

**Mansfield School Committee Meeting  
Minutes for Tuesday, March 16, 2021  
Virtual Meeting using GoToWebinar**

An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. The open meeting session was called to order by Kiera O'Neil at 5:33 pm.

**Members Present:**

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

**Administration Present:**

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

**Members Absent:** None

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

**Roll Call:**

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

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Kiera O'Neil asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21 for the Following Purpose: Under Exception No. 3. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

**Motion** to enter into executive session by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Motion Carries 5 - 0**

**School Committee returned to Open Session at 6:07 pm**

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

None

**Communications:**

One email asking for assistance on returning to remote learning

**Administrative Reports:**

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Superintendent Teresa Murphy spoke on equity and inclusion. Teresa attended a webinar "Black in Mansfield" which she found to be very eye opening and thought-provoking. It has been recorded for anyone who is interested. She also participated with 20 other MASCD members in a book club using the book, What is Racism. This book is geared toward middle school students. Teresa has given this book to the ELA department chair for review to see if we can add it to our curriculum. She continues to work on the virtual Minority Job fair. Finally, Roland Green staff recognized "Down Syndrome Day" with their students.

**MHS Student Representative:**

Ethan Bruce provided an update on MHS events. Fall II sports started; our football team opened the season with a big win against Franklin. The World Language Honor Society is holding inductions tomorrow. Talk of a possible return to full in person learning is being met with mixed feelings by the high school students. On behalf of the senior class, Ethan expressed his gratitude for the hard work that Principal Watkins has put into preparing senior activities. It has been a difficult year and she is working hard to support us.

**Approval of Minutes:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>Discuss Y/N</b>	<b>Vote</b>	<b>Roll call Order</b>
Open Meeting 03-02-21	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lynn C. Jenn W. Kiera O. Linda F. Lauren S.
Open Meeting 03-09-21	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lauren S. Linda F. Kiera O. Jenn W. Lynn C.
Exec Session 03-02-21	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lauren S. Linda F. Kiera O. Jenn W. Lynn C.
Student Advisory 12-16-21	LF	JW	N	5 - 0	Lynn C. Jenn W. Kiera O. Linda F. Lauren S.

**Old Business:**

**Committee Updates:**

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Returning & Learning: Continued discussions on the progress of kindergarten return to school as well as brainstorming on grade 1 - 8 return.

**New Business:**

***Return to School Update moved to end of meeting.***

***Food Services Outreach Modifications:***

Assistant Superintendent Edward Donoghue discussed upcoming changes to the food distribution process. The district must adjust for the return to school and how it impacts the food services staff. As more students return, there are fewer meals to distribute. We will be meeting with the state tomorrow and see what guidance they have for us. At our highest point we were providing 250 meals per week. We are now down to a weekly average of 180 meals. In total we have provided over 70,000 meals. Currently we are an open site meaning that our location is listed on various social services websites and anyone can participate. We are proposing that we change to a closed site so only Mansfield students are eligible. This will allow our staff to return full time to the cafeteria. As always we will assist with any food insecurities as needed. Lauren Scher emphasized the importance of communication. Lynn Cavicchi asked that we keep our local food pantry and social services in the loop. Ed also noted that the PBET funds will decrease for families as they return to school since these funds are for days that students are NOT in school. Superintendent Murphy thanked food services for all of their hard work this year. They have really stepped up to help the members of our community.

***Consideration of Connolly Bus One Year Contract Extension:***

Per Ed Donoghue, we are currently in the 4th year of a 3 year contract. Per the contract we are able to approve two 1 year extensions. One year has already been approved and we bring this forward for a second approval. This will end the contract at the end of the 21-22 school year. Rates will be frozen. The contract will go out to bid in December of 2021.

**Motion** to approve a one year extension of the Connolly Bus contract so that the last year is 2021-2022 by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Discussion:** None

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Motion Passes: 5 - 0**

***Consideration of April 5, 2021 Transportation Rate Change:***

With students expected to return to full in person learning on April 5th, the district would like to offer a reduced rate for any families who register for the bus for the first time this year. The

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proposed rates are first student: \$60, second student \$50 and third student \$40 with a family cap of \$150.

**Motion** to approve bus rates of \$60/\$50/\$40 with a \$150 cap for April 5, 2021 thru the last day of school 2021 by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Discussion:**

Is there any deadline to sign up? No. Do we know how many non paying students will ride the bus since they do not register? Will there be any capacity issues? We don't see any capacity issues with Robinson, JJ or QMS. It is potential that we may see some once the high school students start. Once we see ridership levels on April 5th we will be able to assess the impact of the high school. Is the assumption that if they don't need to pay we always hold a space? Yes, we have always operated on this model since, by state law, we must provide transportation for these students. Can we look into a new registration process where all riders register regardless of distance? We can look into this. There are pros and cons with each model.

**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 21-22 School Calendar / First Reading:***

A first draft of the calendar was proposed for School Committee review and comment. Assistant Superintendent Michael Connolly highlighted the dates throughout the 21-22 school year. We have an agreement by the MEA to start staff on 8/31/21 which is an exception to the contract language stating staff cannot start prior to 9/1 on any given year. By starting on this date it allows the district to get in 2 student days prior to Labor Day weekend and 1 student day on the Tuesday following Labor Day. This buys us 3 school days before a typical Wednesday after Labor Day start. Members of the committee were upset that the district chose 9/7/21 as the start date for kindergarten and preschool since it is the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Multiple iterations of the calendar had been discussed prior to landing on this draft and there were pros and cons for each date chosen. It was noted that 9/7/21 is scheduled school day for staff and students. Multiple options were discussed. Starting kindergarten students on 9/1 or 9/2 would eliminate the scheduled orientation appointments for these students. Starting on 9/8/21 still runs into Rosh Hashanah and starting on 9/9/21 delays the start by too many days. The committee discussed and agreed that the kindergarten and preschool students should start on Wednesday 9/8/21. Also discussed was the professional development day typically held on the November election day. There is no major election this year so the committee questioned why we kept that date. The day was kept for consistency for parents and staff. However, the committee discussed multiple options since we should not be locked into one date. The 1/2 day PD days were also discussed and several suggestions were provided. The district will take the recommendations back for review.

***Return to School Update:***

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Assistant Superintendent Michael Connolly provided an update. The transition to 5 day in person has been positive. Health numbers are trending in the right direction and contact tracing has gone well. Quarantining has been manageable. The staff has been able to manage the transition. We are still monitoring the vaccine rollout.

Regarding the other grades, we have set virtual parent meeting dates. The district is working with the teacher association and Ed Donoghue is working with food services, facilities and transportation on planning for the April 5th return.

Superintendent Murphy updated the committee on the high school return. The state has not set a date but indicates that they will give us a 2 week lead time. We don't feel that 2 weeks is enough time so we are moving ahead with our own plans. We recommend moving forward on Wednesday April 28th. Why Wednesday? We could do Monday but on Tuesday, all MHS students will be fully remote due to SATs. Therefore it is better to wait until Wednesday.

We recognize that there will be families travelling over April vacation and we will still require these families to report their travel and will quarantine as needed.

One outcome of this proposed schedule is that we will be able to change the methodology for high school MCAS testing. We will no longer need to split cohorts for testing so we will be able to test everyone at once and shorten the window.

Principal Mary Watkins spoke of the efforts at MHS. The administration is double checking rosters based on 2nd semester classes against classroom maximum capacities. We are very tight in some classrooms but we can make it work. Thirty - forty classroom sections will need to switch physical classrooms. We hope to finalize these plans by the end of the week. All changes will be announced, communicated, posted. These room changes will take place before the April 28th start date. Other items in the planning stages are reassigning gym classes, new lunch schedules, reassigning parking spots, adding desks to rooms. We are also brainstorming methods of communication.

**Questions/Answers:**

What is the MCAS window? End of April - Beginning of June. When is AP testing? There are 3 testing sessions and we are administering the 2nd and 3rd sessions during the last 2 weeks of May and the first 2 weeks of June. Most testing will be done remotely from home but some require in person testing. How will hallway passing be implemented? We have looked at many different options but we feel that based on the current guidance of mask wearing, distancing and time together, it is best to have everyone move between classes at the same time. The students will be together for just a few minutes at a time. Will students be able to switch between full remote and full in person? DESE requires schools to provide that option. However we need to meet individually with each student to determine impact and rescheduling. We discourage students from going fully in person to full remote because of limited class offerings but we can make it work. Did you give any thought to starting before April vacation? We don't expect delivery of desks in time and we feel that there are still a lot of logistics to manage so an earlier start would be a challenge. After April vacation seems to line up with DESE's thought process though we haven't heard any definite dates from DESE yet.

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The MHS return to school plans is on the agenda for discussion only. Since we are moving ahead with plans without the DESE requirement we propose a vote for this to occur on 3/23/21.

Lynn Cavicchi asked Mary to provide the plan in writing for committee review. Kiera suggested that if anyone has any questions between now and next Tuesday to contact Principal Watkins or Superintendent Murphy directly.

**School Committee Business:**

April 13th was discussed as a possible workshop date. Public hearing on the budget is tentatively set for May 4th. Discussed the superintendent evaluation timeline. Superintendent Murphy requested that we move up the process slightly to avoid the tight schedules of year end activities. Various dates were discussed and April 13th was settled upon. The workshop will be moved to a later date. Holding in-person school committee meetings was discussed since students will be attending in person. It was noted that administrators, principals and other staff have had in-person meetings consistently through this process and most administrators worked in person the entire length of the pandemic. Currently the Town of Mansfield is working with Mansfield Cable and a consultant on new ways to incorporate in-person meetings with virtual access. The town hall is still operating under the MA emergency guidelines and is under capacity restrictions which prevent members of the public from attending meetings. The goal is to have School Committee and Select Board meetings back in-person by September.

**Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting:**

**Documents Referenced:**

Transportation Bus Rates for April 5  
Connolly Bus contract  
2021-2022 School Calendar

**Motion to adjourn:** At 8:21 p.m., **Motion** to adjourn the open meeting by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call vote:**

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

**Motion Carries 5 - 0**

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