



It is the mission of the Mansfield Board of Education, in partnership with the Mansfield Community, to ensure that all children acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes essential for personal excellence in learning, life, and work within our global community.

Mansfield Board of Education March 19, 2020 DRAFT REVISED Minutes	
Attendees:	Susannah Everett, Vice-Chair, Martha Kelly, Secretary, Edith Allison, Rebecca Aubrey, David Litrico, Elizabeth Verge, Kelly Zimmermann
Excused:	Kathy Ward, Katherine Paulhus

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Ms. Everett

Ms. Everett noted for the public that members are participating by phone based on State and CDC guidance for social distancing to prevent community spread of COVID-19 and that members of the public have also been provided the opportunity to participate via phone. Call-in instructions were available on the meeting agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Ms. Zimmermann, seconded by Mr. Litrico, to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2020 meeting. Vote: Unanimous in favor with Ms. Aubrey in abstention.

HEARING FOR VISITORS: None

COMMUNICATIONS: None

Mrs. Paulhus arrived at 7:30pm.

INFORMATION, PRESENTATIONS, AND ACTIONS:

- Implications of COVID-19: Mrs. Lyman reported on Actions to Date, Planning for the Near Future, Logistics, and Moving Beyond the Shutdown. Her report is submitted with these minutes.
- Update on Building Committees: Mrs. Lyman reported that a building committee for the middle school roof project is up and running. They met today for the first time. David Litrico is the Board of Education representative and Paul Shapiro was elected chair. The Elementary School Building Committee met last week. They were presented with two designs by the architect and chose one for continued development.

NEW BUSINESS: None

HEARING FOR VISITORS: Rich Weyel, MEA Co-President thanked the Board for their commitment to doing what's best for Mansfield's children.

CONSENT AGENDA: Motion by Ms. Aubrey, seconded by Mrs. Paulhus that the following items for the Board of Education March 19, 2020 meeting be approved:

That the Mansfield Public Schools Board of Education approves the request for leave of Elyse Poller, teacher at MMS, for the 2020-21 school year.

That the Mansfield Public Schools Board of Education accepts the retirement of Stephen Dean, physical education teacher at Goodwin school effective June 30, 2020.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: None

Motion by Ms. Aubrey, seconded by Mrs. Verge, to adjourn at 7:55pm. Vote: Unanimous in favor

Respectfully submitted, Celeste Griffin, Board Clerk

Board of Education Update March 19, 2020

Actions to Date

Mansfield Public Schools made the decision to close schools for two weeks beginning Monday, March 16. All staff reported to work on the 16th to prepare supplemental learning materials for students. Food service workers also began preparing meals for distribution to local families.

Teachers were told to prepare materials to support students for two weeks. A contact was made with every elementary family by a staff member on Monday, and on Tuesday, the middle school reached out to every parent to ensure we have proper contact information. In addition, we have used these contacts to survey parents about needs including internet and computer needs.

Many teachers have been communicating with their students this week, sending and receiving emails, sending videos, and connecting with families. Schools have also been sending information about resources in the community such as our Little Lending Libraries found around town. These have been fully stocked to provide fresh reading material to kids.

Stephanie Richards quickly got approval for breakfast and lunch distribution through the federal school nutrition program. Our food service workers have made and distributed meals at 5 locations three times this week, sometimes providing two days of meals at a time, and will continue every day that we are closed. We are now serving more than 70 families and the number is growing with each delivery.

Para-educators were offered a week's advance salary to make up for lost income during our shutdown. They were initially offered extra work as well but that was pulled back quickly once we realized the shutdown was likely to last longer than two weeks.

Custodians have been deep cleaning the schools disinfecting all surfaces from five feet down.

Secretaries are manning the offices and assisting with daily tasks.

Nurses have been communicating with families as needed.

As of Sunday, we are under an executive order from the Governor that closed all schools in CT until March 31.

Planning for the Near Future

By Wednesday of this week, the Commissioner of Education asked us to begin to plan for a longer absence from school and to ensure we had plans to support learning. Also this week the requirement that we attend school for 180 days was waived and districts were told they could establish their own end date (not earlier than currently planned).

We immediately shifted from Supplemental Learning to what we are calling School at Home. Adults are experiencing Work at Home, now our children will experience School at Home.

I have been working with administrators and our district literacy and math/science specialists to establish expectations and parameters for the remainder of the shutdown period. This includes, communication with teachers and families, directions and resources for developing School at Home learning tasks, and consideration of access to materials on-line and in hand. This work includes planning for students with special needs, those who are English learners, and those receiving any level of academic support. All teachers will be involved in supporting children. Our challenge is keeping this manageable for everyone – staff and families. Our School at Home program will begin the week of March 30 as children have enough learning material for the first two weeks. During this time, teachers will prepare and send “lessons” to students to be completed at home. Teachers will be available daily to communicate and support students and a process for ensuring every child and family has a weekly check-in from at least one teacher will be developed.

Our para-educators will be asked to support teachers in this work with some of them coming into schools as long as we are able to prepare materials. Our nurses will continue to be available for families and our custodians will continue to clean the schools. Food preparation and distribution as mentioned will continue.

I have told administrators that they may close school offices and work from home as desired. Secretaries will have school phones forwarded to them at home and complete all other daily tasks at home. For now, Central Office staff will continue to come into the office but that may change also.

It is hoped that once our School at Home program is up and running, we can return to the many other Board and school tasks that are part of what is generally a very productive spring period. Understandably, all work now is focused on continuing to care for our children.

Logistics

All staff will continue to receive their salary as all staff will be engaged in work throughout the shutdown. In addition, for some staff such as paras and secretaries we are exploring on-line training options to supplement the tasks they will be given.

We are in talks with M&J Bus to use drivers and buses to deliver learning materials and books to students and to help us out with a possibly enhanced summer school program.

Summer cleaning tasks may begin once schools have been fully disinfected.

Unknowns remain the length of the shutdown and the full implications for our calendar such as how to address April vacation and the presidential primary date which today was moved from April 28 to June 2.

Moving Beyond the Shutdown

We are nearly through the first stage of this shutdown, the Supplemental Learning stage. Soon we will transition to the School at Home stage. In the future we need to plan for transitioning back to school and recovery of lost learning. In the coming weeks, staff will be busy planning for these next two stage – Transition and Learning Recovery.

Much thought will need to be given to supporting students as they return to school. Both the learning transition and the emotional transition will need to be addressed. It has been suggested that every Connecticut resident will experience the loss of someone they know during this pandemic. The days and weeks missed may not be able to be fully made up but long term planning for the Learning Recovery stage may include changes to our summer program or our 2020-21 school year program. It is far too early to speculate about these things but we do need to begin thinking about how we will address the long term implications of these unprecedented times.