

**South Hadley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting Minutes**

August 5, 2021

Video Conference Meeting accessible via SCTV15

I. Call to Order

Noting a quorum, Vice Chairperson A. Garcia called the virtual School Committee Meeting to order at 6:00 pm. A. Garcia noted that Chairperson A. Schlachter is on vacation and D. Cooke will be joining the meeting late.

In Attendance: Dr. Jahmal Mosley, Superintendent of South Hadley Public Schools
Mark McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent of South Hadley Public Schools
Allyson Garcia
Charles Miles
Jen Matos
Danielle Cooke
Kaily Godek, Student Representative
Jennifer Voyik, Business Manager, South Hadley Public Schools

Absent: Allison Schlachter, Chairperson

II. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the July 15, 2021 meeting were reviewed and motion to approve made by C. Miles, seconded by J. Matos. Motion passed unanimously: 4/0. Minutes approved.

III. Approval of Warrants

Motion to approve warrants as read by C. Miles, seconded by D. Cooke. Motion passed unanimously: 4/0.

Date	Number	Amount
June 30, 2021	#2021-300	\$246,600.53
July 12, 2021	Bi-Weekly	\$669.43
July 13, 2021	#2022-10	\$18,856.19
July 20, 2021	#2022-18	\$17,714.66
July 22, 2021	Bi-Weekly	\$635,128.43
July 27, 2021	#2022-25	\$7,166.17

IV. Reports of Standing Committees

a. School Committee Liaison Reports

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- b. *Advisory Committees*
- c. *Site-Based Committees*

None.

V. Public Comment

A. Garcia opened the floor for public comment, allowing virtual attendees 3 minutes each to comment for a total of 20 Minutes. No public comments made.

VI. SHEA Updates

None.

VII. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. J. Mosley welcomed Dr. Mark McLaughlin, the new Interim Assistant Superintendent to the leadership team and South Hadley. Dr. McLaughlin has been on board for one week and brings a wealth of experience as a former superintendent, in addition to serving over ten years as an Assistant Superintendent. Dr. McLaughlin thanked Dr. Mosley, Jennifer and the Central Office Staff for welcoming him. Dr. McLaughlin has been making rounds at the schools and meeting with the principals and looks forward to getting to know everyone and working with them.

Dr. J. Mosley is working on a Re-opening Plan based on CDC and DESE guidelines and met with nursing leadership to understand concerns and challenges. Communications regarding reopening will be posted on the School Department's website as updates occur to keep the information current and readily accessible.

VIII. Report of the Chair and School Committee

A. Garcia expressed her excitement to have both Dr. Mosley and Dr. McLaughlin on board.

The School Committee will be holding a Summer retreat on August 24th from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. The retreat will be open to the public and posted, but it will not be recorded or broadcasted. The purpose of the retreat is for Dr. Mosley and Dr. McLaughlin to get to know the school committee and allow the opportunity to brainstorm and share ideas.

A. Schlachter has been working with Dan Pease from SHCTV to develop a remote and in-person meeting hybrid. The select board will need to approve it, but there is possibility that future School Committee meetings will take place in the new Senior Center multi-purpose room instead of the High School come the Fall.

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IX. Report of Student Representative

K. Godek welcomed Dr. McLaughlin to South Hadley. She and the students look forward to working with him.

The Kindergarten bus ride has been scheduled for August 26, 2021 at 6:00 pm. Principal Skala and SRO Officer will board the bus with the students. All participants are required to wear a mask on the bus. Five Star bus company is thanked for providing this service free of charge to the district.

The landscaping at Plains has changed in the last two weeks and it is beautiful. The area is safer and clean, and many are complimenting the changes.

The PBIS coaches at Plains received a mini grant from the MES and have plans to improve the bench and signage in the playground by the start of the school year.

This Summer, the High School provided the first annual Art Camp. Ms. McNally led the camp which offered hands on experience and students were able to showcase their artistic abilities. Twenty-six students attended camp.

Registration for Fall Sports will be offered on-line through family ID Families. The athletic director, Mr. Castonguay can be e-mailed at ecastonguay@shschools.com with any questions.

The Class of 2022 continue to have extra lawn signs and magnets for sale on a first come basis at \$5.00 per tiger paw magnet (30 are available) and \$15.00 per lawn sign (11 signs in the paw print are left and 20 of the Tiger are available). Please contact Kaily Godek to purchase at khgodek2022@student.shschools.com or via the class Instagram page at shhs_2022. J. Matos will also be posting these items on the Facebook page.

X. Custodial Contract

The custodial contract was reviewed at the June 25th meeting. The questions posed have been clarified and a settlement agreement between the South Hadley School Committee and South Hadley custodial employees is reached. Minor language changes include adding a new deduction card for dues, the Juneteenth Holiday which is a state recognized holiday, and a half-day on New Year's Day is added. The two-year contract is retroactive starting on July 1, 2020 to June of 2022. The contract includes a 1.5% retroactive raise in salary and a 2% increase this year. Additionally, there is a one-time execution bonus of .5%.

Motion to approve the Custodial Contract made by C. Miles, seconded by D. Cooke. Motion passed unanimously: 4/0.

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XI. Covid Protocols for the Fall

Dr. J. Mosley delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining the plan to re-open. Language in the presentation is credited to the CDC, DESE, Nurse's Union, Dr. Dellasandro, and the school legal counsel team. The plan to reopen is based on guidelines and expectations from the DESE, DPH, CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), staff, families and students are not legally obligated to inform the schools whether their children are vaccinated or not. Apart from students with medical conditions or behavioral needs, DESE and DPH are strongly recommending that all students K to 6 wear a mask when indoors. Masks may be removed while eating indoors and are not required outside. Unvaccinated staff in all grades and students in grade 7 and above are recommended to wear a mask indoors. Vaccinated students and employees may remain unmasked. Regardless of vaccination status, any individual at high risk for severe disease from COVID or has a high risk household member is encouraged to wear a mask.

By federal and public health order, all students and staff are required to wear masks on the school bus and in school health offices at this time. In areas of substantial to high transmission levels, people who are not vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other unvaccinated individuals. It is particularly important for people who are not fully vaccinated to wear a mask during physical education or recess activities and keep physical distance as much as possible.

Physical distance should be maximized as much as possible during school meals. School cleaning protocols are in place per the US Environmental Protection Agency. Given the very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, single use items and packaged meals are not required. Frequent hand washing continues to be promoted.

South Hadley Public Schools will keep the current mask mandate voted into effect by the School Committee in August 2020. This mandate requires all students, staff and visitors to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status. In doing so this allows schools to have in-person learning, extracurricular activities and after school clubs can continue, parents are able to plan accordingly for work and childcare, and it alleviates concerns and questions whether who or who may not be vaccinated. Nurses reported that half of our student population is eligible for vaccination, which leaves the other half not. This new variant is targeting young, healthy children and wearing a mask will protect everyone.

Building based re-opening teams have been implemented for each school. The teams continue to explore best practices to keep our community safe and schools open in-person. Some creative practices may include having lunch or conducting class outside etc.... Plans and expectations will continue to be communicated to parents, students, staff and the community and are subject to change pending infection rates.

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Parents are encouraged to direct any questions or concerns to the building principals. Future updates will be shared on The South Hadley Public Schools website and at School Committee meetings.

Questions & Answers:

Q: J. Matos questioned if signage will be placed outside the buildings to advise visitors of mask requirement.

A: Yes, visitors are required to wear masks.

Q: D. Cooke inquired what the distancing requirements will be in hallways and classrooms.

A: Initial requirements were 6 feet then it changed to 3 feet. Distancing will vary by class size and space. The 3 feet rule will apply and creative places to teach such as the football field or gym will be explored. DESE language will be reviewed for recommended guidelines.

C. Miles requested that last year's approaches be reviewed by the teams and policies follow current scientific data.

Q: K. Godek asked if the locker rooms in the Middle and High School will be available for students to use to prep or change for practice or games?

A: This is a great question for Principal Wood and her re-opening team. What is different this year is some students are vaccinated in the High School. It is a complex question because you could have 1 person utilize the locker room safely, but not 300. Consideration will be given to allowing a set number of people in the locker room at one time on a rotating basis.

Motion to uphold mask mandate from the August 20, 2020 vote made by A. Garcia, moved by C. Miles and seconded by D. Cooke. Roll call vote approved 4/0.

Action: PowerPoint presentation and links will be posted on The South Hadley Public Schools website.

XII. Recruitment Standards for Coaching Staff

Prior to Covid, public concern was expressed to the school committee that coaches on staff were selecting assistant coaches from the community without a clear recruitment process that included CORI checks at the High School. It is law that anyone working with children directly are required to have a CORI check. Dr. J. Mosley will work with the athletic director and principals to ensure agreements and processes are being followed for both paid and volunteer positions.

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J. Voyik recently conversed with Eric Castonguay and requested a list of anyone volunteering so that it can be cross-referenced with Human Resources to ensure a recent CORI is on file.

Action: Dr. J. Mosley will review and ensure that a policy or process is in place to be followed by the athletic director and principals.

XIII. School Choice

Select School Choice grade slots are available in the Elementary and High School. The public will be notified of available openings and interested families can fill out the application and send it to Central Office. Families will receive a notification letter and be placed on a waiting list should the grade not be open or already filled. Currently there is 5 slots available in 2nd grade, 1 slot in 9th grade and 8 slots in grades 10 and 11.

K. Godek inquired how the School Choice slots are determined. Dr. J. Mosley advised that slots are determined by several factors such as class size and population enrollment.

Action: Available School Choice slots will be published on the Town of South Hadley website.

XIV. ESSR II Grant

There are three ESSR Grants available. The first grant that was worked on last June 2020, EESR 1, is \$173,000 and will be utilized for transportation, technology, and substitute teachers. ESSR II is \$691,000. The schools were asked to submit needs and based on priorities, an itemized list was developed to equitably share funds across the schools. The funds will be utilized for teaching support, Summer School, playground equipment, a district-wide Assistant Special Education Director, school reopening teams, professional development for staff and administrators, and social emotional support for students in the form of a district-wide Social Worker. The Social Worker is a level-based position to help students throughout the district acclimate from a tumultuous year. Additionally, funding will be allocated to district diversity that will encompass areas such as gender identity, race relations, inclusivity etc...

A. Garcia asked for clarification regarding the Diversity Coordinator position versus diversity coaching. Dr. M. McLaughlin clarified that the coaching would be equivalent to a train the trainer model with teachers in the district whereas the Diversity Coordinator is an actual position.

All EESR II positions are grant funded and will be posted. The Special Education Assistant Director position formerly was an active position that was cut. Due to the volume of work the department does and the budget implications, a future conversation is required to address the sustainability of the \$3 million for tuition and additional transportation costs.

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C. Miles inquired if there is a plan to permanently fund the Assistant Special Education Director and will there be a solution to rising special education transportation costs? Over the years, discussions have been had regarding a Transportation Director.

At the present time J. Voyik has served as the alternative transportation director which is not part of her job description nor is she compensated for it. This is not sustainable long-term and further discussion needs to take place.

A. Garcia asked when the funds will be available. Once the ESSER II application is approved, funds will be available this year until June 2023. The funding is retroactive to July 1st of this year.

XV. Unfinished Business

a. Maintenance and Grounds at Plains School

The grounds at Plains School and the High School were walked this week and are looking good. J. Voyik spoke to Anne at the Planning Department and learned that the area at Plains is a natural rain basin and the wildflower areas are supposed to be there. Picnic tables have been moved out into the courtyard at the High School for students to have lunch and the art garden is really shaping up. While this was an unanticipated cost to the School Department, progress is being made and students are now able to use those areas.

D. Cooke inquired what the status is of meeting with the DPW and Town Administrator. J. Voyik reported that it is in progress.

b. South Hadley Police Department Memorandum of Understanding

Action: Dr. J. Mosley and J. Matos met to discuss language regarding bias, dress and training. Edits will be made to the new MOU and will be submitted for review at the next school committee meeting.

XVI. New Business

A. Garcia requested an update on the YMCA after school care program. Dr. J. Mosley plans to support the program and reopen under DESE guidelines. Additional conversation will be had with YMCA Director, Cheryl Labrie, regarding cleaning and custodial responsibilities. Currently the Y is only offering after school care at this time. Before school care will be determined pending need and staffing.

D. Cooke inquired if lunch would continue being free. J. Voyik advised that lunch will be free throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

With no further matters to discuss, the School Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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The next School Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 19, 2021. It is unknown at this time whether the session will be remote or in-person.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Rainville
Executive Assistant, South Hadley Public Schools.

Reviewed and Approved by,
Jahmal Mosley, Ed.D.
Superintendent, South Hadley Public Schools.
Date: 8/16/21