



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES August 21, 2018

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	August 21, 2018
Location:	MERMHS Learning Commons
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Co-Chairperson Ann Cameron Sarah Wolf
Absent:	Julie Riordan Ken Warnock Caroline Weld
Guests:	Joanne Maino, Principal MERMS Allison Collins, Director of Student Services
Recorded by:	Gail Hunter

A. Call to Order – Ms. Erdmann called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

B. Business Meeting

- 1) **Public Comment** – there was no public comment this evening.
- 2) **Chairman’s Report** – there was no report this evening.
- 3) **Consent Agenda**
 - Acceptance of Warrants
 - Minutes
 - Out of State Travel

There were no minutes to approve and discussion of Out of State Travel was postponed to the Committee's next meeting.

Ms. Cameron inquired if it was possible to identify a less expensive service for the District's elevators. Mr. Urbas indicated the service was costly and MERSD had a less expensive service in the past. However, that service failed to meet the minimum standards for safety inspections and was replaced by the current service, although more expensive, the service provides excellent service and keeps the District compliant with all safety standards.

The Committee did have a question regarding grants received by the District from State, Federal and other grant awarding organizations. Mr. Urbas indicated that all grant funds were reported in the Budget and some grant awards were part of the Consent Agenda. (Spaulding Awards were made to the District for a specific request and Spaulding funds were received as reimbursements to the District.) Ms. Erdmann suggested that all grants awarded to the District be listed with a summary of the awarded program and purpose. She further suggested placing the information at the end of the budget. Mr. Urbas agreed to follow up on the request.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed with all four Committee Members present in favor.

4) Sub-Committee Reports

There were no reports presented from the Finance Committee, Policy Committee or the Negotiation Team.

Ms. Cameron reported on the Elementary Facilities/MSBC status. Ms. Cameron stated there were revised documents ready to present to Manchester BOS and Finance Committee on 9/4/18 and 9/5/18. She asked Committee Members to review the updated documents for tone and content and to provide feed-back in the next day or two.

Ms. Cameron indicated meeting with the BOS and Finance Committee for Essex went well and the Memorial School Project received their full endorsement.

5) Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Beaudoin complimented the excellent work by the maintenance team preparing for opening day. Everything is looking good and all schools are ready for the first day of school.

First day for teachers is August 27, 2018 with students returning on Tuesday, August 28th. The first day begins with a Breakfast and "PEP Rally" starting at 8:00 a.m., traditionally attended by the Chair of the School Committee. Ms. Erdmann indicated she would attend. This year will include a presentation on RULER followed by the annual photo.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated that fall will be busy with the return of the Japanese delegation who are continuing their review of the District's Inclusion Program.

On October 5th Commissioner Riley the recently appointed Department of Education Commissioner will be visiting the District to meet with faculty and students.

Also, this fall the State Head of Student Services, Russel Johnson, will be touring the District's model programs. This is part of ongoing reviews by the Department of Education and according to Dr. Collins site visits take place every 6 years and the District is up for review this year. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the District looks good when reviewed by the Department of Education.

Additionally, Superintendent Beaudoin informed the Committee that the Football Program is running with 17 student-athletes participating. The team is a blended team with MS and HS players. As a result, the Athletic Department dropped games with 2 teams considered too strong for the District's blended team.

There is some concern about the players playing both defense and offense and the increased possibility of injuries. Principal Puglisi and the athletic program are cautious about the team's lack of HS players and has developed a quasi-schedule with Cape Ann teams. Ms. Cameron asked if it was viable to keep the program going? Superintendent Beaudoin stated according to the Jr. Hornets it is, however, the program will be closely monitored.

Ms. Cameron asked if the School Choice placements had been filled. The 10 places have been filled according to Superintendent Beaudoin.

6) **New Business** – Dr. Collins and Principal Maino – Presented Results of *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (YRBS)

The survey was developed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Administered in 2018 to MERMS Grade 7 and 8 students. No state data comparison is available as the state does not test middle school students.

YRBS focuses on risky behaviors that impact student health and safety. Questions are asked in each of these areas: Safety, Violence related behaviors, Bullying, Thoughts of suicide, Tobacco Use, Alcohol Use, Drug Use, Sexual Behavior and Nutrition/Physical Activity

91% of 7th and 8th grade students participated for a total of 239 (129 boys and 110 girls). Due to student enrollment one percentage point equates to 2.39 students. There are no state comparison numbers available.

Most students are not engaging in risky behaviors involving illegal substances. Most students are making healthy choices about physical activity, nutrition, television and sleep.

Violence and bullying related behaviors, as reported, were higher than we would like. Incidents of suicidal thinking among respondents was also a concern. Students reported high rate of participation in multiple sports (3 or more teams). Illegal substance use was low. Alcohol and

Tobacco use was higher. Sexual behaviors – students reporting on sexual intercourse was low (questions on other behaviors were not asked).

Areas of Concern: Violence, Bullying/Cyberbullying and Suicidality

Supports and Interventions: Education and prevention Grades 6-8 including: bullying awareness, signs of suicide program (screening protocol), small group, whole group and whole school, fold vocabulary into RULER, streamline counseling referral procedures, continue individual and group counseling program, School Council initiatives.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked if the support and interventions proposed would be in conjunction with Health Education. Principal Maino indicated there were several programs in place to help students move in the right direction.

Ms. Fitzgibbon is specifically concerned about the preponderance of requests for and exchange of nude photos and would like the MS students to understand there are legal repercussions for forwarding these images.

Superintendent Beaudoin was discouraged to hear that the nude photo issue was widespread and indicated any incidents need to be reported to the Police – around this issue the Police are friends. She stated is a student sends a photo it is bullying and illegal.

Ms. Cameron asked if it would be possible to see a graphic depiction of the social emotional programs currently in place with a clear understanding of what is addressed by which program. Ms. Cameron would like for parents to be able to visualize what goes in and how it all fits together. Principal Maino thought a VENN diagram might help to depict the programs.

Ms. Erdmann agreed with Ms. Cameron and thought an inventory of the Social Emotional curriculum would help to communicate what's happening and what's available to parents. Superintendent Beaudoin stated that Dr. DeRoche was pulling the information together to document the programs in place.

Ms. Cameron asked how the information from the Survey would be rolled out to parents. Principal Maino will be sharing the information with Teachers first and is concerned about sharing the information with parents. Ms. Erdmann indicated the Power Point will be in the School Committee's Presentation folder following the meeting. Ms. Cameron indicated the meeting had been recorded and parents will be aware of the Survey.

7) Continued Business

- Middle School Handbook Approval

Principal Maino had several handbook housekeeping items for the Committee review and informed the Committee that the ME Block was moving to the second to last class of the day with one class following – many students use the last class for homework. Handbook edits:

1. Who can attend school dances and participate in extracurricular activities. Principal Maino would like the handbook to specify these events are for students enrolled in MERSDMS. She has had parents with children in private school ask if their children could attend school dances and is concerned about liability issues. There was some discussion about MS Handbook vs. District Policy and the Committee focused on extracurricular activities.
2. Lunch/Recess time is 10:30 to 12:00 and the class time slots for lunch and recess will rotate so no child is always in the 10:30 slot.
3. Grading ASPEN explain weighting to avoid panic if a child has an F – that F will change when projects are fully developed.
4. Exploratory Classes go from Pass/Fail to grade for 7th and 8th graders. Additional comment fields will be added to be more informative.
5. Counseling support – language change removes the word guidance from the program not that students will not be guided but education is shifting away from Guidance.
6. Aligning the language around the school nurse to more accurately reflect the language in the High School handbook – defining assessments, opt out options and other health issues.
7. Homework Club move from 2 days a week to 4, from 2:15 to 3:15 so participating students can catch the late bus.
8. Discipline – eliminate the green card use only red and yellow cards. The Committee raised questions around cell phone use in MS. Ms. Wolf noted that in the handbook there was an exception if the teacher allowed for cell phone use in the class. Principal Maino indicated that with all students now using Chrome Books phones for information were no longer necessary. With the Committee’s support the school policy will be Off and Away.
9. Adding vape products to the tobacco use and possession policy
10. Ms. Fitzgibbon asked about plagiarism policy and if it should be part of the honesty policy. Principal Maino indicated in MS plagiarism was considered a teachable moment. It was decided to add a sentence about plagiarism to define it for the MS students.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the edits to the MS Handbook as presented with extracurricular activities as defined as attendance in MS, School Nurse role to reflect HS handbook language, remove language on teacher discretion regarding cell phones, add social media to page 17 and add plagiarism to honesty policy. Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Superintendent Evaluation – discussion postponed to next meeting.
- School Committee Goal Setting

DRAFT School Committee Goals for FY19

- Target resources to support the social/emotional needs of students across the District.

- Develop and deliver a fiscally responsible budget that maintains educational quality, supports District goals and recognizes the confines of Proposition 2 ½.

Support implementation programming that enhances our organizations cultural proficiency and promotes respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences.

Engage the member towns in the need to pass the debt exclusion for the rebuilding of Manchester Memorial School and communicate the capital plan to maintain Essex Elementary.

- Continue ongoing review of all District policies, updating existing policies and job descriptions where needed and researching new recommendations.
- Successfully negotiate a contract with META using IBB.

- **FY 18 Budget Closeout**

- **Annual OPEB Report**

Ms. Wolf moved the District forward \$466,537 to the MERSD OPEB Trust Fund for retiree health care as invested by PRIM, Ms. Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Lunch Program Deficits – will be addressed in first September meeting.
 - **Athletics Deficits**

Historically Athletics Fees have not covered all the expenses for the Athletic program, the deficit has been covered by fund balance reserves with permission of the School Committee. Following the increase in fees this year the program is in the black with \$5K. According to Mr. Urbas it is optimistic to believe that the program will continue to operate in the black. Mr. Urbas is requesting the School Committee approve moving \$18,314 from the fund balance to cover the deficit in the athletic line item.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve \$18,314 be moved from the fund balance to cover the deficit in the athletic line item, Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Student Activity Accounts Approval**

There are several Student Activity Accounts managed by the Principal of each school. Funds disbursed from these accounts are reviewed by Mr. Urbas and Mr. Fleming under the direction and supervision of Mr. Urbas. Powers and Sullivan, the accountants require that the School Committee approve this process as part of their annual audit.

A list of Sub Accounts were previewed by the Committee.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the sub accounts presented and the addition of class accounts as needed annually, Ms. Fitzgibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 8) School Committee Comment** – Ms. Wolf reminded the Committee that in their retreat the Committee had resolved to keep things going and she was maintaining a “parking lot folder”. This evening the Committee failed to listen to the entire presentation on Youth Risk Behavior prior to commenting.

9) Adjourn

Ms. Cameron moved to adjourn the School Committee Business meeting, Ms. Erdmann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MERSD Mission Statement

Our Mission is to educate all students, to inspire passion, to instill a love of learning, and to encourage both local and global citizenship.