

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Thursday, November 19, 2020
Remote Meeting**

Present: Chair Guagliumi, Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Schneider, Rothhaus, and Hardy. Also present were Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Guagliumi called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Chair Guagliumi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

Chair Guagliumi stated public comments could be sent to publiccomment@sau26.org or by going to sau26.org where a meeting link was provided. She said all comments would be read and written into the record but noted the name and address of the speaker had to be provided.

3. COVID-19 Update: Administration's Recommendation Regarding the Status of Schools through Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Superintendent McLaughlin stated on October 28th he provided an update to the School Board as well as to the community regarding the conditions from the beginning of school through October 28th. He said at that time they were in the "green" zone which meant it was safe to continue with the way things were going. He said he also provided information regarding a "red" scenario which meant there could be a sudden and unplanned closure. He noted they were in a "red" scenario when the Merrimack Middle School had to shut down in mid-October.

Superintendent McLaughlin said he also talked about the "purple" scenario which meant there could be a sudden or anticipated closure. He further said there was an increased amount of transmission on a national, state, and community level. He pointed out the daily PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test positivity rate in New Hampshire alone was 4.3% and it was likely higher in the south-central region. He added according to the Department of Health and Human Services, a positivity rate of greater than 3% was indicative of community spread.

Superintendent McLaughlin stated the mask policy, the travel policy, and the communicable illness policy had all helped to enforce the conditions by which they could keep the schools open. He said they invested in PPE (personal protective equipment) and enforced social distancing protocols. He said he wanted to be clear that "in-school transmission" had been avoided.

Superintendent McLaughlin reiterated that what happened in a community happened in the schools. He said in a relatively short period of time the organizational supports that kept the schools going were becoming significantly strained.

Superintendent McLaughlin said from October 19th to October 30th there were 11 student absences at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School as a result of COVID-19, he said the number included actual positive cases, close contact with an individual who tested positive or had to be quarantined. He then said the number of student absences from November 2nd to November 19th had climbed to 36. He also shared that the number of absences at the James Masticola Elementary School went from 21 to 31; at Reeds Ferry the number went from 14 to 41; at Merrimack High School the number went from 74 to 103; the Merrimack Middle School was closed for the last two weeks of October but from November 2nd to November 19th the number was 35, and at James Masticola Upper Elementary School the number went from 30 to 31.

Superintendent McLaughlin shared that there were 32 COVID related staff absences from October 19th to October 30th and that number had increased to 116 from November 2nd through November 19th.

Ms. Melissa Gagne, Human Resources Manager, stated there was a large decrease in substitute teachers with 76% of their active substitutes were not picking up any shifts. She said at the beginning of the current school year they had 18 floater substitutes and as of November 19th, they only had 14. She also said they had 5 floating substitute nurses Monday through Thursday as of the beginning of the current school year and to date, they were down to 3.

Ms. Gagne commented that typically most vacancies were filled but they currently had 17 paraprofessional vacancies, 8 food service/lunch monitor vacancies, 4 vacancies in the maintenance department, 2 vacancies in Title I, and 1 special education teacher vacancy.

Ms. Gagne stated staff had sought support through FFCRA (Families First Coronavirus Response Act) due to their home district's going remote for the holidays. She said recently Londonderry and Milford confirmed that they would go remote for a period of time, and Manchester and Nashua had been remote since the beginning of the school year.

Superintendent McLaughlin said the change in their circumstances over the past two weeks, not in terms of in-school transmission of COVID, but on the impacts of COVID and the ability to function safely and efficiently had been dramatically impacted. He said his recommendation to the School Board was to transition to remote instruction, pre-K through grade 12, beginning on November 30, 2020. Further, Superintendent McLaughlin said he anticipated a return to the hybrid model on January 19, 2021. He said holiday travel and gatherings would likely cause a spike in COVID cases.

Superintendent McLaughlin expressed his sincere gratitude to the students, staff, parents, and volunteers.

Vice Chair Barnes stated she felt the instruction could actually be compromised if the buildings were open. Superintendent McLaughlin replied he agreed because the number of services would be compromised due to a lack of staff.

Superintendent McLaughlin commented that there was a plan in progress to address the need for specialized instruction and he would keep the Board informed.

Board Member Schneider commented that he felt the way instruction was delivered remotely would have to be more aggressive.

Board Member Hardy commented she agreed that remote instruction needed to be more aggressive. She asked how a decision to go remote would affect sports. Superintendent McLaughlin replied things were developing very quickly and he was not yet prepared to answer that question but he was mindful of the importance of it.

Board Member Rothhaus commented it was her opinion that schools closing and going remote would only be a last case scenario. She also expressed concern regarding the students who required special education but said she felt it was important that all students be in school every day and was opposed to shutting the schools down for an eight-week period of time. She suggested closing the schools only until December 14th.

Chair Guagliumi asked what happened when a substitute was needed but not available. Superintendent McLaughlin replied in that case other people from the building who performed other duties had to cover those roles.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio added they had cohorts and smaller classes for a reason, which was COVID. He said even the administrators were covering classrooms to keep the students safe.

Chair Guagliumi commented if the District went fully remote she would want the students to have additional instruction time and would like the administration to look at implementing other interventions. She also said she would like to see a comparison between the two cohorts.

Chair Guagliumi asked what the negative impact would be if the schools opened two weeks after Thanksgiving. Superintendent McLaughlin replied he was not sure what was going to happen but felt it was better to anticipate a problem rather than to hope things would go away even when all of the evidence was pointing in another direction.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio commented time would not allow for combining cohorts and schedules would not be possible to be changed within the two weeks after Thanksgiving.

Board Member Schneider said given everything he had heard he would support remote instruction through to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as long as they could guarantee they could come up with a more aggressive instructional schedule for all students.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) for the District to go fully remote beginning November 30, 2020, through January 18, 2021, and that the District increases the instructional time where possible to students through increased instruction and support and utilize as much of the entire week as possible.

The motion passed 4 – 1 – 0. (Nay – Board Member Board Member Rothhaus)

Board Member Schneider commented that Ms. Heather Barker, Director of Student Services, needed to provide her thoughts and plans for how special education would be handled remotely at the next School Board meeting.

Chair Guagliumi asked how lunches would be distributed. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said they could still provide bagged lunches to be picked up at the high school or it could be delivered via STA (Student Transportation of America) excluding holidays.

4. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Vice Chair Barnes announced she had received approximately 27 public comments and while they would be added to the public record they would not be read into the record.

Vice Chair Barnes read aloud the following rules/procedures pertaining to public comments:

Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of school operations and programs as concern them. However, in public session, the Board will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor will they hear complaints against any person connected with the school system. Other channels provide for the Board's consideration and disposition of legitimate complaints involving individuals.

The Board vests in its Chairman, or other presiding officer, the authority to terminate the remarks of any individual when they do not adhere to the rules established above as to content or time limitation.

At approximately 9:45 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Hardy) to adjourn.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT EMAILS:

Some emails could not be included because they did not contain the individual's address.

From: Katie Bowler <cbowler2@hotmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 6:54:13 AM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: Special Meeting

Dear Merrimack School Board,

If there is a recommendation for schools to go full remote from Thanksgiving to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, I hope the Board will not approve this. Merrimack has done an amazing job, staff and students, with having no COVID transmission in school. Being able to attend school in person for part of the week has been so important for the emotional and well being of families. I cannot stress enough the positive mental health benefits, as well as the learning opportunities, of having in-person instruction.

Going remote, given our current situation, is not the answer. It will do much more harm than good.

Please work with the community to find any needed solutions before going full remote. Parents and others want to support in-person learning to the extent possible.

Also, it would be helpful for the community to understand the recommendation prior to the school board meeting. Can you please request that this be sent to parents before meetings, or include the proposal in the school board agenda?

Parents need better communication around what plans and proposals are being recommended.

Thank you for your time.

Katie Bowler
8 Jade Rd.
Merrimack, NH

From: "Flett, Kristine" <Kristine_Flett@comcast.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:49:42 AM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Cc: "Guagliumi, Cinda - (School Board)" <Cinda.Guagliumi@sau26.org>
Subject: Emergency School Board meeting 11/19

Hello,

I am writing to you in relation to Agenda item #3 COVID-19 Update: Administration's Recommendation Regarding the Status of Schools Through Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Mark McLaughlin. I am concerned that the recommendation will be to go fully remote from Thanksgiving through MLK day. Unfortunately, not knowing what the recommendation actually is I apologize if this email is premature. Dr McLaughlin and multiple principals have time and time again assured us that even though we are still experiencing COVID 19 related cases in our schools there has not been an in school spread of the virus and all cases were contracted outside of the buildings.

Speaking for my household alone, I can tell you that my children thrive much better with in class instruction. I currently have a junior in multiple AP and honors courses as well as an eighth grader and moving to an all remote environment will not only affect their mental well being but even further isolate them from their peers. I completely understand moving to a remote environment if and when we see a large number of cases or in fact it starts to spread within the schools. I fully support and appreciate all the hard work the school board, school staff and Dr McLaughlin have had to do in this extra ordinary environment I just ask that you consider the mental and emotional wellbeing of our students and do not make judgements based on fear. Our family has made social sacrifices to limit our exposure in the community and we do not plan on traveling during the holidays. I do understand that there are families out there that will continue to have large family/friend gatherings but I ask that those of us who are doing the right thing to keep our community safe are not punished under the fear of an outbreak.

Again, I apologize if this letter is premature and not applicable to the recommendations brought forth tonight but without advance communication to parents prior to the school board meeting I unfortunately have to make my own assumptions as to the agenda.

Kind regards,
Kristine Flett
12 Erik Street

From: Kim Fricano <kfricano825@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 7:36:43 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>, "publiccomments@sau26.org" <publiccomments@sau26.org>
Subject: 11/19/20 Board Meeting

Name: Kim Fricano
Address: 35 Sandhill Drive

I am writing regarding the ongoing COVID situation and how that impacts the operation of our schools. As a parent of a student who receives special education services, as well as a special education service provider (in a neighboring district), I implore those involved in this decision making process to consider the impact of remote education on our special education students. Those are the students who have teams of up to 10 teachers or specialists and carefully crafted individualized plans in place in order for their educational needs to be met; those are the students who see regression in their skills after a summer break, or sometimes a holiday break, or even a weekend; those are the students who desperately need the routine, consistency, and security of an education in school, in person, and suffer the most from the closing of schools. I have witnessed this both personally and professionally. Despite the rising community numbers of COVID cases, the department of health has confirmed that transmission in schools remains low. IEP's are legally binding documents with no regard for a pandemic; these service hours need to be provided to keep our students moving forward, prevent regression, and to avoid putting further strain on parents and caregivers to become their child's teacher, aide, or therapist. While at some point it may be required or mandated by the Governor to close schools for safety reasons, this is not the case now. Please take this into consideration when you decide whether or not to close our district without such order, for any length of time.

Respectfully,
Kim Fricano

From: Chandra Miller <chandra.miller8@gmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 7:51:32 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: Opposed to closure of school

My stream is not working appropriately and keeps cutting out, however I am strongly opposed to the closure of schools through Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Not only will this continue to be detrimental to the students mental health and overall continuity of their education, but scientific data has shown very limited spread of COVID-19 within the schools world wide. Additionally, despite the significant increase in cases in NH, there are still NO outbreaks within the schools statewide. This tremendously speaks for the ability to safely hold classes IN school!

Also, switching up the students schedules will greatly effect the parents schedules. At this time of year, this can cause catastrophic effects for families of working parents, especially as we come into the holidays, a time of year that often causes increased financial strain on families to begin with.

As a result, I am strongly opposed to students switching to full remote through Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Sincerely,
Chandra Miller
12 Dunbarton Dr
Merrimack, NH

From: Nancy Sydow <nancy.sydow@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 7:52:07 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: COVID and school closing

Dear school board members,

As COVID cases rise along with refueled uncertainty I implore you to base your decisions regarding pivoting to full remote learning on data and not pressure.

Since March we have had more data to show that transmission of COVID is not happening in school setting. This is due to students and staff adhering to guidelines. We also now know that when both parties wear a mask risk of transmission between infection and uninfected is low. Furthermore, viral load and viral shedding in young children has been shown to be minimal and most of the time not enough to infect others.

An article in Nature published 10/29 and reporting very low concern for illness and transmission in children 14 yo and younger. Similar information seen in several other studies. That demographic (under 14 yo) is the demographic who should have limited screen time and more hands on / direct teacher interaction. Additionally the American Academy of Pediatrics does not support remote learning this is not what is best for our young children.

If we are truly an evidence based district, the evidence points to wearing masks, social distancing, temporary closure of dining in restaurants & gyms. In France, schools remained open with restaurants, gyms, and other indoor gatherings shut down and dramatic reduction in new cases.

We, as a community, should be learning from what is working worldwide and be basing our decision in data and fact.

I would like to know if the school board has any members focusing on the medical data and information.

Some resources and more can be provided on request.

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.08.03.20165589v1>

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/world/europe/france-coronavirus-cases.html?campaign_id=154&emc=edit_cb_20201118&instance_id=24236&nl=coronavirus-briefing®i_id=123917074&segment_id=44864&te=1&user_id=6ed43e6352321abdc0481865e91e533
[1](#)

Nancy Sydow (mother of 5 the, 3rd, and 1st graders)
17 Naticook Road

From: **Amy Goodridge** <amy.m.goodridge@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Nov 19, 2020 at 8:17 PM
Subject: Public comment for 11/19 emergency meeting
To: publiccomments@sau26.org <publiccomments@sau26.org>

Amy Goodridge
33 Ellie Drive
Merrimack NH 03054

As a Merrimack taxpayer, I am dismayed the superintendent is considering going fully remote for an extended period of time. The children of this town need to be in school, they need stability and a proper education. The school board should vote against going fully remote.

The town notice for this emergency meeting did not include the email address to provide public comment in writing, which is not proper process.

Please provide a copy of the superintendent's current employment contract to the taxpayers and an overview of any sort of term or notice requirement and salary/benefits. We need new leadership and the taxpayers need more information regarding how quickly we can move to hire new leadership.

Thank you,
Amy Goodridge

From: Beth Miner <bethminer55@hotmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:19:26 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: COMMENT

Beth Miner
49 Jessica Drive

Let me first state that I am against this decision. That being said, if we are going to make this transition, can the district address the delivery of content to students. Will students be logging in to receive real time instruction from their teachers for EACH of their classes? Meaning that on their given hybrid IN SCHOOL days, they will be in classes all day... Please specify how this will be run. Is there a district wide directive for teachers as to requirements for real time instruction?

From: Comcast Mail <cdlafa@comcast.net>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:20:52 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: Meeting tonight

Christine Tobin
108 Turkey hill rd

I am writing to advocate for school to continue as is. Going full remote does not make sense as a response to, “anticipation “.

The attendance numbers weren’t presented accurately. Those absences are for any symptom of sickness regardless of an actual positive test. Students that did quarantine did so, and there was no reported transmission at the High School per Mrs. Putney’s email. Transmission has not occurred in school.

I think the possible decision to go remote is inappropriate and harmful to our students. The Governor has not suggested schools to shut down and the numbers don’t represent a closure.

The discussion about staff and staff roles is not as applicable as the presentation suggests. All roles have changed. Individuals need to be flexible and they are expected to work.

Full remote is harmful to our students.

Thank you for your time.

From: Scott S <ssabens@gmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:22:38 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: School board meeting

If you are trying to sell consistency for the students, why aren't you doing full day schedules via zoom for all students? That would be consistency!

Scott Sabens
8 Dumas Ln.

From: Chandra Miller <chandra.miller8@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:22:51 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: **This recommendation is inconsiderate at best**

This plan that affects families immediately. That is less than a week's time to force families to scramble to find care and hope their children are able to access education throughout the week. Families need to work in order to survive, to pay our bills, to give kids what little is left this time of year as we go into the holidays.

The CDC and DHHS data does NOT support this.

I understand you have significantly less staff in the school, but you also have less students in school. This is taking the "easy way out of the district." But once again the children will suffer. Their poor educational set up this year will just further decrease, and their mental health will suffer drastically. I am not just concerned about the kids now, but 5-10 years from now, when they have received such a gap in education. At no fault to the teachers attempts, but to the school board and districts allowance of them to provide a proper timeframe for education. The teachers arent failing the students, they are the ones making lemonade with lemons... the School Board is!!!

I am disappointed that this is the thought process, and more so that I feel that the board does NOT trully take into consideration the thoughts and responses of the people of the town.

Chandra Miller
12 Dunbarton Dr
Merrimack, NH

From: Becky Velez <rebeccalvelez@yahoo.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:22:57 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: Don't switch to remote!

Merrimack High is doing very well mitigating Covid. If students travel, they can quarantine for 14 days. And don't take any more days off! They canceled instructional days at the beginning of the year, for the election, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day. Please don't cut any more instructional days.

My student wants to be in school.

My two cents,

Becky Velez

3 Greatstone Dr. Merrimack

From: Lynsay <lhooven@gmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:23:54 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: School closure comment

If you vote to go full remote, can you please consider combining the cohorts into 1 class per teacher and direct remote teach them all 5 days? Daily live zoom teaching (with breaks), would make this decision much more bearable.

Thank you,
Lynsay Hooven
5 Crestview Circle

From: Samantha Collyar <samantha.collyar@yahoo.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:24:51 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: School board comments

To the Merrimack School Board,

I have so many emotions watching this meeting and none of them are good. I have watched my third grader struggle with these changes and watch him feel like he is left behind. I have watched him be overjoyed to go to school to be with his peers and teachers on his two in school days and then pull a complete 180 on his independent days. I've talked with numerous parents who have said and experienced the same. I think it is so unfair to these children to close down their in schooling time they so look forward to. These children deserve to go to school, be with their peers, and get the in school support they need.

What are the plans to continue support to the students who meet with the counselors and various support staff. What do you expect us to tell our children who are going to be so confused and upset about this? You say the majority are shinning but have YOU actually talked to the students or are you just hoping that's the case? I'm genuinely curious where that is coming from?

Samantha Collyar
18 Souhegan Dr
Merrimack

From: kimberly cayot <kcayot80@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:42:34 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: Tonight's meeting 11/19

This is Kimberly Cayot at 7 Bowman CT.

My question to you is, has anyone thought of the mental health toll this is taking on students?

Also, working parents are now having to lose more hours of work, spending more on tutors/daycare, printing work from home, buying computers, buying Microsoft for school computers that don't support assignments from teachers. Why was there not any input from parents?

Will students now be able to receive 4 days a week of direct instruction? 11 days or so of direct instruction between Nov/Dec is detrimental to my child's education when other districts are succeeding 5 days a week of direct in school instruction.

From: Barbara Sousa <bnb61993@yahoo.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:43:05 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: Remote

I understand the need and desire for more face to face instruction for going remote. However, kids spending hours upon hours a day in front of a monitor is not good for them. Developmentally, doctors have recommendations for limited screen time. Add in health issues from staring at a screen all day. (Headaches, neck aches, eye pain,etc). I don't think more time in front of a screen for direct instruction is worth it. Also, zoom is inconsistent and freezes or has audio issues all the time. This call tonight shows what we deal with on a daily basis. Is there another platform that can be used? For households with more than one child, it is not feasible to have each one on zoom call all day. The WiFi doesn't support it. Devices for families will also be an issue. Not everyone has more than one device.

Barbara Sousa 4 griffin st

From: Jenn Hutchinson <jennhutch89@gmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:51:01 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: Remote

If the district changes to completely remote would we still be paying for Bill Morris to support the remote learning academy? His salary and that of the personnel covering his AP role have large budgetary impacts.

Jenn Hutchinson

6 Iris drive

From: Nicole Tomaselli <nicoledecal@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 8:55:25 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: Questions

Hi, this is Nicole Tomaselli, I live at 11 Knollwood Drive in Merrimack New Hampshire.

We have given this hybrid model "a go" for 10+ weeks, largely at the expense of working parents who are doing double duty or paying out of pocket for someone else to supervise their children. While I would prefer a "fully in" model of instruction where my kids attend school for 4 days, my questions are surrounding the expectations if this board votes to go fully remote.

Will you be combining A & B cohorts when remote? I would urge you to work towards achieving as many instructional hours as possible for all of our students. The students in Merrimack have missed so much direct teacher-led instruction already this year compared to learners in surrounding towns.

Can you please clarify what you mean by resumption of the schedule?

What does December 7-19 then the two weeks of January look like schedule wise?

A full daily schedule of zooms, direct small group instruction is needed every day.

(It IS possible to open a lesson for 10-15 minutes with the whole class (both A&B cohorts), break students into smaller groups with differentiated tasks and use the remainder of the class time to rotate between the groups to achieve small group instruction. This workshop model of teaching is a well known practice to educators and When done in combination with zoom, canvas or seesaw and exit tickets can be very effective for remote learning.)

There is no need to keep students into these half-sized cohorts if everyone is remote.

Thank you for your mindfulness and all of your collective efforts,
The Tomaselli Family

From: Chandra Miller <chandra.miller8@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 9:02:02 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: Teacher equity and ridiculous comments

First, Jenna Hardy and rude and disrespectful! Her "comment" was an attack, disgraceful and completely unnecessary.

Second, teacher equity doesnt exist when they are home caring for their kids while they are running zoom meetings. Teachers have their kids needing help with their school work, crawling on their lap, wanting snacks etc. They were constantly interrupted breaking up all the effort and time just put in to gain the students attention. Just because the teacher can then be available to start a call because they are home DOES NOT equal quality care!

Chandra Miller
12 Dunbarton Dr, Merrimack, NH 03054

From: Wolfram von Schoen <wolfram@vonschoen.de>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 9:11:36 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: 11/19/2020 meeting

Dear board and administration,

My two high schoolers made me aware that their PowerSchool account credentials were recently reset by way of making the password the same as their student ID. They also are unable to change their passwords. I find this very concerning, as it allows anyone who is aware of this fact to log in as another student and wreaking havoc under his or her name, like submitting incomplete or willfully wrong assignments and quizzes, uploading inappropriate content, sending inappropriate emails, gaining knowledge about a student and exposing it on social media etc.

This seems to be a violation of privacy laws and specifically FERPA.

I don't recall any information being sent to us parents about this incident either, which makes me worry even more how this is being handled.

It would be good to hear a statement from the school what happened and how it will be resolved, and when.

Thank you.

Wolfram von Schoen
4 Conservation Drive
Merrimack

From: Wolfram von Schoen <wolfram@vonschoen.de>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 9:27:42 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: 11/19/2020 Meeting

Dear board and administration,

Another comment: as I have stated at the start of the school year, a lot of problems could be resolved by merging hybrid and remote student schedules back together again, they should never have been separated. I have predicted that the split will be a nightmare once the day comes when the school is forced to go fully remote.

Combining the schedules would free up teacher resources, and give the school the flexibility to switch remote and hybrid as needed on the fly, even repeatedly.

It would also undo the terrible disservice of treating remote students as second class, by not offering them a substantial amount of the AP and honors classes the hybrid students were offered this first semester.

Thank you.

Wolfram von Schoen
4 Conservation Drive
Merrimack

From: Joel <johowar1@gmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 9:38:30 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: COVID remote meeting

Why can't we have the decision on a school by school basis? Have the teachers been surveyed? The parents? Maybe some people would voluntarily go remote. Maybe some schools wouldn't need to go remote.

Joel Howard

1 Acacia St, Merrimack, NH 03054

From: Kelli Wright <kelli.wright0313@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 10:28:25 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: 11/19/2020 School Board Meeting

I watched your live school board meeting about COVID updates and school recommendations. To include non-positive cases in your numbers is factually incorrect and inflates the concern within our district without basis. Those who were tested and negative need to be removed as there was no true COVID concern in those cases.

I also think it's unacceptable to assume children and their parents, who btw still need to do their jobs, can thrive going back to remote. Most kids don't pay attention or focus during remote, if you think they do...you are in the minority. Please watch the first 5-10 minutes of your live stream and you will see my point. That is zoom on every session. The technical issues are ridiculous and cause behavioral problems as the kids can not focus. That's not to say the teachers aren't trying, because they are, but remote is not like school and is causing an extreme negative impact on most families.

My middle son was just starting to get a fraction of the in school special education services he needs and now that will be taken away completely, causing another year of educational and developmental delay. Some kids and parents can not work remotely and to not have a full plan in place before deciding to go back to full remote is irresponsible.

Now if we received a significant tax cut because we, the families, are doing the majority of educational work at home or you decided students who are falling behind or have special education needs would still be allowed to attend in school....then maybe I could see this decision being a little easier to swallow. As of right now I am disappointed to put it nicely.

WRIGHT-TURKEY HILL RD

From: Nicole Tomaselli <nicoledecal@gmail.com>
Date: November 19, 2020 at 11:52:47 PM EST
To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>
Subject: Unacceptable

Hi Nicole Tomaselli 11 Knollwood Drive Merrimack New Hampshire

I am very disappointed that our school board voted tonight. Without having an articulate and well thought-out description of administrations' vision for remote instruction as well as clarifying the expectations for teachers and families - how could you have ever felt informed enough to vote?

Additionally I am at a loss as to why this district appears so illprepared for this inevitable pivot to fully remote instruction.

Giving working families another 2 days of NOTHING on November 30th and December 1st so that our district can prepare to teach remotely is unacceptable at this point in the school year. They should be ready to execute the plan and they should have described that plan for seamless transition this evening.

We have been more than responsive as a community in taking care of our children during the 12 weeks of flex Fridays as well as the 2 days each week that we have been supporting, teaching, arranging coverage for our children during "independent learning".

What has all of this additional plan time been used for? I can assure you no one is interested in hearing about the progress that's been made around standards-based report cards or UDL especially when it is apparent that your staff doesn't feel confident or trained or empowered to teach remotely.

It is time to get focused on the real priority:

Teaching the children as many direct instructional hours as possible must be the singular focus of this school year.

If we go remote then we should be starting on the 30th. Otherwise, stay with the current hybrid plan. It doesn't have to be perfect, but our students need instruction on 11/30 and 12/1.

Nicole Tomaselli

From: Joel <johowar1@gmail.com>

Date: November 19, 2020 at 9:38:30 PM EST

To: SAU26 School Board Public Comment <PublicComment@sau26.org>

Subject: COVID remote meeting

Why can't we have the decision on a school by school basis? Have the teachers been surveyed? The parents? Maybe some people would voluntarily go remote. Maybe some schools wouldn't need to go remote.

Joel Howard

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