

Frontier Regional and Union 38 School District
School Committee Chairs Virtual Meeting
Monday, March 16, 2020

MINUTES

Present: Mr. Modestow, Superintendent, Ms. Poreda, Director of Business Administration, Bob Hall, Frontier Regional Chair, Gregory Gottschalk, Sunderland Chair, Ken Cuddeback, Deerfield Chair, Elaine Campbell, Conway Chair

Absent: Katie Edwards, Whately Chair

1. Call to Order – Mr. Modestow called the meeting to order at 11:06 AM
2. Rules of Open Meeting Law – Mr. Modestow discussed the circumstances of convening this first virtual meeting and noted the applicability of the virtual meeting in light of the state of emergency declared by the state of Massachusetts.
3. **COVID-19 Situation** –Mr. Modestow provided an update and discussion took place on the issues regarding food services, education initiatives, pay for hourly workers, pay for transportation drivers, implications for the length of the school year, a memorandum of agreement with the unions, etc. Included in the discussion was the topic of how to proceed with emergency measures and whether a joint committee meeting is necessary to vote on these measures or the chairs could take action as a committee. Mr. Modestow will be contacting legal counsel for clarification on how this will all be able to take place. Certainly, the logistics of a joint committee meeting are difficult enough without adding in the element of making it a virtual gathering!

Mr. Modestow outlined the measures taken so far as the schools were closed prior to the state's decision to close for three weeks. Making the decision on Friday allowed the teachers to use their professional development day to set aside planned exercises and formulate plans for providing resources for students to continue learning while out of school in the coming weeks. The cafeteria staff has been working on plans to continue to offer food for those families on free and reduced lunch plans and are reaching out to the families to find out who will need the assistance. .

Mr. Modestow also discussed the impact of the closures and state shutdowns on the question of the school year in the state. At this time plans call for schools still to stay in session only through the 185th day as planned with the time lost perhaps not needing to be made up. However, he was quick to note everything is very much in flux as the DESE is also working through the issues and things are changing daily, if not hourly with information coming out of Boston.

4. **Paying Staff** - Mr. Modestow and Ms. Poreda have been reviewing the pay implications for the hourly staff and dealing with issues related to time off for any staff who are considered "at risk". Today and tomorrow are being counted as snow days for most employees to provide time for the administration to work on these questions. Consideration has also been given to the compensation needs for transportation services drivers who are idled by the closing of the schools. All of these employees' livelihoods are obviously impacted by this turn of events.
5. **MOA Teachers/Instructional Assistants** – Mr. Modestow related that he is working on drafts for Memorandums of Agreement with the Teacher and Instructional Assistant bargaining units

School Committee Chairs Virtual Meeting
Monday, March 16, 2020 (cont)

to clearly define expectations surrounding work and compensation during this unprecedented time. He is also working on similar documents for non-union staff and district professionals. He expects to have draft language shortly for discussion with the joint committees.

6. **Governance SC oversight moving forward** - With two public hearings scheduled on budgets in the region this week, questions also came up on how those meetings should proceed. Mr.

Modestow will be seeking answers to these and the multitude of other legal questions in the days and weeks ahead. Mr. Modestow is hoping to have the logistics worked out to provide a full joint committee virtual meeting update for all committee members tomorrow evening (most likely).

7. **Other** - As the meeting concluded, the chairs agreed to reach out with updates to their committees while Mr. Modestow and his team continue their hard work.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ken Cuddeback
Chair, Deerfield School Committee