



**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES March 19, 2019**

<b>Meeting:</b>	School Committee
<b>Date:</b>	March 19, 2019
<b>Location:</b>	MERMHS Learning Commons
<b>Attendees:</b>	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Co-Chairperson Ken Warnock Ann Cameron Sarah Wolf Caroline Weld Julie Riordan
<b>Absent:</b>	
<b>Guests:</b>	Principal Puglisi, Spencer Meek, Student Representative
<b>Recorded by:</b>	Gail Hunter

**A. Call to Order** – Ms. Erdmann called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**B. Business Meeting Open Session**

- 1) **Public Comment** – There was no public comment this evening.
- 2) **Student Report** –

Spencer reported spring sports have started. He is playing tennis which requires a 4:30 a.m. wake up for him given he needs to be at practice at 5:30 a.m. Ms. Erdmann asked who was on the courts this afternoon? Spencer replied we were getting extra practice.

Guidance has discussed next year planning with the Juniors, and he knows Guidance has also checked in with the Freshmen and Sophomores preparing everyone for next year.

Ms. Erdmann asked if there was any scoop on the Freshman/Sophomore Dance? Spencer was not there, however Principal Puglisi was in attendance and although she did not dance, she reported it was a really good time and all 120 students enjoyed themselves.

Superintendent Beaudoin asked Spencer if dances were still relevant? He stated they were especially the Prom which his class is already planning for 2020. He also thought it would be a great idea to have a dance during Homecoming. Several students have expressed interest but there is not enough time for class officers to plan a Homecoming Dance. Ms. Fitzgibbon suggested forming a dance committee and Spencer suggested Student Council could plan the Homecoming Dance.

Superintendent Beaudoin asked how students were responding to the college entrance scandal. Spencer replied it's a shock especially the number of major schools involved but he didn't think any students were photo shopping their faces at MEHS. Asked about the college admission process at MEHS, Spencer stated Ms. Low was a positive force and crushes the show down there. Spencer said he took the Military Aptitude Test last week with 4 other students and he was considering ROTC.

Spencer also mentioned the student Blood Drive last week where 20 students donated, and another 10 students were not eligible to donate. In order to donate blood students, need to be 16 and have parental approval.

### **3) Chairman's Report –**

Ms. Erdmann reported she had been in touch with her Dover Sherborn contact and their Late Start Committee is making significant progress. If Committee members are interested the information is on the Dover Sherborn web site under a tab labeled Late Start. Ms. Erdmann stated the group has compiled significant research and engaged 16 stake holder groups within the community. The Dover Sherborn plan is to vote on the late start in the fall of 2019 and assuming it passes implement in the fall of 2020.

The Dover Sherborn process has been deliberate, thoughtful and efficient. One of the interesting points of the process is the Middlesex League's commitment to honor schedules of late start schools as related to sports activities.

Ms. Weld believes the School Committee needs to do more than read about and review late start information. She suggested a community survey to determine if there was interest in pursuing a late start schedule. Ms. Erdmann would like to present information as part of the survey to go about the process in a more informed way.

Ms. Fitzgibbon has information and templates available from Newburyport and is willing to share. Mr. Warnock would like to have a presentation and Superintendent Beaudoin believes it is important to introduce the pros and cons to measure the appetite for change within the District. It

was agreed that by the School Committee retreat there would be a decision on steps to take moving forward.

**4) Consent Agenda –**

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes 3/5/2019
- Out of State Travel

*Ms. Cameron moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Fitzgibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Urbas requested the Committee approve a sub account to the student activity ledger of accounts to include musicals.

*Mr. Warnock moved to update the list of student activity ledger accounts to include musicals, Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.*

**5) Sub-Committee Reports**

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

Ms. Cameron reported there had been 3 meetings last week with MBTS Planning Board, MBTS Conservation Commission and Community Members. The meetings went well, and agreements will be forthcoming regarding parking and traffic routes during construction. Additionally, FAQ sheets will be developed related to constructions including agreements reached with deciding Boards and the Conservation Commission.

Superintendent Beaudoin indicated there is a site access walk through with Mr. Federspiel scheduled for March 20 and a presentation planned to the Board of Selectmen at their March 21 meeting. The main focus of the meeting is to discussion parking, traffic routes and permitting.

Ms. Cameron concluded by stating she feels the Building Committee is in a good place and things are moving forward in a positive collaborative way.

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

Ms. Erdmann stated there had been a Collaboration meeting last Friday with the primary focus MBTS Annual Town Meeting on April 1, 2019. Ms. Erdmann does not anticipate any questions about the MERSD Budget for FY 20 at Town Meeting the budget had been agreed to in an informed and congenial back and forth.

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

Mr. Warnock stated there had been no formal Policy Sub-Committee meeting, however the Task Force had met. There were a number of questions answered which have been recorded and next

steps include judgement statements applied to the Mission Statement to measure what is known and believed from the different perspectives. Principal Puglisi stated the goal is to see if the positive statements outweigh the negative statements.

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

Negotiations will be discussed during Executive Session.

## 6) Continued Business

- NEASC Report – Principal Puglisi

New England Association of School & Colleges (NEASC) Collaborative Conference Visit Report was presented.

NEASC reviews schools in a ten-year cycle. The protocol for 2020 was initiated in 2017 with Self-Reflection, followed by a Collaborative conference/visit and Development of Growth Plan in 2018, Implementation of Growth Plan and Summary Report occur in 2019, Decennial visit will take place in 2020, New/revised Growth Plan in 2021 and Progress updates in 2023.

Report Structure includes: School/Community Summary, Learning Standards Defined and NEASC Introduction to the Process – Foundational Element Ratings & Narrative, Standard Narratives, Self-Identified Priority Areas, Commendations and Recommendations.

MERSD Process: 2017-2018 Steering Committee and Self-Reflection Committees, Summer 2018 Shell Report Written, Fall 2018 Faculty provided “evidence” and input, Fall 2018 Faculty voted, November 2018 Collaborative Conference Visit.

The Foundational Elements represent essential building blocks for each of the standards. Foundational elements rated “does not meet” are priority areas for school improvement.

Foundational Element 1.2a – The school does not yet have a written document describing its vision of the graduate and plans are in place to develop a District K-12 **vision of the graduate** that includes attainment of transferrable skills, knowledge, understanding and dispositions necessary for each student’s future success.

Standards: Learning Culture, Student Learning, Professional Practices, Learning Support, Learning Resources – Each standard includes Principles of Effective Practice (32 principles) describing ways schools meet the standard. Full report is on the MERSD web site.

Priority Areas – Self Identified: Develop a *Vision of the Graduate*, Increase use of data to inform teachers about student learning & well-being, and to improve instruction, program and services. Identify time to build in interdisciplinary collaboration, collaboration with special education and opportunities for lesson planning with co-teachers. Expand curriculum to ensure that students are able to make real-life connections of knowledge and skills. Continue work on social-emotional learning through implementation of the RULER program.

Commendations from the Committee: School's safe, positive, respectful and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought. Commitment of faculty and principal to school improvement and growth to support learning and the best interests of students. Master schedule including U Block which prioritizes student learning, achievement and well-being. Development and implementation of effective student support programs such as Bridge, Academic Center, U Block and Teacher Assistance Team to meet student's individual needs. Authentic, project-based courses and experiences at the school that emphasize real-world learning experiences SCORE extended learning program required for all students. Community and District support for the school's curriculum, co-curricular activities and programs. Active engagement and commitment of professional staff in the development and implementation of the school improvement plan. Extensive, authentic learning connections the school makes with community, business and higher education. Rigorous core and elective curriculum that engages student in inquiry, problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills.

Recommendations: Explore ways to communicate student work habits separately from academic skills in assessment and report card grades as the school develops its Vision of the Graduate. Provide increased access to computers with consistent software and platforms for more dependable implementation in the classroom. Expand school counseling department's connects to students by increasing outreach in the classroom for all grades and developing collaborative curriculum opportunities with academic departments in the school. Add a full-time librarian for the building and develop consistent collaborative program with academic departments in the school. Develop a process or curricular coordination among each academic area, department and program and ensure that written, taught and learned curriculum are aligned. Provide additional support for the physical, social and emotional needs of students such as an additional school adjustment counselor or school nurse. Examine options for teacher evaluation process that would provide consistent, productive feed back to educators and be less taxing on the Principal's time.

Principal Puglisi completed her presentation and Ms. Erdmann thank her stating prior to her joining the Administration at MERHS the community had a good HS now the community had a great HS and Principal Puglisi had done a fabulous job. Ms. Erdmann opened for questions from the Committee.

Ms. Riordan expressed her thanks and stated she thought the NEASC evaluation was an interesting combination of input and reactions. She asked about the process of recruiting a new Dean and Athletic Director. Principal Puglisi stated the process had gone well and she believes the right candidates have been identified and are negotiating their contracts with the Superintendent.

Ms. Cameron asked if AP and Honors classes prepare students for college and is it time to make changes in assessments to align with colleges? She further asked is there justification for changing the current system? Principal Puglisi replied that there is a shift away from traditional assessments in colleges. She mentioned Harvard where 26 of 28 courses reviewed did not have exams and relied on projects or papers as a formal assessment. AP classes have prescribed tests and teachers prepare students for that process. Principal Puglisi does not believe the community is ready to shift away from traditional forms of evaluation.

Ms. Cameron also cited page 22 in the report and asked Principal Puglisi to discuss student learning and what it looks like to define skills, habits and minds, Principal Puglisi stated this relates to the Vision of the Graduate which is a K-12 process and the evaluation of students needs to become more meaningful. The objective is to focus on learning and skill development and shift the focus away from grades. She mentioned the current Social Studies curriculum where students participate in the process and have conversations about grading.

Ms. Cameron asked if the Dean would be participating in the evaluation process? The new Dean will be evaluating teachers and coaching Department Chairs.

Ms. Wolf had no questions but as the mother of a child about to graduate and one about to enter she believes the HS is a wonderful place.

Ms. Weld asked about the mind set for taking tests and was it possible to investigate the research for retaking tests to fully understand the concept? Principal Puglisi stated parent education is important in understanding the testing process.

Mr. Warnock asked about the shift away from centralized librarian in the HS. Principal Puglisi indicated the centralized librarian was a NEASC standard and indicated the role of the librarian has evolved and is changing. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the multi-year plan includes a full-time librarian in the HS.

The Committee discussed role of the classroom teacher and the expectation that the classroom teacher has the expertise to direct students to write in their discipline. Ms. Fitzgibbon asked are students getting what they need to research data? Superintendent Beaudoin believes the curriculum is supporting students need to research data.

Ms. Fitzgibbon stated the current bring your own device policy was not as direct as it could be, and should the District provide the opportunity to buy or lease a Chromebooks? The Committee discussed and concluded parents would welcome additional direction in the choice of device for students.

Ms. Fitzgibbon also asked if college students are invited back to meet with students about to leave for college. Principal Puglisi said that had been done for the past few years and will continue.

Ms. Fitzgibbon also indicated she would like to see the community service program for the HS to be more formalized and directed. Principal Puglisi stated she would review.

- ADL – World of Difference Program Discussion

Ms. Erdmann was impressed by the program and the student's reaction to and participation in the program. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the District had been on the ADL wait list for a year and a half and would like to wait and take a systematic approach to moving forward given current programs the District is engaged in.

The District is going into year 3 of RULER next year and RULER has been a heavy lift. Superintendent Beaudoin recommends HS peer leaders go into the MS to introduce the World of Difference Program. Students are going to the World of Difference Conference on April 12, 2019. She would also like to see how the MS and Elementary school Principals feel about introducing a new program. The concern is doing too much and the programs not being as effective as they could be.

- FY 20 Calendar – Will be discussed at the meeting on April 1, 2019
- FY 20 Budget Update
  - Costs Assumptions/State Funding Update

State Funding will not be finalized until July 2019.

Special Ed Out of District Placements have expanded considerably. At this point they are not finalized; however, the preliminary projections will impact the FY 20 Projected Budget.

FY 19 Budget: Gross Tuitions \$993K, Funding Offsets \$440K, Net to Budget \$553K

FY 19 Actual: Gross Tuitions \$1.108M, Funding Offsets \$458K Net to Budget (\$5K)

FY 20 Budget: Gross Tuitions \$1.012M. Funding Offsets \$384K, Net to Budget \$627K a 13% increase over FY 19

#### **Potential Exposure:**

FY 20 Potential: Gross Tuitions \$1.65M +\$623K (62%) vs. fall estimate, Funding Offsets \$654K, Potential Budget Impact: \$350K overage vs. \$400K increase in FY 21 Circuit Breaker Consider reserves as set aside for: Placements not yet confirmed, Timing/cash flow in advance of CB increase

Mr. Urbas stated he wanted to inform the School Committee and will keep you apprised of the ongoing changes. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the current situation was like the Heath Care crisis – we have a game plan to avoid making cuts to next year. FY 21 looks like a challenging year. Next year we will start on budget in early fall.

- Efficiencies – FTE Consolidation/Reorganization/Unmet Needs

The FTE reconfiguration to address enrollment: maintains student program, addresses enrollment decline and MHS enrolment increase and maximizes existing FTE.

Elementary Library: FY 19 1.5 FTE, 1.0 Memorial and .4 Essex FY 20 1.4 FTE Memorial .6, Essex .4 and MHS .4

Elementary PE: FY 19 2.3 FTE 1.4 Memorial and .9 Essex FY 20 2.4 FTE Memorial 1.1 Essex .9 HS .4

Elementary Art: FY 19 1,3 FTE Memorial .8 and .5 Essex FY 20 1.4 FTE Memorial 0.6 Essex 0.4 HS 0.4

Elementary Music: FY 19 1.8 FTE General Music Split .6 Memorial .4 Essex .6 District Instrumental FY 20 1.7 FTE

Special Ed. FY 19 2.0 Tutors @ MMES and 1.0 SWING/SAIL MS FY 20 1.0 Special Ed. Liaison MMEs 1.0 SWING

Teachers present expressed concern and interest in the changes.

### **7) Superintendent's Report –**

The District is sponsoring the North Shore Leadership Conference on Reading. Many communities have the same concern about growing intervention and support needed in reading. The cause maybe the core reading curriculum which may not be meeting the needs of students. There is a group of educational leaders addressing the issue. The move is to a more researched approach to reading.

Needs assessment on reading with Hill will be presented on May 21, 2019.

#### **Meetings:**

March 27, 2019, 7:00 p.m. Invitation event for neighbors to take them through the process and address their concerns.

May 8, 2019, 7:00 p.m. Discuss phasing and plans for occupancy during construction.

#### **C. Executive Session**

The School Committee Business Meeting concluded and will not reconvene this evening.

*Mr. Warnock moved the Committee to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiation strategy and pending litigation, Ms. Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote: Ms. Erdmann, Ms. Fitzgibbon, Mr. Warnock, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Weld, Ms. Wolf and Ms. Reardon – all yes.*

School Committee Next Meeting – April 1, 2019 – Memorial School Conference Room