

Nonpublic School Advisory Council
NH Department of Education, Office of Nonpublic Schools
Thursday, January 21, 2021
MINUTES

Meeting held telephonically due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

Members in Attendance:

Andrea Elliot

(Brad Choyt)

Caitlin Davis

Christy Whipple

Chuck George

Dave Thibault

Gina Power

Linda Brodeur

Linda Johnson

Lisa Dias

Matthew Hicks

(Mike Runey)

Nathaniel Greene

Shireen Meskoob

(Susan Harrington)

Toby Iselin

The DOE indicated that it will work to provide guidance on how meetings will be held moving forward under the regulations set forth by the DOJ for remote meetings. The public will need to have a degree of access to the meetings. In the meantime, the meeting will be recorded to help create the meeting minutes, which will be made available to the public online. A vote will be taken to approve the minutes at the next meeting before they are posted.

There are three items if business.

VOTE ON COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

At the Council's last meeting, David Thibault was nominated to serve as chairman. Andrea Elliot makes the motion to approve the nomination and it is seconded by Matthew Hicks. A unanimous vote followed.

VOTE ON RECOGNITION OF PROGRAM APPROVAL AGENCIES: AACCS AND AISNE

Two accrediting bodies seek recognition by the DOE. The Association of Independent Schools of New England and The American Association of Christian Schools. Matthew Hicks makes a motion to approve the AISNE. Christy Whipple seconds the motion. A unanimous vote followed. Linda Johnson moves to approve the AACCS, followed by a motion to second. A unanimous vote followed.

The DOE will pass the Council's approval to the State Board of Education for final approval.

OPEN DISCUSSION

The meeting is opened up for any other items that members wish to discuss.

C. Whipple indicated that smaller nonpublic schools that do not have a designated school nurse, currently covered by phase 1a of the NH vaccine allotment guide, are at a disadvantage because there is usually an administrator who fills that role, along with others, and deals with sick children. C. Whipple is one of those administrators, regularly communicated with her regional health coordinator, and was provided with the vaccine by the coordinator in a last minute situation in which the coordinator had a surplus of vaccines and that surplus would go to waste unless used that day. Other members expressed

interest in finding out about administrators receiving the vaccine if they are the acting nurse. S. Meskoob will look into it.

D. Thibault asked given the funds that have recently been made available to nonpublic schools, is there anything that the Commissioner wants the Council to do in regard to communicating that information with nonpublic schools. C. Davis indicated that the DOE is in the process of developing the application for the schools to complete and submit to the DOE. More information is anticipated from the US DOE to define some of the reporting fields. The Commissioner is sending an email to schools soon that provides a general idea for how those funds can be spent. This type of program is completely new to the DOE and to nonpublic schools. It will look similar to equitable services and the communication between nonpublic schools and public school districts. The difference is that the DOE will be provided the services directly to the nonpublic schools instead of the resident school districts.

Eliza Alexander, a nonvoting member, asked about how funds are allocated to nonpublic schools. Is the number of low income students used, or is enrollment used? C. Davis indicated that this too is related to the clarification that the DOE anticipates from the US DOE. E. Alexander indicated that similar conversations are being held in Maine. The role of PPP may impact a school's eligibility to receive the funds in question. The current transition within the US administration provides for challenges in answering some of these questions as well.

A. Elliot asked whether the DOE had any idea of the percentage of nonpublic schools that received equitable funding from their districts versus those that might not have. C. Davis indicated that this was not data that the department collected. On the other end, the DOE may be able to extrapolate the percentage that the public school districts spend on nonpublics, but this would not be available on a school-by-school basis.

N. Greene indicated that the Council can anticipate to meet within the next three months. A draft of the administrative rules for nonpublic schools is on the upcoming agenda.