

Central Massachusetts Collaborative

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Dr. Susan Farrell, Executive Director
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Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, September 24, 2020, at 8:30 a.m.
14 New Bond Street, Worcester, MA 01606

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Maureen Binienda, Chair, Superintendent of Schools, Worcester Public Schools
Dr. Kristine Nash, Interim Superintendent of Schools, Oxford Public Schools

Also Present: Dr. Susan Farrell, Executive Director, CMC
Beverly Tefft, Director of Finance, CMC
Joseph Meichelbeck, Treasurer, CMC
Mike Kelly, Director, Robert Goddard Academy, CMC
Evelyn Marrone, Director, Woodward Day School, CMC
Ann Ortiz, Director, Central MA Academy, CMC
Rich Cameron, Assistant Director, Woodward Day School, CMC
Kris Collins, Assistant Director, Woodward Day School, CMC

1. Superintendent Binienda called the Meeting to Order at 8:37 a.m.

2. Approval of the August 13, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (voting item)

Dr. Nash made a MOTION to approve the August 13, 2020 Board of Directors meeting minutes.

Superintendent Binienda seconds the MOTION.

3. Director of Finance & Operations Report

a. Warrants

Mrs. Tefft introduced three (3) warrants for the month of July 2020 which will be scanned and sent to the Board for signature.

b. Audit Update

Mrs. Tefft reported the auditors were on site this week and she expects their presentation to be ready for the November meeting. Due to turnover, the Business Office has fallen behind and is working to finalize things for a timely audit.

Mrs. Tefft introduced a draft of the FY20 P&L report. This draft statement projects a surplus of over one (1) million dollars which was expected due to decreased operating expenses related to COVID-19. The Collaborative is hoping to use these funds to better align with other districts for specific employee categories. Mrs. Tefft expects to have more solid numbers in the October meeting.

Superintendent Binienda inquired about any decrease in enrollment. Mrs. Tefft was pleased to announce no decrease in enrollment numbers.

Mrs. Tefft also provided an update on switching banks from Webster First Credit Union to UniBank. This decision was addressed in a previous board meeting to better support the Collaborative needs. Mrs. Tefft is hoping to have a more responsive relationship with UniBank and is pleased to support a local business.

4. Executive Director Report

a. Opening of Schools Report

Staff returned to CMC on Thursday, August 27 with two (2) days of fully remote PD. Buildings reopened to staff on August 31 for two (2) weeks of on-site PD. This included PPE training and state mandated training in confidentiality, conflict of interest laws and SPED laws. Professional staff also participated in PD with Modern Teacher to improve hybrid and remote learning practices and PD for implementation of Study Island and Exact Path tools for student assessment. Dr. Farrell stated the most challenging issue for all staff is maintaining the appropriate physical distance which is something everyone needs to be vigilant with.

CMC reopened to students on September 14 with a phased-in hybrid learning model. In this plan, all students were divided into three (3) cohorts. Group A attends on-site week one (1) and attends school remotely on week two (2). Group B attends school remotely on week one (1) and attends on-site for week two (2). Group C students attend in-school for both week one (1) and week two (2). All students participate in remote learning on Friday of every week. The on-site schedule for the first two weeks has been half days on-site and remote for the remainder of the learning time. Additionally, Dr. Farrell was pleased to inform the board that most students have done well adhering to the new COVID-19 protocols.

The Collaborative also instituted new busing practices which have been successful. CMC's New Bond location has the largest group of students. Dr. Farrell commended staff for an excellent job of getting kids in and out of the building in a safe and timely manner.

Superintendent Binienda inquired about how remote and in-class learning are occurring together. Dr. Farrell stated that every program has developed a full plan based on their student needs. So far, technology has been the biggest challenge.

Superintendent Binienda recommended the Caregivers Technology Academy developed by Worcester Public Schools. Additionally, Worcester Public Schools has fifteen (15) hours of self-directed technology training which would be an excellent PD for CMC staff.

b. Student Enrollment Updates

Dr. Farrell introduced the student census for September 2020. She was pleased to receive new referrals over the month of August bringing the total number of students to three-hundred and ninety (390) for the public day school programs. There are four (4) Recovery High School students and twenty-six (26)

Woodward Day School students for a total enrollment of four hundred and twenty (420) students collaborative wide.

c. Staff Updates

Dr. Farrell presented the September 2020 staffing updates explaining that the Collaborative has been creative to cover staffing needs. Custodial staff has been increased and the schedules have been restructured to support daily cleaning with a deep cleaning every Friday while staff are remote.

Dr. Farrell addressed the Collaborative need for additional nursing support. CMC is looking to have an LPN to assist with the isolation room. Additionally, the Collaborative nursing staff has developed processes for when staff or students call out which align with DPH guidelines.

Dr. Farrell discussed the current COVID-19 community metrics and presented options for next steps. Worcester is currently in the red for the second week on the Community Level COVID-19 Data Map. The first option is to stay at half-days and reassess weekly. The second option is to add one (1) hour to the day and hold at this level until Worcester drops to yellow for a minimum of three (3) weeks. With both options, programs will work to increase the number of students in cohort C based on parent preference, space and busing capabilities. Dr. Farrell recommended option two (2) and asked the board to provide a recommendation.

Dr. Nash thanked Dr. Farrell for her recommendation and stated the decision needs to be based upon the health and safety of staff and students. Dr. Nash agreed with option two (2) of increasing the day by one (1) hour and holding this schedule until Worcester drops to yellow for at least three (3) weeks.

Superintendent Binienda agreed with the recommendation of Dr. Farrell and Dr. Nash. Effective September 28, 2020, CMC will add one (1) hour to the school day for in-person learning.

5. Member Requests/New Business

Dr. Nash made a MOTION for the Board to accept the following donation:

- DonorsChoose.org, “Hear, Hear” for CMP, unknown amount

Superintendent Binienda seconds the MOTION.

6. Executive Session

No Executive Session held.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn NeJaime