

Oyster River Cooperative School District

Barrington Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2020

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Denise Day, Michael Williams, Al Howland, Yusi Turell **Absent:** Brian Cisneros

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Suzanne Filippone, Mark Milliken, Andy Lathrop, Kim Felch

GUEST PRESENT: Dan Moulis, Dave Gibson, Carrie Neill, Tim Hatfield, Garth Svenson

CALLED TO ORDER at 6:03 PM by Tom Newkirk

Tom asked all members in attendance to introduce themselves.

II. DISCUSSION ITEM:

Barrington Parental concerns related to HS Remote Learning

Dave started with a statement: How strong is the relationship Barrington has with Oyster River. In his opinion it is as good as it has ever been. He then reviewed the Barrington survey results. It was distributed to all families in Barrington in mid-November. It had an over 50% response rate. It also received a tremendous amount of feedback outside of the survey. Concerns focused on the quality of instruction, communication-what is the plan, and the perception there is no sense of direction. General concern is that there is no real plan for a path forward. It has been less than transparent in comparison to other schools they send students to. 31% rate instruction received a response of a 4 or 5. In Dover it was at 55%. 45% rate it at 1 or 2. In Dover it is 29%. What is the path forward? In person or hybrid 80% want this (51/29). Consistent with Dover. The good news is this is consistent with Dover. Bad news in how they rate the quality of the instruction.

Denise asked what was the actual question for #3. Dan stated that it was related to the level of instruction/instructional model provided. He also brought up concern's families have with remote learning. There was a general theme of wanting to have a hybrid model. Other theme was that having opportunity to meet with their teachers. Michael asked about question 4.

Carrie asked what type of surveys has OR done. Jim said in general parents of OR students generally want the same thing. This Board spend most of the summer debating the plan for the Fall. The big issue was UNH students. The impact in September was nominal. November was atrocious for community spread. Durham experienced the highest numbers in the state at one point. This week we had to shut down the PEP program, we lost 19 staff members to exposure this week. The Board was very cautious. The community spread has been pretty dramatic in November and the beginning of December. The model we choose cannot be done in a vacuum. We have to understand what is happening in the community. As we are building models the Board wants timelines, but it has to be specific to a situation we are in. Rather than say we will implement on a specific date we should be saying once the levels get to this rate then we can begin this model. What is the best choice for the community? We are struggling with trying to follow directions from a science-based perspective. The CDC recommendations are changing for convenience. We decided to stay with the science-based recommendations.

Barrington went through a similar process. They standardized their data from a very limited number of sources. We appreciate and recognize that your policies and practices are solely yours. We do not intend to dictate it. One of the things is that there is no correlation in community infection and student infection.

Denise explained that in OR we have a mix of students in the high school because of our choice model. It is not just one cohort.

Barrington looked at it in a very simplistic manner. Not about what you do in school. The notion that all students are safer in remote learning because they are staying at home learning is false. They are going to other homes and are out and about. Monday-Friday students are in school and are tested and they have one of the lowest rates in the state. How come it is working so well in Barrington and why is there a fear of bring kids back into the school in Oyster River.

Tom asked Suzanne to do an overview of what the high school is doing. Suzanne explained we started small and we have increased the number of students coming in. About 150 per day. Have afternoon flex period. Starting with classroom-based instruction, reassessment, meeting with advisors. Two weeks ago, we started with freshman and had about 50% in. Monday and Tuesday had 9-12 come in and had about 25% come in. It was optional. Students are losing 20% of their class for 2 days. All kids are running through their classes. Whenever you pull students in you will have students working independently. How do we support the students who are at home when students are in. Garth asked what we are doing at the MS. Jim explained what we are doing with about 150 students in per day. Carrie appreciated the overview and asked what additional services you implemented to address the social and emotional concerns. Kim Felch talked about Dr Roy and Cassey Ackley's service. She explained that they are looking at ways to increase motivation. Focused on how to create ways to get kids in the building and get connected. Suzanne explained that had 2 weeks of activities around the social/emotional concerns. Kim stated that it has been an individual approach. Did a debrief virtually with every student to see where they are. Have a counselor available every day for contact. Doing newsletters.

The question is why we can't do in school instruction. Why when the building is one of the newest building in the state and not near the capacity. Suzanne explained we cannot have all of the students in and practice social distancing. Garth asked why you can't do the 50%. Yusi asked if they were aware of the November decision of the Board. She explained the thinking of the Board was because of the amount of time students would not be learning and not being able to cohort. What are you going to look at for when you launch the plan? How could a MS with spacing limitations and antiquated conditions be deemed safe and not the high school? Denise explained that the middle school has teams and we are only bringing students in for 1 day per week. It is a very complicated situation at the high school. What is the gateway? Jim said it is our ability to keep the school open. If we had a 50% model, we would be closed. Al explained that the Board struggled with the asynchronous learning. Suzanne explained how the current model works. Yusi explained it was difficult to see how this would impact the learning. There are tradeoffs in each model. It is a reasonable question to ask for a timeline to develop a plan that does not sacrifice asynchronous time. Is that true that you do not have a plan in place. Michael agreed that they do not have a plan.

Seems clear it is really about what is the plan that will be used going forward. Instead of trying to build a model that fits with the cohorting we have in the school, why not change the cohorting. Michael stated that if we did that, we would eliminate the choice. That is what makes Oyster River attractive. We asked that question in the Spring and if we asked it today, we might get a very different answer. Dave stated that it feels like you are trying to change the oil on a car that is going 60 mile an hour down the road. The feedback he is getting is that it is not consistent and there is no path we are going down. Al explained that we started with what we learned in the spring and how can we get better. We decide to improve the remote learning because we knew if we brought them in, they would very soon be out. If we look at the difference between Dover and OR we would see that Dover is consistent. Lot of feedback about not liking it but they do understand it. That is why there is a big difference. Suzanne asked what is meant by inconsistent. Is it the teachers, the learning, the model and decision making? It would be helpful to understand what is meant by inconsistent. I cannot be a part of the solution if I don't understand what it means. Denise asked what is different. Dave explained they were told it would be remote from the start and it has stayed that way throughout. For instance, the pathway to bring freshmen into school was not clear.

Do you have data that you can look at in terms of progress? Has there been any standardized testing across the board for students? How do you judge how the students are doing? Suzanne explained the faculty looks at the common assessments the individual teachers are giving. What about pacing. It is a little off. Kids are struggling with memory and work completion. We are losing some in the middle of all of this. Dan asked about the engagement of students in the instruction. What are the plans for that second semester and what is the timeline and how is it communicated to the families? The next model is the 50% model. There would not be small cohorts. What is the data preventing us from doing it now? Jim explained that our process has been unpredictable. When we feel it is safe, we can move to a 50% model. Feeling from parents is go for it. Safest thing to do is just go remote. Question you have to balance is 2 days with teachers worth the tradeoff of for the time without teachers. When do we do this?

Dave stated that the question for Barrington is why are students in school in other schools and we are not. Students do not understand why their friends are going to school and they are not. That rolls up to parents and ultimately to the Board. How do you measure success, how do you know this is going to work? Jim stated that we do have the grade distribution for the freshman, and the number of students who are successful is better than all years back from 4 years ago. The number of students struggling is also lower than previous years. Teachers are not covering all of the same material. This is just one measure. Carrie asked when the last time was you did a survey. Denise asked it was in October and it was a big part of the decision making. Suzanne asked about students questioning why they made the choice to come to OR. Dave corrected her to say it was not what was being said. Just why are my friends in other schools going to school and OR students are not.

Tom stated it was very informative and he gets what they are relying even though it is not easy to hear them. Dave said he has a better understanding of what you are struggling with. Our relationship is strong, and it is good we can have these conversations.

Dan stated that he feels we have to keep the 6 foot of social distancing and that is one of the fundamental elements of what is different in our developing plans. He appreciated them coming and being candid.

Tuition Costs

Dave stated that they are going through the budgeting process and this has been an exceptional year. He would like to propose that any costs direct and indirect that we have not had access to we would like to be able to mitigate. He suggests we put together a smaller working group to bring some level of resolution. Tom suggested a letter to the superintendent to set up a working group to review this. Yusi asked for clarification. Dave stated it should be the superintendents and include the business staff.

III. ACTIONS: None

A. Superintendent Action Items

B. Board Action Items

IV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 {If Required}

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 {If Required.}

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Caswell
Business Administrator