

**PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
241 South Ocean Avenue
Patchogue, New York 11772**

**Transcript of March 30, 2020 Business Meeting
Conducted via Teleconference due to Covid-19 Virus
Broadcasted via Facebook Live**

Anthony O'Brien: OK, I'm going to call the meeting to order. [6:34 p.m.]

I need a motion to move to go on to Executive Session.

Bernadette Smith: I'll make a motion.

Marc Negrin; I'll second.

Anthony O'Brien: I need a second.

Dennis Logan: Who made the motion and who seconded?

Anthony O'Brien: Who made the motion and who seconded? I'm sorry.

Bernadette Smith: Bernadette, first.

Anthony O'Brien: And Marc seconded it.

All those in favor?

Group Response: Aye.

Anthony O'Brien: All those opposed?

OK, we're going to move into Executive Session. [6:35 p.m.]

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ENTERED EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 6:35 P.M. THE REASON FOR THE
EXECUTIVE SESSION IS REFLECTED IN THE MEETING MINUTES**

7:30 P.M.

Anthony O'Brien: OK, I'm calling the meeting to order. Welcome to our March 30th Business Meeting via teleconference. I'm the Board of Education President Anthony O'Brien. This meeting will be conducted via teleconference. Attending tonight's meeting is our Board of Education First Vice President Kelli Anne Jennings, Board of Education Second Vice President Teresa Balducci-Greenberg, Trustee Diana Andrade, Trustee Thomas Donofrio, Trustee Marc Negrin, Trustee Bernadette Smith, Superintendent of

Schools Dr. Donna Jones, District Clerk Dennis Logan, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Lori Cannetti, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Dr. Joey Cohen, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Pupil Services Dr. Jessica Lukas, School Business Administrator Frank Mazzie, School Attorney Richard Guercio, School Attorney Lisa Hutchinson, School Attorney Reesa Miles.

Those members of the public who have questions, regarding the meeting and the topics discussed, are welcome to submit them to Dr. Jones and she, or the appropriate administrators, will provide a response. No responses will be provided during the meeting or immediately afterwards. Questions for myself or for the Board of Education should address the district clerk, Dennis Logan, and again a response will be provided in a timely manner. Both Dr. Jones' and Dennis Logans' e-mails are posted on the website.

An audio recording of the meeting will be available on the district website, pmschools.org, as soon as tomorrow, based on any technical issues regarding the posting. Additionally, a draft of the meeting minutes will be on the website as soon as they are available. As per the modifications to the Public Meetings Laws we will provide a transcript of the meeting when it is available.

Thank you for your understanding during this difficult time.

So, let's begin, there will be no presentations or reports. So, we have the Consent Agenda to approve.

Dennis Logan: Nothing is pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Anthony O'Brien: OK, so I need a motion to accent the Consent Agenda.

Teresa Baldinucci-Greenberg: I make a motion.

Anthony O'Brien: That's Teresa and I need a second.

Diana Andrade: I'll second that – Diana Andrade

Anthony O'Brien: All those in favor? Dennis is going to do a roll-call vote.

Dennis Logan: Roll Call Vote: Ms. Andrade?

Diana Andrade: Yes

Dennis Logan: Ms. Baldinucci-Greenberg?

Teresa Baldinucci-Greenberg: Yes

Dennis Logan: Mr. Donofrio?

Thomas Donofrio: Yes

Dennis Logan: Ms. Jennings?

Kelli Anne
Jennings: Yes

Dennis Logan: Mr. Negrin?

Marc Negrin: Yes

Dennis Logan: Ms. Smith?

Bernadette Smith: Yes

Dennis Logan: And, Mr. O'Brien?

Anthony O'Brien: Yes

Dennis Logan: The Consent Agenda is approved unanimously.

Anthony O'Brien: OK, there was nothing pulled from the Consent Agenda and there were no actions arising out of Consent Agenda. We have one committee report and that's for Instructional Committee and Trustee Teresa, if you want to give a report on that...

Teresa Balducci-
Greenberg: Yes, the Instructional Committee met on March 5, during that time our discussion was about the weighting of classes at the high school and whether the weighting is, what we are accomplishing what would be appropriate to be accomplished at this time and why students are taking weighted classes. We had very lively discussion. We found some information on line about survey questions. We started to develop some survey questions and hoped to re-address it at our next meeting. The intention was to get a survey out to the students. But with the pending situation that was tabled for this time being. We will be re-visiting it in the future.

Anthony O'Brien: Thank you Teresa. Dr. Jones, I know you want to speak, but I know that Lori Cannetti has a few things to say as well.

Dr. Donna Jones: Yes, well, I'm going to start by saying good evening everyone, to our trustees, also to colleagues out there and to all of those who are tuning in live. Once, again, should there be any technical difficulties with this presentation it will be also recorded so that anybody who wants to receive this information, it will be available to them tomorrow on the district website in a recorded fashion, as well.

I do want everyone to know that there are a number of things and a number of questions that have come to our attention recently that I hope will clarify some

questions and concerns that the community has at this time. We have been doing our very best to keep the community informed and we do know that this is a very difficult time for us all. We are trying to get information out as quickly as we can, but we are also trying to flow the information in such a way that it's not inundating the parents with information that doesn't give them time to acclimate to what is that we are providing.

I want to share a number of updates and respond to a number of the types of questions that we have been receiving over the last week and I beg your patience and indulgence as we try, our very best, to get the information to the parents as best we can.

As the parents know, the Governor has extended the school closures through April 15th. He will re-evaluate at that time, however, based on the current trajectory of the virus, we do not anticipate schools to be open at that time. We're hoping for the best, but we are, indeed, preparing for the worst, so that, no instruction is interrupted, as best as it can, as difficult as that may sound during this timeframe. So, we're going to be going on a two-week by two-week basis in accordance with what the Governor asked us to do and how he re-evaluated. So, at this juncture we do know that school is closed through April 15 and we will have additional information at that time.

Next, I'll talk a little bit about the work packets. We've received a number of calls regarding the work packets. The best thing that I can do is to share with parents, because some parents are concerned that they will be asked to scan the two weeks of work packets back to the school district. We're not asking you to do that. Our goal in providing the work packets..there were a couple of reasons for why we did this. The way we moved in Patchogue-Medford is moving up the calendar and having had the two weeks of vacation time for the students and the parents and the teachers to be able to acclimate to this change. They were on vacation for two weeks and, hence, today is the very first day that our teachers are back, that our students are back, virtually, and trying to acclimate to this new norm for the time.

So, what we've asked our teachers to do is to begin training this week on what this virtual and distance learning will look like. We've asked our students to start to work on their packets during this timeframe. They're not expected to go live with virtual learning as of yet. We're just asking you to do the work, to work with the children, parents, so that they can remain engaged in learning as we prepare for the distance learning plan. Just do your best. We're not collecting it right now. Just keep it at home, but we don't want there to be a disruption of instruction. So, we just want the children to be engaged and we recognize that some parents have said the packets are too difficult, some have said that the packets are too easy. We've done our very best to address the first wave of this process and you will find that it will be much different when children start getting their information and their class instruction from their respective teachers which will commence in the two-week period to follow.

If you have any questions, you can reach out to your teacher, your child's teacher, the building principal or assistant principal of the respective buildings that your children attend school or the district office staff, in that order. But if you chose to reach out to me directly, I will forward the e-mail as best I can or I will respond to it myself, but we intend to respond quickly to any parent concerns or any student concerns that you have so that we can continue to move forward in the best way that we can.

The next question is regarding the deployment of devices, and there have been many questions, and as you know, well over a week ago we asked that you complete a survey regarding devices. The purpose of that survey is for us to get an understanding of how many members of our community had no, absolutely no, device, how many had just the cell phone as a device, and how many children were in households so that we could understand how best to deploy these devices. We received responses that represented the lions share of the district and so we have to go with who responded to the survey and we are deploying a plan for getting these devices to households. We ask your patience because we are first going to address those households that have no devices at all. Then we're going to address those that have multiple children and only a cell phone. So, we're going to secondly address those households that only have a cell phone and then we're going to address those that have multiple children and only one device. So, we have a certain finite number of iPads and we have a finite number of laptops. We'll be deploying the iPad first because the laptops have to be re-imaged in order for us to proceed.

At this point I would like to give a special recognition to James Richroath and Dennis Pettas and our entire technology department. They have literally been working around-the-clock to assist with all aspects of the deployment of the devices, the website updates, surveys that have been conducted in Spanish and English and distance learning next steps.

I've already discussed how we intend to deploy the devices. If for some reason you did not respond to the survey, which I really hope you did, but if for some reason you just couldn't, it's not too late. We are not going to open the survey back up. You can call my office, 631-687-6380, or e-mail me directly or e-mail the technology department and we will be sure to note and put you on the list for addressing in the respective way.

We're also going to be focusing on secondary students before the primary, once we make sure that we make sure that all of the categories we have discussed have been addressed, and, as I've indicated, we have a finite number of devices so we ask your patience and understanding as we begin to deploy. We will begin to deploy on the week of April 6. You'll have to make an appointment, on line, that we will send out information on that. Please don't ask us yet, because we will send it to you. And, so, when you hear my message saying this is an important message from Dr. Jones, please pick up or let the recording play. It is important that you remain up-to-date with all the information that we're sharing.

Thanks to all of the Assistant Superintendents, our Operational Supervisors, the teachers, to our parents, to our community, certainly to our Board of Education members, to our school food service workers, our security guards, our nurses, our administrators. When I tell you that all of them have been working around-the-clock, and if, for some reason, I missed anybody its only because I am trying to remember everybody. Everybody has been working because we care about the children. Our primary interest is to make sure that they are served appropriately during this challenging time.

As far as Special Education children go, we are mandated to provide their CSE's and we are working to set-up virtual CSE meetings so that they will move on beginning April 13th.

I would like to talk a little bit, also, for those parents that are mandated reporters or emergency response workers or even essential reports of any other sort. We have now set-up through SCOPE, and it's S-C-O-P-E, where there's childcare. It is free of charge to any essential report in the community, in our community. We have executed an agreement this evening which will enable them to get the support, but you have to be an essential report, as identified by the law in order to participate. Please visit our website if you are in need of childcare in this very difficult time and you will see or you can call my office and we'll provide you with the information in order to make sure that if you are an essential reporter that you are receiving the childcare in accordance with the Governor's mandate.

I will say that we have worked very hard with the State Education Department to submit a Distance Learning Plan, a Childcare Plan, a plan to ensure that if medications needed to be returned to parents that we had done that, and as I said, a distance learning plan. So, we've done a number of things. We're in compliance with everything we should be in compliance with regarding the State Education Department.

If you are in need of breakfast or lunch, we are serving breakfast and lunch daily at Canaan, at Medford and at Eagle Elementary Schools. It doesn't matter which grade level you are in if you are a student in the Patchogue-Medford School District in grades K through 12, you can go to one of those locations and receive a breakfast and a hot lunch, somedays hot, somedays cold, but you'll receive lunch daily. We are there to serve you and we are there at those sites every day.

The deadline for non-public school transportation has been extended to April 15th. That is for parents of private and parochial school students. You need to know that has been extended by two weeks. As always, if you have questions and you are the parent of a child attending private or parochial school please contact the transportation department and they can direct you further.

As I am, I just want to also mention that we will be providing many social and emotional supports. Our guidance counselors, our psychologists, our social workers are ready to work if any of the parents are having challenges with behavioral issues and we understand that their will be heightened anxieties during this difficult time. We are here to help in that regard, as well.

And, there are some questions regarding the distance learning and we will have more answers to you shortly, but there were a few that came up and I will respond to a few of the questions we have received right now. There will be much more to come. There will be question and answers. There may be other creative ways that we'll speak, in terms of podcasts or other informative opportunities to get the message out so that parents can better understand what this distance learning will look like and how we can best support our elementary students, our secondary students, our students with learning challenges, and those that require 504 supports and those that require other supports in accordance with their special education IEP's.

So, I do have a few questions here that were sent to me earlier in the day that I will respond to as I think it will be things that will be helpful to all parents that are listening-in.

The first one is: Will the children be able to see their teacher? The answer to that is no, classes are not live classes. Teachers may use voice, they may use PowerPoints, and create pre-recorded videos. Teacher will be able to chat, one-on-one, with students and they will also be able to e-mail.

We will be getting out a letter to all parents, K-12, with information that will enable you to set-up what you need to set-up and we will be available to assist, should you have questions with the set-up to make sure that you are prepared when we have to go live with distance learning.

The next question is: Will the students be able to write on documents and submit them? This is a Microsoft365 platform. Students will be able to user Microsoft Word, Excel, etc. and submit work directly through the platform.

So there have been many parents that have been concerned that their initial work packets had a lot of paper involved and they can't print, they don't have a printer, the don't have access to print, it's too costly to print, printer's broken, all of these things. There are a couple of options we have afforded on the website and we don't expect you to go into a lot of expense to print. They're in a PDF format which affords you the ability to type on the documents. As another alternative, the old-fashioned way is to take out a piece of paper, a spiral notebook, record the lesson in the notebook and write the answers down there. As long as you have some way of recording that you've done the work we are going to be flexible in our responses.

Just one more question: Will they be able to submit the packets they are currently working on? The packets will be returned when students return. We are working

out what this means in terms of report card grades and other things and you'll be getting more, additional, information on that as we're about to move into a time where it would be the third quarter marking period so you're going to receive additional information on how we'll be responding to that.

The last thing that I want to mention, and I'm sure I'm missing a lot, but I'm trying to be respectful of time and not overwhelm the parents with too much information.

The last thing that I will say is the Governor just recently announced, I believe last Thursday it was, that there will be significant cuts to school district budgets. We don't know exactly what that will mean, but we know that it's going to be significant. If it goes, as though, through the way that we believe it may go it even has the opportunity to reduce on a quarterly basis, should the legislators go with giving that authority to the Governor. We know this will be painful. We don't know exactly what those cuts will mean yet. We do know that we're almost going to have to start working on the budget development from scratch and make some very difficult decisions. We know we have to take a step back and re-calibrate in this new norm period. We may even have to figure out how we incorporate the one-to-one devices into this budget if we can afford to do that because we don't know how long this is going to take and how long we are going to be in this isolation period and we want to make sure that we can best serve our children in this process.

As we understand at this point the targeted vote date for elections and for budget votes has now been pushed-back to at least June 1st. We don't know if that is even a realistic date at this point. We'll have to stay tuned and see what they advise us.

There's a lot of information unfolding on a regular basis, from hour-to-hour, certainly day-to-day, and so I ask you to stay tuned. I know that I have been contacting parents a lot lately. I've been sending out a lot of information and know some parents have said it's difficult to navigate the website and we're doing our best to address these issues within the constraints and confines of what we have to work with. We're taking all the questions under advisement, we're responding as best we can to all parent inquiries and whether it's myself responding, or a member of the staff, we're working around the clock. There are no hours on our workdays these days. We're just working to make this as best a transition, under the circumstances, as possible.

So, with that said. That is my report tonight. I tried my best to summarize where we are and what the next steps are. Parents, I just implore you to please look and listen-out for my voice when I say I have an update, please work with us, please just be patient. We know this is tough, but we do take under advisement all the commentary that you provide and we try to see, how best, we can work with what we have to work with in order to address your concerns, while also looking at the bigger picture of everyone's problems and how we can best serve, not only individual parents, but the community as a whole and I think our community supports, our mayor, all of our churches, all of those that have offered food to our families, the homeless families within the district. Everybody has been so

supportive and we thank you. We greatly regard and respect you. We know this is difficult for you and we are here to work this through with each and every day. Thank you and we will get through this together.

Anthony O'Brien: Thank you Donna. Is Lori Cannetti going to be speaking?

Dr. Donna Jones: No. I've already responded to that.

Anthony O'Brien: And, is there extra help? Is there, like extra help that they can be doing?

Dr. Donna Jones: We have additional resources, so there have been, the question from Trustee O'Brien is, is there extra help? We are doing our very best to work that through. There are some children that may need extra help and certainly they'll be working with their teachers and we'll be working through that to try to get some responses to that and there are other children that need more of a challenge. That's really what's behind differentiated instruction and we'll do our very best to address all these issues. All of this is new to us and we're really just trying to figure it all out. So, more to come on that, as well. The next time that we address you in a podcast format will be addressing what you can expect next with the online instruction.

Anthony O'Brien: OK thank you.

OK, before we close- up -

On behalf of the Board of Education, I would like to thank the faculty and the staff for all the hard work and many hours that they've put into moving the district forward in the long and very hard, trying times that we have been going through.

I would also like to address the community of Patchogue-Medford. Please remember, that during these times like this, it's easier that when we work together for the common good. If you have any questions and clarifications please feel free to reach-out to the district office for correct information. Unfortunately, not all the information that you read on line is correct. Remember, the number one goal during this for the health of our families and our children. Everything else will fall into place. The administration and the Board of Education have made it our goal to work on the best possible plans that will serve our children and their families. We have all, and will continue to update you as we move forward. We wish you all and continued good health and again feel free to reach out to me or to Dr. Jones, through Dennis, and, again, you can find his link on the website.

I need a motion to adjourn.

Thomas Donofrio: I'll make the motion. This is Tom.

Anthony O'Brien: Tom, thank you. I need a second.

Kelli Anne
Jennings: I'll second.... Kelli Anne

Anthony O'Brien: Kelli Anne.... We have second.

All those in favor?

Group Response: Aye

Anthony O'Brien: All those opposed?

OK,

Richard Guercio: Excuse me for a moment. Did you guys vote on the Consent Agenda?

Anthony O'Brien: Yes, we did.

Dennis Logan: Yes

Dr. Donna Jones: Yes

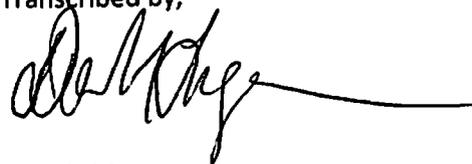
Richard Guercio: OK, sorry. There's little electronic glitch over here. OK.

Anthony O'Brien: OK, thanks Rich. That was our lawyer.

Alright, so we had a, all of us were in consent to adjourn the meeting at 8:00.

Thank you all. Good evening. Thank you.

Transcribed by,



Dennis M. Logan
District Clerk

April 1, 2020