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Hazen Union Discusses COVID-19 Concerns

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – At a July 29 Google Meet with parents and others, Hazen Union Principal David Ferrigo, newly-appointed Associate Principal Jason Di Giulio, new Director of Guidance Kasey Potter, and Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) Nurse Leader Betty Stewart, R.N., sought to get feedback on school reopening plans.

Ferrigo stressed that nothing would be finalized, nor any decisions made during the meeting. The purpose of the discussion was to listen to the community. As many as 87 people attended.

Ferrigo asked for people in the meeting to be mindful and respectful. “We are all facing the same storm, but we are weathering it in very different boats. People come into this conversation with very different perspectives and ideas.” Ferrigo said it was understandable if people were emotional, “what we’re dealing with here is really nothing less serious than life and death, and the futures of our kids.”

The meeting was structured into four parts. Ferrigo said that first-off “we really want to know how you’re doing, we want to know about your experience over the last five months as you’ve been dealing

with this. What’s been hard for you about this time?” Ferrigo next wanted to hear people’s “greatest hopes and most pressing concerns.” During the third part, he clarified the Agency of Education parameters all re-opening plans must follow, and lastly asked what people felt the school should do.

Many parents said their kids “really really” wanted to go back to school. One parent said “They really want to go back to school. They want to be in school, they want to see their friends, they’re tired of this at-home thing. It’s not average, it’s not normal to them, they don’t like it. They want to have discussions with friends, they want to be challenged by their teachers. I don’t know how safe that is.”

Some said with the restrictions on contact, additional safety measures, and wearing masks, it may not feel much like a school after a few weeks, one going so far as to describe that it might “feel like a prison.” One parent said, “I don’t like sitting with the unknowns, but we’ve been sitting with the unknowns since March and I don’t think they’re going away any time soon.”

Since a part of the re-opening proposal is virtual, parents offered their experiences with remote learning during the spring. While

See CONCERNS, 2



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Hazen Union custodian Wendy Brochu (left) applies wax stripper to the floor as Dave Brochu (right) runs a floor machine at the school last week. The first day of school for students is scheduled for Sept. 8.

Hazen Union Outlines Efforts to Keep Students, Staff Safe

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – A Tuesday virtual meeting between Hazen Union administration and the community about re-opening schools tackled many subtopics, but none got more attention than the safety measures being put in place by the school and the potential health ramifications re-opening could pose.

Hazen Union Principal David Ferrigo, newly-appointed Associate Principal Jason Di Giulio, new Director of Guidance Kasey Potter, and Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) Nurse Leader Betty Stewart, R.N., spoke to attendees to fill them in on the school’s evolving plans.

On Monday, Tod Delatons re-opening could pose. See SAFE, 4



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Hardwick Babe Ruth teammates (from left) Tyler Rivard, James Montgomery and Jadon Baker, volunteered to help Lyle Rooney (second from left) take care of his family’s wood pile as other members of the team stacked it last week in Walden.

Scientific Findings May Support School Reopening

by Doug McClure

MONTPELIER – At its July 28 press conference, Governor Phil Scott’s administration provided more science-based evidence supporting his plans to re-open schools.

Governor Scott began his words at the press conference by describing the seven-week-long process to come up with the school re-opening plan, and said: “We recognized how unpredictable this pandemic is, and the anxiety it can and has caused.”

See REOPENING, 3