

**Andover School Committee  
Minutes of March 19, 2020**

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**Members in Attendance:** Chair, Joel Blumstein  
**Members Calling into meeting:** Vice-Chair, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, Susan McCready, and Shannon Scully.  
**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Berman, Paul Szymanski, Sandra Trach and Sara Stetson, and Nicole Kieser

**I. School Committee Regular Meeting- Call to Order**

**A. Call to Order/Opening Ceremonies**

Chairman Blumstein called the School Committee to order at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Meeting Room located in the School Administration Building. Chair Blumstein, Superintendent Berman and Dee DeLorenzo were present in the meeting room; all others were participating remotely by telephone. The Meeting began with pledge/Moment of Silence and Salute to Flag.

Joel thanked everyone for their hard work during this difficult and challenging time especially the food service workers, custodians, assistants, teachers, administrators, parents and students.

**B. Communications:**

Due to the restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 virus, the Governor has authorized a change in the Open Meeting Law allowing the School Committee and Administrators to participate remotely.

Tonight's budget hearing will be rescheduled to a later date. There will be no public input session tonight, but we hope to have that option available moving forward. The Informal SC Forums are cancelled until school reopens. There is a lot of good information on the APS website and an email address, [covid-19@andoverma.us](mailto:covid-19@andoverma.us), is available to ask questions. School Committee members can be reached at [SchoolCommittee@andoverma.us](mailto:SchoolCommittee@andoverma.us).

The Annual Town Election has been postponed until further notice, however, you can continue to vote by absentee ballot available at the Town Clerk's Office. As part of the order to delay the election, Joel will remain on the School Committee until his successor is sworn in. Town Meeting may also be postponed.

**C. Superintendent – Update on APS District Closure Due to COVID-19**

We are in unprecedented territory and the responsiveness of administrators and staff has been extraordinary. Clearly, we made the right decision to close the schools. There has been a team of administrators diligently working together with our core team to ensure we had a process in place. Dr. Berman recognized core team members Rita Casper, Steve Chinosi, Sandy Trach, Sara Stetson, Paul Szymanski, and Nicole Kieser. In addition, our teachers are providing at-home learning activities for their students. Special Education personnel have

created a site to provide resources for parents. Our custodians have been incredibly diligent with disinfecting the buildings, and a special thanks to our cafeteria staff who continue to provide meals to our students in need.

The Commissioner of DESE has been very exact about the terms of the closure. The current closure period is not considered Time on Learning and is geared towards enrichment opportunities and learning activities that students can access from home. Equity and access is a high-priority for students with special needs and learning challenges who require additional support; it would be inequitable for us to drive forward and leave others behind. We are well equipped with staff and technology allowing us to put relevant information on-line and to provide alternative options for enrichment learning opportunities for students.

The members of the School Committee thanked everyone in the District for their hard work during this difficult time. The situation changes quickly, and we should move forward in small increments for now. Teachers are all working remotely and can be reached online.

Dr. Berman wants to provide substantive learning experiences for students keeping in mind that we are in a disruptive time. Teaching on-line is a very different kind of experience.

Sandy Trach has been working with the Program Coordinators and their faculty to pull themes and activities together. Faculty has been hard at work planning at-home activities. An at-home work site is available on the APS website. The webpage provides links to different grade levels, and links to a lot of different information. The site will be continually refreshed.

Sara Stetson and her team from Student Services have been working with a Universally Designed site. They have a unique challenge for students who cannot access the information and have developed creative ways to provide a number of opportunities for student learning. They will be regularly updating the elementary website and the Middle/High School support pages will be launched very soon.

The Business Office will have limited but continuous staffing. Food Services will have a support staff, and the custodial staff will be rotating shifts

The IT Department is working to get access to technology to families who do not have access. A Tech survey and a telephone call is going out asking families if they need any tech assistance or need a device, etc.

As of now, the Governor's order closes school until Monday April 6, 2020. Joel and Shelley had a good phone conversation with Matt Bach, AEA President, and talked through a number of issues.

**1. Discussion/Vote: Hourly Payment w/detailed costs**

The issue of pay for staff falls under the authority of the School Committee. People who have been asked to work from home will continue to be paid. Joel hopes that we will find a way to pay all of our employees. Shelley said our salaried employees continue to work; instructional assistants, custodial and cafeteria employees are all hourly employees, some of whom are working and some are not.

The majority of hourly employee's salaries are budgeted, except for our Nutrition Services Staff (cost \$4,500 per day). To continue to cover their salaries, the cost will have to come out of the general budget. We do have savings that will occur due to school closing, a portion of which could be used to offset the expense of paying the Nutrition Services Staff for the next three weeks.

Dr. Berman recommends we go forward with paying all hourly workers during the current closure.

The School Committee members are all in agreement to fully support this recommendation. Joel said this may add to our deficit, but it is the right thing to do. We should carefully document all of our expenditures, be creative in looking for productive opportunities to engage staff, and should pursue funding opportunities that may be available to us at the State or Federal level.

Shannon Scully moved that the Committee vote to adopt the recommendation of the Superintendent that, during the current closure of the Andover Public Schools caused by the COVID-19 crisis, all hourly employees of Andover Public Schools who have been directed not to work because of the closure continue to receive the wages that they would have received before the closure. The motion seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call vote: Susan McCready-Y, Paul Murphy-Y, Shannon Scully-Y, Tracey Spruce-Y, and Joel Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**Discussion/Vote: Student Opportunity Plan submission or extension of due date**

APS is slated to receive \$172,000 in increased funding under the Student Opportunity Act. We will be using a significant portion of our funds to focus on closing student achievement gaps to ensure that all students achieve at high-levels and are successfully prepared for life. We are committed to using an evidence-based approach to close gaps.

Sandy Trach talked about the Chapter 132 Act Relative to Students to provide foundation and additional benefits in the school requiring us to submit a 3-year evidence-based plan to close the achievement gap. We are focusing on Hispanic/Latino students and students with disabilities to improve any disparities. We will be supporting the students academically, socially, and emotionally using evidenced-based programs to close the gap. It is a 3-year plan requiring a vote of approval by the School Committee

Shannon Scully moved that the Committee vote to approve submittal to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the Student Opportunity Plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call vote: Susan McCready-Y, Paul Murphy-Y, Shannon Scully-Y, Tracey Spruce-Y, and Joel Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**IV. Adjournment**

At 8:07 P.M. on a motion by Tracey Spruce and seconded by Susan McCready, the Andover School Committee moved to adjourn. Roll call vote: Susan McCready-Y, Paul Murphy-Y, Shannon Scully-Y, Tracey Spruce-Y, and Joel Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary