

# CARVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, March 9, 2020

7:00 p.m. OPEN MEETING

Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Meeting Room 1

## School Committee Present:

Andrew Cardarelli  
Jason Greenwood  
Stephanie Clougherty  
Andrew Soliwoda  
James O'Brien

## Also Present

Scott Knief, Superintendent  
Brad Brothers, Chief Operations and Finance Officer  
Meredith Erickson, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

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**Meeting Opened:** Andrew Cardarelli opened the meeting at **7:04 p.m.** with the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Recognition:**

### **Emma Simmons: 1,000 point - Girls Basketball**

Grade 12 student Emma Simmons was recognized for achieving a place in the 1,000 point club for Carver Basketball. Mr. Knief noted that in addition she was a league All Star for 3 years, a Patriot Ledger All Scholastic for 3 years, a team captain for both her junior and senior years, an offensive MVP for 2 years and also volunteered as a youth basketball coach for 2 years as well as her community service at the Lady Crusader Basketball camps in the summers. The Lady Crusader Varsity Basketball team went to the South Sectional finals the past 2 years. The committee recognized the outstanding season for the girls team and for Emma.

Emma shared that she plans on playing for Eastern Connecticut State next year. She said it achieving her 1,000th point was humbling and thanked her family, coaches and the team for their support.

### **I. Comments from the General Public:**

None

### **II. Comments from the EAPC:** EAPC President, Tom Pinto

Mr. Pinto greeted the committee and addressed the interesting times going on across the country with coronavirus and said the EAPC looks forward to continued open communication.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

February 13, 2020: Open Session Minutes

**Motion:** Andrew Soliwoda

**Second:** Jason Greenwood

**Vote:** Unanimous - James O'Brien abstained.

February 25, 2020: Open Session Minutes

**Motion:** Andrew Soliwoda

**Second:** Jason Greenwood

**Vote:** Unanimous

### **IV. Communications:**

Mr. Knief highlighted the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' (MASC) Day on the Hill. The

Day on the Hill is the MASC annual advocacy day at the State House. This year it is on Tuesday, May 5, 2020. The day includes an agenda of speakers that outline the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's key points of advocacy, a luncheon, and time for members to schedule meetings with local representatives.

Mr. Knief also reviewed information regarding the Coronavirus. He overviewed the measures identified by the CDC and shared that the district would do a deep clean of each school, central offices and busses on alternating weekends for the next month or so and as long as needed.

He showed a video explaining the disinfecting measures/spraying system used in the district to sanitize. The "EvaClean" system is a combination of an electrostatic sprayer and pur-tabs which is a magnetic charged spray that seeks out and surrounds all touch points. It was purchased a little over a year ago and has already been used off and on in the buildings, particularly when they were seeing a spike in illness. It had been used at the Elementary school twice already that year and on the busses in late January and early February during the stomach bug and flu outbreaks. Mr. Knief said a second sprayer is coming in the next 2 weeks and the district has plenty of supplies on hand for sanitizing for quite a while.

Mr. Soliwoda inquired if it was the same system used to clean the Plymouth schools when they closed their district to disinfect. Mr. Knief noted that the Plymouth school contracted this service out and was not sure what they used exactly but believed it was a similar system.

Mr. O'Brien asked the school administration how the climate was in the district regarding the Coronavirus and asked if it would be necessary to address the students about it.

Mr. Knief replied that he felt as though anxiety was increasing because of media and social media coverage and that they have not had any formal student assemblies about it. Information has been sent to families through JupiterEd, Blackboard Connect, and the Elementary School App to alleviate concerns for parents and families in terms of cleaning and preparing. He acknowledged a heightened level of concern and anxiety in the community although he said he has not seen the level of anxiety in our districts that some other superintendents have seen in theirs. Mr. Knief and Mr. Brothers met with the Director of Facilities and the Principals in each building that day to identify clear information and how to best communicate it.

## V. Reports from the Superintendent:

### A. Personnel Updates:

Mr. Knief reviewed the following changes in personnel at Carver Public Schools.

**Transfers:** Lauren Tiago, Special Ed. Teacher, MHS to *Special Ed. Teacher CES*; Craig Lauzon, ESP, Special Ed., MHS to *Long Term Substitute Special Education Teacher, MHS*; Carol Dwyer, Custodian, 3rd Shift, CES to *Town Hall*; Tiffany Clancy, Special Ed. ESP, *Part-time to Full-time*

### B. US History I Civics Projects

Mr. Knief explained that as part of the new Civics Curriculum being implemented this year, students in grades 7 and grade 10 were assigned a civics based project. The grade 10 project was entitled Student Cam. Students had to individually or in small groups create a 5-6 minute video documentary on a topic related to the C-SPAN Student Cam 2020 competition. The theme for the competition was "What is your vision in 2020: Explore the issue you most want presidential candidates to address during the campaign." Teachers Brendan Cully and Chris Tresca selected a group from each of their classes who presented their 10th grade projects to the committee.

Dominic Macrina & Isaac Morris: Climate Change Presentation

Isaac Morris shared that he and his partner chose this topic because it is an on-going problem and it is only getting worse.

Caleigh Gilbert, Abby Johnson, Aine Manning Mental Illness and Gun Violence

The students said they chose this topic because it seemed as though a lot of mass-shooting stemmed from mental health and it was a current issue all around the world. They felt as though no one should be afraid to go anywhere, especially school. The girls reached out to the president of the gun club in Carver as well as the school guidance counselors for questions and input.

Teachers Brendan Cully and Chris Tresca told the committee that each class had 4 or 5 distinct videos and all of the projects were really great. They said it was great to see it evolve and see the students work on something they were passionate about. Mr. Tresca added that citizenship gives students a good way to show their voice and an opportunity for not just something they are passionate about but a call to action.

Mr. Knief and the committee thanked the students and teacher for their presentation noting that they were impressed by the quality of the videos and how they were able to show multiple sides of the same topic with a main goal at the end. The committee wondered if there would be a way to share these kinds of projects with the other members of the community, perhaps even on Area58.

### C. Drop Out Data Report

Drop-out data for the 2018-2019 school year was recently released. Mr. Knief reviewed the drop out data from the last several years. The drop-out rate is calculated by dividing the total number of students in grades 9-12 who left school during a given school year compared to the number of students reported enrolled on October 1 of any given school year. For example, during the 2018-2019 school year, Carver had 4 students drop-out of school and had a October 1 number of 368 for a drop-rate of 1.1%. During the previous school year, the district only had one student drop for the whole year. With zero being the ultimate goal, under 2% is the mark to be under. Mr. Knief attributes these low numbers to the range of programs offered at the Middle High School. The MAP, TAP, GAP, CAP are all keeping these at-risk students engaged.

Mr. Greenwood asked if this is counted into the school's Accountability data?

Mr. Knief confirmed that the drop out data and the "engagement" rate, which are students who attend beyond 4 years, are both included in the accountability information for the state. He noted that in general if you look at our students who have dropped, they have received interventions and have been offered programs throughout the secondary grade levels. Occasionally there are times when dropping out and going to night school are the best chances or opportunity for students to get their diploma, he said. The state says that they track that data well, for instance if a student drops and then they go to night school and earn their diploma over the summer, they will adjust the drop out rate for the district.

## VI. Recommendations from Superintendent

### A. Student Opportunity Act

At the last school committee meeting on February 25, 2020, Mr. Knief outlined the district's Student Opportunity Act Plan. He briefly reviewed the plan for the committee and community once again.

**Motion to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan as presented:** Andrew Soliwoda

**Seconded:** Jason Greenwood

**Vote:** Unanimous

### B. Approval of the FY21 School Budget

At the last school committee meeting on February 25, 2020, a public hearing of the budget was completed. Mr. Knief and Mr. Brothers presented a review of the budget once more.

Mr. Soliwoda asked if the conversation of school choice will be discussed at the next meeting?

Mr. Knief confirmed that school choice would be discussed at the April or May school committee meeting sharing that in the last few years the school choice decision was tied to the budget. The district this year is not a position where they need to use the anticipated school choice enrollment numbers to sustain the budget and therefore will be discussing it at a later date.

**Motion to approve a school budget of \$24, 237,099 for the FY21 School year:** Andrew Soliwoda

**Seconded:** Jason Greenwood

**Vote:** Unanimous

C. **FY20 Budget Transfer**

Mr. Brothers reviewed the proposed FY20 budget transfers. He noted that the district has benefited greatly from the mild winter in all utility lines.

The district is still projected to be short by roughly \$200,000 in the out of district tuition lines, however, a large piece of that will be offset with savings in the utility and health insurance lines. The budget transfers presented are in an effort to clean up accounts with deficit balances from savings we have seen in districtwide legal service lines as well as transferring funds between line items in the same department to cover deficits in some line items.

Mr. Soliwoda asked where the items get classified when we do the school cleanings as far as costs are concerned.

Mr. Brothers said it comes from facilities/general maintenance line. Currently, all the materials and equipment is in house and owned by the district. With previous years' savings, he noted, the district pre-buys these items, so we currently have a year's worth of pur-tabs, etc. on the shelf.

He also reviewed and increase in the Pre-K offering of \$18,000 which covers the gap an was pulled from savings through districtwide legal services line. The PreK started an additional classroom with a .3 teacher that has now moved to a .7 position.

**Motion to approve the FY20 budget transfers as presented:** Andrew Soliwoda

**Seconded:** Jason Greenwood

**Vote:** Unanimous

D. **School Calendar 2020-2021**

The proposed calendar for the 2020-2021 school year was shared with the committee. This year Labor Day falls as late as it can on Monday, September 7th. Contractually teachers can not return to school any earlier than the Monday before Labor Day which would be Monday, August 31st. Mr. Knief worked with the Professional Development Committee to develop two calendar proposals and also had the staff vote on the two options. The proposed calendar was selected by 70% off the staff as the top choice.

Mr. Knief gave an overview of the calendar sharing that the district will have 2 Full-Day professional development days on Monday, August 31st and Tuesday, September 1st. Students will return to school for two days on Wednesday, September 2nd and Thursday, September 3rd followed by the traditional 4 day weekend for the Labor Day holiday. The last day of school without snow days will be Friday, June 18th.

**Motion to approve the FY21 calendar as proposed:** Andrew Soliwoda

**Seconded:** Jason Greenwood

**Vote:** Unanimous

**E. Policy Revision and Approval**

A few weeks ago, the Administration had a phone conference with the group that is conducting the Tiered Focused Monitoring review. During that conference they gave some recommendations to update the language in 3 policies to appropriately meet the current Civil Rights guidance on defined subgroups that should be identified in specific policies. In essence, the DESE representatives shared that if the language wasn't updated prior to our site visit on March 17, Carver we would get a formal recommendation to do so as part of the final report. Mr. Knoef reviewed the changes made to each policy.

Policy JB: Equal Educational Opportunities

Policy JLD: Guidance Program

Policy JLD-E: Guidance Program

**I move to waive the first reading and accept the proposed changes to Policy JB: Equal Educational Opportunities as amended (Intellectual spelled incorrectly):** Jason Greenwood

**Seconded:** James O'Brien

**Vote:** Unanimous

**I move to waive the first reading and accept the proposed changes to Policy JLD: Guidance Program as amended (Intellectual spelled incorrectly):** Jason Greenwood

**Seconded:** James O'Brien

**Vote:** Unanimous

**I move to waive the first reading and accept the proposed changes to Policy JLD-E: Guidance Program as amended (Intellectual spelled incorrectly):** Jason Greenwood

**Seconded:** James O'Brien

**Vote:** Unanimous

**F. Field Trips:**

International Field Trip: Spain | Morocco - April 2020

Mr. Kneif shared that at this time the State Department, Governor Baker, the Massachusetts Department of Health, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are all recommending that school districts cancel all planned international trips for the remainder of this school year based on the CoronaVirus. The travel company has offered our students 3 options:

1. Change the travel dates of the current itinerary to any date prior to August 1, 2021 moving all current participants to the new dates.
2. Modify the current tour to visit other locations on the planned dates
3. Cancel the tour for all participants and all participants will receive transferable vouchers that must be used prior to August 1, 2021.

The trip to Spain and Morocco had 16 participants made up of 10 students and 6 adults. Three of the students on the trip are seniors who also had a parent who was going on the trip. The other adults were made up of 2 staff members, chaperone leaders and 1 other adult. While the underclassmen could go on

this trip next year, for a senior, past practice has been that once you graduate, you cannot go our school based trip because we are no longer responsible for them. If they choose to go in July, Mr. Knief would recommend allowing those senior students and parents to participate given the circumstances.

He shared that if the other option for vouchers was considered, the district would help to facilitate the transfer for the voucher and could offer it to students traveling on the Europe trip the following year. The International Trip Advisors said they would help to facilitate that as well.

Mr. Knief acknowledged that it is tough for a Superintendent and a committee to make this decision. He recommended that they move to cancel the trip and allow the parents to decide if the group prefers option 1 or 3 at their scheduled parent meeting on Wednesday. The decision would have to be made by a whole group consensus.

**Motion to cancel the international field trip to Spain and Morocco and allow the parents choose from option 1 and 3 in terms of how they get refunded:** Jason Greenwood  
**Seconded:** Andrew Soliwoda

Mr. Cardarelli said it is something that the members have talked over a lot noting that no one wanted to cancel the trip, however, they don't want to put our students and families in jeopardy of getting sick and also putting our community at risk.

Mr. Greenwood agreed and noted that if it's the state and DESE's recommendation it should be followed. Mr. O'Brien was pleased to hear the options and said they were certainly a better solution for parents who could recoup all or some of their money rather than the initial idea that they may lose all of it without any refund. Mr. Soliwoda asked if there are any other upcoming trips that would fall under these recommendations. Mr. Knief noted that the only upcoming trip similar in scale is the Senior GradBash trip to Florida with about 70 students, scheduled to take place the first week in April. On a recent conference call with the Department of Health and DESE, Mr. Knief said there was no current restrictions on domestic travel and the administration has shared this with senior parents to let them know at this time there is no recommendation to restrict domestic travel. The district has begun to investigate possible refunds in the event that anything changes.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Modern Drama | Drama Club: Trinity Rep Theater, Providence, RI - March 19

**Motion to approve the Modern Drama | Drama Club field trip to Trinity Rep Theatre on March 19:**

Andrew Soliwoda

**Seconded: Stephanie Clougherty**

Vote: Unanimous

Upcoming Events for March and April were not listed on the Agenda but were reviewed with the committee and included such events as March Music Madness, the HS Drama Production, Bubble Soccer, and the Joint Meeting of the Select Board and School Committee

## VII. Reports from the School Committee

**Motion Made to Adjourn:** Jason Greenwood

**Seconded:** James O'Brien

**Roll Call Vote:**

Andrew Cardarelli, Chairperson: **Yes**

Jason Greenwood: **Yes**

Stephanie Clougherty: **Yes**

Andrew Soliwoda: **Yes**

James O'Brien: **Yes**

**Motion Approved: 5 to 0**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by: Gina Marie Russell