

**Mansfield School Committee Meeting  
Minutes for Tuesday, January 26, 2021  
Virtual Meeting using GoToWebinar**

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An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. The open meeting session was called to order by Jenn Walsh at 6:04 pm.

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**Members Present:**

Kiera O'Neil (6:12 pm)  
Lynn Cavicchi (6:08 pm)  
Lauren Scher  
Jenn Walsh  
Linda Fernando (until 8:07 pm)

**Administration Present:**

Teresa Murphy, Superintendent of Schools  
Michael Connolly, Assistant Superintendent (Teaching/Learning)  
Edward Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent (Finance/Operations)

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**Members Absent:** None

***\*\*\* All votes taken by roll call vote \*\*\****

**Roll Call:**

Kiera O'Neil ---  
Lynn Cavicchi ---  
Jenn Walsh aye  
Linda Fernando aye  
Lauren Scher aye

**Public Speak:** Public Speak is open for 15 minutes for anyone who has registered via GoToWebinar.

None

**Communications:**

None

**Administrative Reports:**

PSATs: These were administered at MHS today. Any student not participating attended school remotely so all classrooms would be available for use to the grade 11 students. All administrators were brought in to proctor the classrooms and everything went very well. On April 27th, SATs will be given and we will have a similar approach to the day.

Student Learning Time: Mansfield was under the required number of hours as determined by a November DESE survey. As a district we looked at many ways to increase the number of student learning hours at each school and worked closely with union leadership to implement the following changes:

Robinson (grade 1 and 2): increased synchronous learning by 3 hours for remote students.

Jordan/Jackson: Increased minutes for each class

Qualters Middle School: Each day, three team teachers will remain fully synchronous for the day.

Mansfield High School: Over a two week period, each student will receive two synchronous class sessions in every class while at home.

Teresa is very appreciative of those that helped to facilitate these changes including the MEA leadership who worked closely with our administration on a new MOU.

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**High School Student Representative Report:**

Senior Ethan Bruce provided an update of happenings at MHS. The students have come a long way and have adjusted well to the modified schedules. Winter sports are going well even with all the changes. It is exciting to see college acceptances coming in for seniors.

**Approval of Warrant:**

	Goods & Services	Salary & Wages	Goods & Services	Salary & Wages	Goods & Services
	21023S	2021-12	21025S	2021-13	21026S
	12-8-20	12-11-20	12-22-20	12-24-20	12-29-20
General Fund	323,697.66	1,840,173.70	674,377.22	1,501,407.43	48,975.46
CARES	12,628.60		14,215.66	-	84,864.42
Medicare	-	2,323.69	-	2,323.69	-
Capital	50,976.94	-	15,379.24	-	-
Revolving	2,162.12	71,641.47	1,046.84	82,801.81	-
Food Service	14,174.59	22,192.84	30,645.33	19,543.26	461.90
Gifts	-	-	298.82	-	-
Student Activity	5,264.13	-	955.86	-	-
Grants	32,630.10	121,511.87	63,566.01	103,335.98	-
Prior Year	-	-	72,262.76	-	1,550.25
	<b>\$ 441,534.14</b>	<b>\$ 2,057,843.57</b>	<b>\$ 872,747.74</b>	<b>\$ 1,709,412.17</b>	<b>\$ 135,852.03</b>

**Motion** to approve Warrant memo dated 01-11-21 by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lauren Scher            aye  
Linda Fernando        aye  
Kiera O'Neil            aye  
Jenn Walsh              aye  
Lynn Cavicchi          aye

**Motion Passes: 5 - 0**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Summary of votes:

Date	1st	2nd	Discuss Y/N	Vote	Roll call Order
Open Meeting 05-07-20	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lynn C. Jenn W. Kiera O. Linda F. Lauren S.
Open Meeting 05-21-20	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lauren S. Linda F. Kiera O. Jenn W.

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					Lynn C.
Open Meeting 06-02-20	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lynn C. Jenn W. Kiera O. Linda F. Lauren S.
Open Meeting 12-15-20	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lauren S. Linda F. Kiera O. Jenn W. Lynn C.
Open Meeting 01-12-21	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lynn C. Jenn W. Kiera O. Linda F. Lauren S.
Joint Meeting 05-14-20	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lauren S. Linda F. Kiera O. Jenn W. Lynn C.
Executive Session 05-07-20	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lynn C. Jenn W. Kiera O. Linda F. Lauren S.
Executive Session 05-21-20	-	-	-	-	<b>Move to 2-9-21</b>
Executive Session 1-12-21	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lauren S. Linda F. Kiera O. Jenn W. Lynn C.

**Gifts:**

Superintendent Murphy announced a gift of \$50.00 from Leuders Landscaping. This money will go to our Robinson Playground fund.

**Old Business:****Committee Updates:**

Audit: No update

CIP: Continued discussions. Next meeting is tomorrow night with the entire town group to discuss priorities.

Budget: Met with Town to get a good sense of where our budget stands. Group will meet again in late February. We are at the very beginning of the process and are waiting on state financial numbers.

Facilities: The group met last week. Custodial staff has done a great job keeping up with cleaning; An initial review on the Robinson roof replacement project has been completed; check in stations at

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the schools are on target; the QMS gym floor was refinished and looks amazing; MSBA applications will open soon and we will begin our RFPs for boilers and/or the Robinson Roof repairs.

Policy: Met and started to set priorities for spring changes.

Returning and Learning: No update

**New Business:**

***SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) Annual Presentation:***

Pam Guravage and Dawn Low presented an annual update. They provided an overview of the organization, what they do and who they support. Examples of services offered to special education parents in 2019-20 were: presentations on managing ADHD and transition planning, a parent social. All activity was then halted when COVID hit and meetings were cancelled. However, the board continued to meet with Special Education Director Jim Leonard to review issues, parent concerns and back to school plans. Some of the upcoming events planned are: Monthly meetings with administrators, Basic Rights workshop (2/9/21), Parent support group (2/24/21), Anxiety during Covid Workshop (4/13/21) and a workshop on 6/8/21 (topic TBD.)

Parent concerns were highlighted which include:

- The spring school disruption was very difficult for special education students, many students showing regression or slowed progress.
- The hope is that the daily cohort will expand to include more students based on reading and language based needs.
- Reduction in peer interaction and social opportunities have been a challenge. SEPAC would love to see a program similar to Best Buddies at the middle school and possibly the elementary schools.

Moving forward, SEPAC hopes that the district looks for greater opportunities for inclusion teaching and embraces best practices that we have created during COVID.

Lauren Scher asked if the virtual world has created any barriers to reaching out to parents. Dawn Low indicated that participation has actually increased as virtual meetings are much easier for parents who cannot always leave their children during the evenings to attend meetings in person.

Lynn Cavvichi requested a summary of their concerns for review. Dawn Low will provide.

***Consideration of School Resource Officer MOU:***

Annually the district works with the Police Department to update the MOU for our School Resource Officers. With the issues surrounding COVID, we have been delayed in completing this effort. Tonight we have a draft for School Committee Review.

Superintendent Murphy reviewed the new goals of:

- Increase school perimeter security in a COVID socially distanced environment
- Collaborate with the Director of Facilities and Superintendent of Schools on School Security check-in stations

Police Chief Ron Sellon provided some background information. His belief is that you cannot take any police officer and put them in the SRO role. At a minimum the town provides extensive training and education for our SROs. Some of the projects that the SROs have been heavily involved with are: 4L training, Raptor Visitor Management System, security of our buildings, in addition to the daily interaction with our students and staff.

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The pandemic has hit our families hard. Our SROs have been instrumental in putting families in touch with available resources.

**Questions / Answers:**

Kiera O'Neil commented on the great relationship we have with our SROs and the police department in general. The committee is very appreciative of the support that we receive.

Lauren Scher asked how we measure success. Both Superintendent Murphy and Chief Sellon felt that we had great success but would work together to devise some metrics for committee review.

Lynn Cavicchi asked us to remove gender specific language in the contract and requested a 5 year review of the SRO program. She also asked what procedures parents follow if they have an issue with the SRO program. Chief Sellon said that individuals can go to either the police or school department as we are constantly in touch. If the police department has any issue related to schools, we immediately inform the superintendent. There are also regularly scheduled safety meetings with the school, police and fire departments.

**Motion** to approve the 2020-2021 School Resource Officer MOU (with suggested edits) by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lauren Scher	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Lynn Cavicchi	aye

**Motion Passes: 5 - 0**

***Consideration of Program of Studies:***

Principal Mary Watkins and Director of Guidance Tina Karidoyanes presented the proposed MHS changes for next year. A summary of the changes are updated course descriptions, prerequisites as needed; renaming of sub-separate courses, course additions and course deletions.

**Questions/Answers:**

Lynn Cavicchi asked if the program of studies assumes the budget will pass with proper staffing. Yes, so adjustments would need to be made if world language and science positions are not approved. Are there technology needs for the new media course? No, we have everything we need. Does MHS anticipate an increased interest in online courses or dual enrollments next year? It is very difficult to answer. We did see an increase in dual enrollment this year and it was very successful so we have expanded the list local colleges with whom we will partner. However, it should be noted that this does come at a cost to parents for the college tuition portion.

Kiera O'Neil asked to clarify the staffing needs. Superintendent Murphy noted that a few years ago we lost a science position and last year a world language position. We are hoping to get these back so we can offer needed opportunities for our students.

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Lauren Scher asked if there is a demand for certain science courses over others. Yes, there is varied demand which resulted in the removal of low demand courses. In other classes we cannot always meet demand. We have surveyed students on topics of interest.

At 8:07 pm Linda Fernando left the meeting.

Lauren Scher asked if there could be clarifications made to the grade 9 math prerequisite standards. The required grades do not seem to be equitable for all students. Are we creating barriers for some students? Are we offering enough remediation courses next year? We know students will be behind next year, but we don't feel that forcing students to take more classes in the subjects they struggle in is the answer. Students need to take advantage of various course opportunities. We do understand that we have to help all students catch up over the next school year.

**Motion** to approve the 2021-2021 MHS Program of Studies by Jenn Walsh / Lauren Scher

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lynn Cavicchi	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Lauren Scher	aye

**Motion Passes: 4 - 0**

Principal David McGovern presented the changes to the QMS program of studies.

Literacy courses will be added for grade 7 and 8 as an alternative to world language program for students whose reading and/or writing are slightly below grade level. Grade 7 Physical Science has been changed to Grade 7 Science to reflect the new integrated science curriculum which aligns to DESE frameworks.

Questions/answers:

Lauren Scher asked for further clarification on the new literacy program and if it creates a barrier for students wanting to move forward with world languages at the high school. There will be a small group of students in need of this literacy course. It is important for students to master these skills before attempting a foreign language. QMS and MHS are working together and believe that these students will be able to catch up by the end of grade 9. One year of grade 7 plus one year of grade 8 which is partial review equals one year of a grade 9 world language class.

Lynn Cavicchi asked if the literacy program is a two year commitment and if so should this be clarified for parents along with the pathway toward world language courses in high school. Yes, this will be noted for parents. Does the program of studies assume budget approvals? Yes, we would need the town to approve our staffing requests to make these changes work.

**Motion** to approve the 2021-2021 QMS Program of Studies by Jenn Walsh / Lauren Scher

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lauren Scher	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Lynn Cavicchi	aye

**Motion Passes: 4 - 0**

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***Returning and Learning Spring 2021:***

Assistant Superintendent Michael Connolly updated the committee on a proposal to bring our kindergarten students back in the building in person 5 days per week at 3 feet apart. We would like to consider a start date of March 1st. Pending the success of this return, we could then move ahead to grade 1 and grade 2. Mr. Connolly then described how we "got here." As the committee is aware, there have been many parents and Robinson staff members advocating for more in person learning time. We looked into a half day model but decided those plans would not work. A survey of Robinson parents and staff members indicated that 80% of parents and 68% of staff would be willing to return to school at 3 feet apart. Since the beginning of the year DESE has allowed districts to return anywhere between 3 and 6 feet though they understood that most districts were returning hybrid at 6 feet. At some point districts need to explore the 3 foot option and we feel that now is a good time for our youngest students. Although COVID cases have spiked since Thanksgiving, we have not seen a dramatic rise in our Robinson numbers. Any positive cases were a result of out-of-school contacts. Additionally, there are rarely severe COVID cases in young children.

We are constantly monitoring community and school numbers and hope that they will continue to decrease. Our health staff must be able to manage the increase number of students in the building and the potential increase in contact tracing due the tighter spacing. Parents will need to be able to manage students if they are quarantined. Teachers must be able to support at home students during quarantine while also managing the increase class size in the room. We need to also manage requests to change cohorts. Will any hybrid parents prefer remote or will any remote parents want their kids in school if we go back 5 days? Robinson will send out a preference survey to parents so we can see if there are any roadblocks.

What we have done so far: We have double checked spacing, bus capacity, lunch adjustments and furniture needs. We are working closely with Christine Dooling on health restrictions.

What is next: Next week we will hold a parent meeting and draft a survey so parents can respond with their preference on remote or in person learning. We will continue to meet with staff.

**Questions/answers:**

Kiera O'Neil described this as an evolution. We started by closing the schools and slowly worked our way to the model we have today. This seems like a good next step.

Jenn Walsh would like to see metrics. What are we going to measure to see if this is a success? Those points should be identified so that we can easily determine whether or not to move forward with grades 1 and 2. There was some discussion on the best time period between each grade. One week would be great but others thought that at least two weeks would give us a better sense of our ability to adapt to the changes and to keep COVID in check.

Christine Dooling spoke about our plans. It is right to move forward for the benefit of our students but we need to be cautious. As we monitor our contact tracing, we have seen changing trends in the virus. Now we are seeing the typical scenario being adults getting sick and then transmitting it to their children. There is some worry regarding the strain on our school nurses keeping up with increased contact tracing and increased normal daily health demands once students are in full time.

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Jenn Walsh asked if there would be any additional costs for buses. We would not need to add any buses.

Lynn Cavicchi noted that every model is a trade off. She is definitely in favor of more education for our students but we need to be clear on what we know and what we don't know. It is important to take it slow and understand what we need to evaluate before expanding to other grades. If the incubation period is 2 weeks then we should set 2 weeks as the minimum lapse time between grades. Kiera and Lynn pointed out that bringing back one grade in Mansfield is similar to bringing back an entire elementary school in other towns.

Lauren Scher agrees with bringing students back one grade at a time. However, we must look ahead and plan for all grades so that we don't have to make continual adjustments. The new strain of the virus brings additional unknowns. However, we shouldn't stop thinking ahead because of this uncertainty. Make sure we have a plan to roll back to remote if needed. Communication to parents must be clear and indicate that what we have are goals not definites.

Assistant Superintendent Donoghue reviewed bus ridership. There are 24 buses at Robinson with many at very low capacity. We feel that we can get all students on the bus with some route modifications. The maximum number on a bus is 23 unless there are groups of siblings and then the max is 27.

Lauren Scher suggested that we reach out to school councils, MESA and try to predict some of the questions parents will ask. This would help to build the presentation.

Kiera O'Neil reminded all that having all our students back does not mean everything is back to normal. For example, we may need to use the gym to house students or lunch so kids may be back but without a gym class. Lunches will be at odd times, etc. Parents must understand that there will be many compromises along the way.

***Consideration of MHS Student Activities Transfer of Funds:***

The All Night Party 2020 account has completed all open payments so the current balance of \$587.98 can be redistributed. The high school proposes the following:  
\$195.99 to the All Night Party 2021  
\$195.99 to the All Night Party 2022  
\$196 to the All Night Party 2023

**Motion** to approve the distribution of funds to the All Night Party Accounts for 2021, 2022 and 2023 by Jenn Walsh / Lauren Scher

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lynn Cavicchi            aye  
Jenn Walsh                aye  
Kiera O'Neil              aye  
Lauren Scher             aye

**Motion Passes: 4 - 0**

***Consideration of Policy:***



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The facilities policies will be put on hold until February. The remaining policies were reviewed at the last meeting and there was one open question regarding terminology. Felicia Vasudeven at MHTL, confirmed the language as written.

Code	Title	Action	Motion 1	Motion 2	Disc Y/N	Vote	Order
JICFC	Teen Dating Violence	Revise	JW	LS	Y	4-0	Lauren S. Kiera O. Jenn W. Lynn C.
JICFC-R	Teen Dating Violence Protocols for Responding	Revise					

***FY21 2nd quarter financial update:***

Assistant Superintendent Ed Donoghue provided an update of our expenditures to date as documented in handout.

***FY21 3rd quarter unbudgeted COVID expenses.*** Ed provided an update on these expenses as documented in handout.

**New School Committee Business:**

Next meeting will be held 2-9-21. Upcoming dates of 3-2-21, 3-16-21, 4-6-21, 4-27-21 are tentative and will be reviewed at our next meeting.

**Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting:** None

**Documents Referenced:**

SEPAC Presentation highlights  
Program of Studies 2021-2022 for QMS and MHS  
School Resource Officer MOU  
Policies  
FY21 3rd Quarter Update  
FY21 3rd Quarter unbudgeted COVID expenses

**Motion to adjourn:** At 9:51 p.m., **Motion** to adjourn the open meeting by Jenn Walsh / Lauren Scher

**Roll Call vote:**

Lauren Scher            aye  
Kiera O'Neil            aye  
Jenn Walsh              aye  
Lynn Cavicchi          aye

**Motion Carries 4 - 0**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Diane Nugent, Secretary to the  
Superintendent & School Committee