



## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES November 6, 2018

<b>Meeting:</b>	School Committee
<b>Date:</b>	November 6, 2018
<b>Location:</b>	MERMHS Learning Commons
<b>Attendees:</b>	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Ken Warnock Julie Riordan Ann Cameron Sarah Wolf Caroline Weld
<b>Absent:</b>	Rachel Fitzgibbon, Co-Chairperson
<b>Guests:</b>	Julie Riley, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology
<b>Recorded by:</b>	Gail Hunter

**A. Call to Order** – Ms. Erdmann called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

#### **B. Business Meeting Open Session**

- 1) **Public Comment** – There was no public comment this evening.
- 2) **Student Report** – There was no student report this evening. Principal Puglisi is planning to appoint a student to attend the School Committee meetings. Ms. Wolf suggested the appointment might be a junior given the heavy schedules of seniors. Superintendent Beaudoin and the Committee thought this was an excellent suggestion and Superintendent Beaudoin will forward the suggestion to Principal Puglisi.

3) **Chairman's Report** – Ms. Erdmann indicated this evening was a big night for the School Committee and Towns anticipating the results of the School Building vote in both Manchester and Essex.

4) **Consent Agenda**

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes 10/2
- Out of State Travel (Request is not ready this evening – looking for another provider for travel to Houston, TX and a European trip scheduled.)

Warrant Discussion, Mr. Urbas provided the following information on warrants.

**Bridge** insurance company is providing a low than anticipated reimbursement. Mr. Urbas believes the District has a good case to pursue a more favorable settlement and the Committee may want to consider pursuing this through legal representation.

**Turf Field** estimate to resurface the field is \$500K. The reserve fund for the field resurfacing currently has a balance of approximately \$170K. The High School field is projected for resurfacing in 2 years and the Brook St. field resurfacing in 4-5 years. Ms. Riordan suggested fundraising for the field resurfacing. Ms. Erdmann asked about signage rentals for the fields to help curtail anticipated costs.

**Custodial** advance maintenance is contracted at \$4K a month. The District will save on benefits with an annual savings of \$25K – the administration is happy with the person who is working from the contract company.

**Elevator Fine** – is the result of the previous elevator company's failure to provide a certificate for the operation of the elevator.

**Budget Transfers** – there were 2: Instructional Technology \$1,787.00 and Building Administration Expenses \$1,042.35, Total \$2829.35.

Ms. Cameron asked about the **increase in transportation costs**. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated there were anticipated increases to the transportation budget. Stating Regional Transportation is an unfulfilled promise made by the State, State Representatives are pushing for reimbursement of transportation expenses on behalf of Districts. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the Out of District placements came with mandated transportation. The District anticipates a significant increase in FY 20 due to labor costs for transportation providers and driver shortages being experienced state wide.

Ms. Erdmann asked if the District could bid with additional providers. Mr. Urbas stated the Slater was a good provider but if there were opportunities the District would request additional bids.

*Ms. Riordan moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Weld seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Warnock abstaining from approving the Minutes of 10/2/18, he was not in attendance at the meeting.*

## **5) Sub-Committee Reports**

- Elementary Facilities/MSBC (Ms. Weld and Ms. Cameron)

Following the election there are meetings scheduled in Essex on Wednesday, 11/7/18 and in Manchester at the Collaboration Meeting on Friday 11/9/18 to discuss next steps.

- Finance Committee (Ms. Cameron and Ms. Erdmann)

Collaboration meeting is scheduled for this Friday, 11/9/18.

- Policy Committee (Mr. Warnock and Ms. Fitzgibbon)

Policy Committee met and continued discussions on policy revisions to school transportation reviewing the District policies. Superintendent Beaudoin and Mr. Urbas are discussing the statutory minimums related to transportation. Field Trip discussions are taking place regarding safety as related to LGBTQ students and staff inclusion.

- Negotiation Team (Ms. Wolf and Ms. Riordan)

Ms. Riordan indicated the team is having productive discussions about options with a view to making it all work. There is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow 11/7/18 with a focus on Health Care and Stipends. Ms. Weld asked if the discussions were moving forward collaboratively? Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the discussions were collaborative and both sides are aware of what there is available to work with.

## **6) Superintendent's Report**

This evening Superintendent Beaudoin initial focus was on sports and the success of the teams.

- ✓ Boys Soccer – has had a successful season
- ✓ Girls Field Hockey – completed the season with a 4-0 record
- ✓ Girls Soccer is advancing to the finals
- ✓ Football team has won 2 games and will play on Thanksgiving Day against Georgetown.

The football program will be reviewed and discussed at the end of June 2019. Plans call for early enrollment with a deposit to determine the viability of fielding a team. Ms. Riordan stated the Athletic Task Force was reviewing the possibility of fielding a team and considering a JV team for 2019 with juniors and seniors playing with co-op teams, giving the program a year to rebuild. Superintendent Beaudoin stated it is the District's goal to get ahead of the 2019 season.

Community Support – Superintendent Beaudoin thanked the communities of Essex and Manchester for their support of the Memorial School Building Project.

Night of Stars – is an example of what we do well stated Superintendent Beaudoin develop lots of self-confident students.

RULER is full speed ahead – charters and mood meters are evident throughout the buildings. Teachers and students are taking hold of the language of RULER and focusing on the good stuff.

Ms. Erdmann expressed thanks for the Spaulding Education Fund and their support of the MERSD.

7) **New Business** – There was no new business this evening.

**8) Continued Business**

- Annual Fall Data Presentation – Dr. Riley, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

**AP Scores 2018:** Total AP Students 145, Number of Exams 325, Percentage of Total Exams 100

Subjects Included: Studio Art, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition. Comparative Government and Politics, Human Geography, Psychology, United States Government and Politics. Unites States History Calculus AB, Computer Science A and Statistics.

Dr. Riley pointed out writing was a strength and focus at the High School Level. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated there were no prerequisites at MERHS, however there was a minimum for the number of students in AP classes.

**SAT Scores 2018:** Data in the report reflects high school graduates who took the new SAT during high school. If a student took the SAT more than once the most recent score is summarized.

Dr. Riley indicated the total score over all differential is 1100 and above – with a strength in evidence-based reading & writing and computation math. She is happy with the SAT scores they indicate students are growing and learning and hit their stride in High School.

Evidence Based Reading and Writing: 608, Math 604, Average 1212.

ACT: Composite: 25.8 (20.8 national average)

**What is the Next Generation MCAS:**

Updated version of the nearly 20-year-old MCAS assessment. Focuses on student’s critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge and ability to make connections between reading and writing. Provides a clearer signal of readiness for the next grade level or college and career.

Designed to be given on a computer. First given in spring 2017 in grades 3-8 in English language arts and math. Will eventually replace all older MCAS tests in grades 3-10.

### **New MCAS Achievement Levels:**

Legacy – Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Warning

Next Generation – Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations Not Meeting Expectations.

In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are more rigorous than the standards for reaching Proficient level on the legacy MCAS. Massachusetts educators set the new standards to help signal students' readiness for the next grade level.

Parents should look closely at where their child's score falls within the Partially Meeting Expectations category. If it isn't within the category, talk with your child's teacher about how you can work together to help your child catch up.

MCAS data is built into the Accountability System: **2018 Accountability System**

**First year of the accountability system** and the ESE will look to see if any changes or refinements are necessary. Overall accountability classification for schools: 74% designated as "Not requiring assistance or intervention", 14% designated as "Requiring assistance or intervention" and 12% as "Insufficient data."

Overall accountability classification for districts: 90% designated as "Not requiring assistance or intervention" 7% designated as "Requiring assistance or intervention" and 3 % designated as "Insufficient data".

There was some discussion regarding chronic absenteeism and if there was a way for the district to assist with this variable by identifying students who require assistance.

### **2018 Accountability**

Accountability categories for districts: 17% categorized a "meeting targets", 75% categorized as "Partially meeting targets", 7% categorized as "IN need of focused/targeted support", 1% categorized as "in need of broad/comprehensive support".

**DESE Recommendations Do Not** – Compare 2018 accountability data to historical accountability results. Additional indicators, fewer years of data and different comparisons. Equate 2018 accountability categories with historical accountability and assistance levels. No cross walk between categories and levels.

**What the District is learning from the data?** Baseline and Longitudinal Data, Trends, Rigor and Academics, Curriculum Alignment and Coherence and Whole Child. The District will take a new look at Data and MERSD Analytics.

**Trends: ELA: Grade 6-8** Essay/Extended Writing, Write comparison essays vs narratives, Finding and using textual evidence, Understanding nuance, inference and meaning in complex text. **Math: Grade 3-8** Short answer, Place value, Operations and Algebraic Thinking: solve problems using 4 operations, multiply and divide within 100, Numbers and Operations: adding, subtracting and converting decimal notations to fractions. **Science: Grade 3-8** Earth and the solar system, heat transfer in the earth system.

**Vertical and Horizontal Curriculum Alignment:** Reorganize curriculum review cycle, Coordinate, ELA task Force-Ongoing K-8 ELA (2018-2019), K-8 Math (2019-2020) and K-6 (2019-2020).

#### **Next Steps:**

- Review K-12 curriculum and content alignment to the new 2017 MA ELA, mathematics, and science standard expectations
- Assess K-12 vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment
- Determine next steps for curriculum review and adoption cycles
- Assess student work to determine grade-level expectations for writing
- Research instructional strategies to support implementation of best practices in ELA, math and science curricula.
- Review assessments and interventions for students.

#### **School Committee Questions, Discussion and Comments:**

Ms. Weld asked about student participation in AP classes and if there was a maximum number of AP classes a student could take. Her concern is the social-emotional health of students and the pressure of AP classes. Parents need to sign a waiver if a student is taking 4 or more AP classes. It is believed students take additional AP classes because they are interested in the content and there are the classes they want.

Ms. Cameron inquired about Chemistry and if the curriculum is in alignment with college courses. She indicated her children have struggled with college Chemistry. Dr. Riley will review with the Department.

Ms. Erdmann asked if the right people were teaching AP classes. Dr. Riley indicated the District was looking at all learners. And indicated the number one class on the Yale University curriculum was a course on Happiness. Hopefully with the implementation of RULER we will help students to self-manage. Ms. Riordan stated assessments measure academic achievement but do not help students navigate the world.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated MCAS is a measure of fundamental knowledge for students to move on. All schools hit basic levels of education – we need to be in alignment with all students and especially students who struggle to find a place in a school that is higher than average.

Superintendent Beaudoin went on to say we get worked up to a competitive measure but that's not how we structure academics. Ms. Erdmann stated we are a school we need to teach. Ms. Weld is concerned about the pressure that exists as part of the school environment.

Ms. Wolf asked if essays were scored by people or computers. Dr. Riley responded the essays were scored by people. Ms. Wolf was also concerned about the more challenging curriculum and asked if we were implementing developmentally appropriate practices for the younger children. She went on to state the K standards are pretty intense. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated getting the kids to the high end included a balanced approach.

Dr. Riley indicated that she did not think the State roll out of the new standards was great. She suggested the District may go our own way at the lower grades because it has proven to be successful for the students. Dr. Riley will continue to review data and assess the students in grades K-3.

Ms. Cameron asked if the District set goals? For example, we would like our scores to be this. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated we are dealing with people and academic achievement was a number dependent on people, so no the District does not set a goal. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the end is graduating and what do we want our graduates to look like. The District achieves that goal. She stated she could not think on one instance when a student did not receive a diploma. There have been students who needed to complete a course but ultimately, they received a diploma.

Ms. Cameron asked if Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was still a standard utilized. Dr. Riley indicated the District is still using the CPI scale – she stated AYP was built out of CPI. Dr. Riley indicated the High School was at 99% on the CPI scale.

Ms. Weld stated as much as she appreciated the data the Committee reviews annually, she would like to see a review of the what the District does well and independently of data. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated that it is important to understand how students are feeling in their environment and the District is achieving that balance.

- Building Project Update – waiting for final vote results
- FY 20 Budget Calendar – will be presented at the next meeting.

Ms. Erdmann asked for a full discussion during the budget process to address the Health Insurance swings over the past years.

Superintendent Beaudoin suggested additional sub committee meetings to take a deep dive into Committee questions.

Ms. Cameron asked in light of the shooting at the synagogue in Pittsburgh was the District doing enough to support diversity and inclusion in schools? Ms. Cameron stated that once again there is a focus on Santa's Elf, the Polar Express and additional programs throughout the District that fail to acknowledge more multi-cultural programming. Ms. Wolf agreed.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated it is a challenge and the District is trying to understand how best to address the challenging issue. She thought Newburyport had done an excellent job with their campaign “No Place for Hate.” It was a campaign to encourage more inclusion in the community it was a collaborative effort throughout the community.

9) **Public Comment** – there was no public comment this evening.

**10) Adjourn**

*Ms. Wolf moved to adjourn the School Committee Business meeting, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*