic. Role call:

Matt – Yes

Tom – Yes

Steven – Yes

Gerri– absent

Coty – Yes

Ed – Yes

Maggie – absent

John – Yes

Todd – Yes

Motion passed 7-0.

Entered Nonpublic session at 5:31pm

Also Present, Superintendent Dr. Robert Gadomski

Assistant Superintendent Lori Lane

In nonpublic negotiations were discussed.

A motion to exit nonpublic session was made by John and seconded by Coty. 5:41pm Roll call vote:

Matt – Yes

Tom – Yes

Steven – Yes

Gerri– absent

Coty - Yes

Ed – Yes

Maggie – absent

John – Yes

Todd - Yes

Motion passed 7-0

A motion to adjourn was made by John and seconded by Coty. 5:42pm Roll call vote:

Matt – Yes

Tom – Yes

Steven – Yes

Gerri– absent

Coty - Yes

Ed – Yes

Maggie – absent

John – Yes

Todd - Yes

Motion passed 7-0.

## **Somersworth School Board Policy Committee Meeting\***

**April 5, 2021**

**5:30 PM – 7 PM**

**\*\*In accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body was authorized to meet electronically. The Somersworth School District utilized zoom for this electronic meeting.**

### ***Discussion Summary***

**Present:** John O'Brien (School Board, Committee Chair), Matt Hanlon (School Board), Lori Lane (Assistant Superintendent), Gerri Cannon (School Board), and Steve Potter (School Board)

#### **NHSBA Special Policy Update March 2021 – Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process**

The Committee and Lori reviewed the overview provided by the NHSBA on the significant changes to a number of policies on student discipline impacted by the passage of HB 1558 in June 2020 and the subsequent changes to RSA 193:13. The major changes are as follows:

- Implementation of a multi-tiered system of support for behavioral health and wellness or MTSS-B.

Lori explained that the Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies program or PBIS is a MTSS-B system. The Somersworth School District has implemented this program for over 10 years. Matt noted that the district was recognized in the past statewide and nationally for its work in this area, particularly at Somersworth High School/Career Technical Center.

Lori said that PBIS is implemented K-12 and focuses on proactive behavior prevention/intervention through building a positive school climate and culture and setting building wide expectations for behavior for students and staff. When done well, it works and has been very successful in Somersworth. Because of several years of ongoing administrative and staffing changes, this is an area that Principal Chris Tebo is working to strengthen at SHS/CTC. Lori mentioned that a large part of Dana Hilliard's new SAU position next year is to support all of the schools in all aspects of student supports; including discipline.

There is new language that schools must have a "Code of Conduct" to outline behavior expectations. Lori said that each school has a PBIS behavior matrix and other supporting documents and information in their student handbooks. She will need to determine if what we currently have in our student handbooks will meet the code of conduct requirement.

- Heavy emphasis on students afforded "due process" at all steps of the discipline process.  
Students right to due process has been a part of the discipline process for many years. Lori explained that the new recommended language is much more intentional about the role of due process throughout the discipline process. Students need to be told what the infraction is that has been caused by their behavior and be given an opportunity to explain/respond/correct to what their behavior.
- Long-term suspensions are now limited in duration and when they can be levied.  
The Committee had a lengthy discussion about the implications of the language changes. As we continue to work through the new language, the Committee wants to make sure that it is clear what the superintendent's role is as well as the Board's so that neither over-reaches into the schools need to do to manage student behavior.

- Intervention plans are now required for students who are re-entering school after a long-term suspension. Intervention plans like this were typically created for students who had IEPs. HB 1558 now requires intervention plans for all students, not just those with identified special needs. Lori said that there likely could be some embedded costs associated with this if specific services, other programs, etc. are written into intervention plans. This is something that the Committee will be having further conversation about as Lori works through the details with the administrative team on how these plans will be implemented.
- Alternative education need to be provided for students who have been suspended in excess of 20 cumulative days. The Committee discussed the implications of this requirement and potential cost impacts. The goal of these changes is to keep all students engaged in their education regardless their behavior. As with most schools, 95-97% of students will never need this level of intervention. However, for the 3-5% of students with the most significant challenges, alternative education could mean a variety of in-district but also out-of-district options.

Lori said that she has had some initial conversation with administration about the possible role that remote learning could play as a possible alternative education option. There will likely be some cost associated with this, but it could be a more effective and less costly way for the district to keep students engaged in learning instead of sending students out-of-district.

After this general discussion, the Committee discussed the following policies that have been recommended for update:

#### **JJ – Student Rights and Responsibilities**

The major change is that policy JIA is being rescinded and replaced with JIC. This change is noted in the policy language.

The Committee agreed with this change. The policy will move forward for first reading at the next full Board meeting.

#### **JIA – Student Due Process**

Because all of the student due process rights language has been incorporated into policy JIC, JIA is being rescinded. Lori explained that when the Committee reviewed JIC, they will see that the due process language has been threaded throughout the discipline process.

The Committee agreed with the NHSBA recommendation to rescind JIA, but decided to hold off moving the policy forward for first reading until the other related policies were also ready to move forward.

#### **JIC – Student Conduct**

As the Committee discussed earlier in the meeting, the major language changes in JIC were focused on the requirement to implement a MTSS-B system of support. Our PBIS districtwide model meets this requirement.

The Committee discussed the fact that they would like to make sure that this policy is as comprehensive as it needs to be. Question – how many policies does this touch? The Committee recently moved forward new language for policy JICG on the Prohibition of Tobacco, e-cigarettes, etc., but the new JIC language doesn't "connect" to JICG. At the same time, we don't want to make the policy too cumbersome. Question – should the policy tie to other documents like the code of conduct for student athletes? For our next meeting, Lori will delve further into this and bring back recommendations.

#### **JICD – Student Discipline and Due Process**

Most of the changes in HB 1558 impact policy JICD. As mentioned earlier, the due process information in policy JIA is now found throughout JICD as the language states that due process needs to be implemented at all levels of the discipline process.



There are a number of levels of discipline that are identified in the language. Question – are these now “must haves”? Lori will need to research this further. For example, is “temporary reassignment” or in-school suspension required or is it a suggested level of intervention? “Probation” is another level that is in the new language but is not something that Somersworth currently has as part of its behavior intervention strategy.

In addition to the related discussion at the beginning of the meeting, there was discussion about the modification of expulsion for firearms. Fortunately, these incidents are very rare. The new language adds a lot of detail when a student can be let back into school should the school board wish to re-consider an expulsion for this reason. Lori will also get clarification on this language to see what is suggested and what is required.

**The next meeting\* will be on Monday, April 19, 2021, 5:30 PM. The agenda will be determined.**

*\*Members will participate electronically as allowed by the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. The Somersworth School District will be utilizing zoom for this electronic meeting.*

**The Committee set the following additional meeting dates: May 3 and May 17.**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lori Lane  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools*