



**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES October 20, 2020**

<b>Meeting:</b>	School Committee
<b>Date:</b>	October 20, 2020
<b>Location:</b>	Via Webex
<b>Attendees:</b>	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Sarah Wolf, Chairperson Shannon Erdmann, Vice Chairperson Ken Warnock Ann Cameron Eric Bourke Theresa Whitman Matt Harrington
<b>Absent:</b>	
<b>Guests:</b>	Patricia Puglisi, HS Principal, Joanne Maino, MS Principal
<b>Recorded by:</b>	Gail Hunter

**AGENDA**

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

**B. Business Meeting Open Session**

1) **Public Comment** –

Ms. Wolf stated there has been confusion about why School Committee meetings are not open for public discussion. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees states: “A School Committee meeting is a meeting of a government body at which members of the body deliberate

over public business. We welcome the attendance of members of the school district community to view your School Committee as it conducts its regular business meeting, but these meetings are not designed to be an opportunity for dialogue.”

There was no Public Comment from the community this evening, however Principal Puglisi requested to make a comment.

Principal Puglisi asked the Committee and Communities to remember Gloria Tanner a creative and talented teacher who died following a hard fought battle against cancer. Principal Puglisi stated students, teachers and staff are heartbroken by her loss. Ms. Cameron stated as a parent she valued Ms. Tanner’s perspective and guidance as her children progressed through the High School, Ms. Tanner will be missed.

## **2) Chairman’s Report –**

Ms. Wolf thanked residents and families for joining this evening. The Committee is happy to hear from you, whether you choose to contribute in these meetings or you reach out to us through email or contact members of the Advisory Group.

Today was the first day of implementation of the District’s Hybrid Model for K-2. Grades 3-5 will be in next week. This is a significant shift for students, families and teachers. Ms. Wolf hopes everyone will maintain open mindedness and a positive attitude as we continue to adjust over the next weeks. The Middle and High Schools will remain in the Remote Model until semester break in January 2021.

Ms. Wolf assured residents and families the elected School Committee is focused on the education, well-being and health of your children. The Committee strives to make decisions that will meet the needs of our students, our greater school community and our member Towns.

## **3) Consent Agenda**

- Minutes – 9.1.2020 and 9.15.2020
- Acceptance of Warrants

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

## **4) Sub-Committee Reports**

- Elementary Facilities/MSBC (Ann Cameron/Shannon Erdmann) – Report

Ms. Cameron reported that the canopy for the Memorial School had been approved and was paid for with savings achieved during construction. Steel delivery was expected over the next six days for the gymnasium, cafeteria and Pre-K wing. The Building Committee has reviewed the construction budget and is confident the new Memorial School project is coming in under budget and on-time.

- Finance Committee (Anne Cameron/Shannon Erdmann) – Report

The Finance Committee met with the Collaborative Group and discussed the opening of elementary schools to K-2 and grades 3-5 students. The Group discussed the District's need to use reserve funds to pay for the additional costs of the Hybrid Model. It is anticipated the Towns will help the District by sharing their CARES Act funding.

The Group decided to extend the lease with the Town of Manchester for another year. Manchester has a proposed 40B project in Town and the Developer estimated the project could add 30-40 students to the District's enrollment. BOH representatives from the Towns have joined the Collaborative Group meetings to review potential challenges moving forward.

- Policy Committee (Eric Bourke/Theresa Whitman) – No Report
- Negotiation Team (Sarah Wolf/Ken Warnock) – Report

Mr. Warnock stated the District already had a Memorandum of Agreement around working conditions which are unique this year due to the pandemic. The elementary school teachers worked collaboratively with School Committee members and Administration to develop a clear and efficient process for returning to school. Ms. Wolf thanked META for working through the long process and always having the health, safety and welfare of students as their primary concern.

*Ms. Erdmann moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with META, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.*

#### **5) Superintendent's Report – Fall 2020 Hybrid Transition Report**

Superintendent Beaudoin stated it is exciting to launch Hybrid and to get students into the buildings. There were children everywhere I looked today, and it was a welcome site. Superintendent Beaudoin thanked Principals Roberts and Willis, Mr. Urbas, Dr. Riley and Mr. Waldron for their efforts preparing for the transition to something that has never been done before.

Superintendent Beaudoin also thanked parents for their patience. The District needed time to figure out how the new learning models would play out. She assured parents the District will continue to create the learning environment the District is recognized for. It is the second month of the school year and we have synchronous learning in K-2 and next week in Grades 3-5.

Hybrid Model participation is strong with Memorial School at 90% and Essex Elementary at 80%. If there are parents who want to shift to coming into school, please let the Principals know. DESE Remote and Home School students are welcome to return at end of the semester, the District needs time to reorder cohorts.

Mr. Urbas stated the District had submitted a request for \$200K from FEMA to cover PPE, changes to on site HVAC systems and creating safe spaces and storage. FEMA reimbursement is 75% of costs the District will likely receive \$150K. Additionally the District anticipates receiving \$400K through the CARES Act.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the District had heard back from DESE and was informed the District's plan is solid and no further action around an audit would be taken. DESE had tagged the District because there was no specific date for engaging in the Hybrid Model. All issues are resolved.

Ms. Wolf asked if the MOA and DESE letter could be posted on the School Committee web site. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the DESE letter and MOA will be posted.

Ms. Erdmann asked if other Districts were running cohorts of 60 students at the secondary level and would MERSD move forward with that plan. Superintendent Beaudoin stated plans are still being developed for MSHS. Final plans may call for a reduced number of times students come in. The District plans to follow guidelines around the capacity of the building.

- Hybrid Launch Today  
K-2 October 20<sup>th</sup>  
Grades 3-5 Week of October 27<sup>th</sup>  
January 2021 – Semester Break Target for MHS Hybrid Transition
- Operations Updates  
Hybrid Participation  
Staffing – Functional with Hiring in Progress
  - LTS Nurse
  - 7 of 9 TA's – Additional TAs needed general and special education
  - Kitchen staff as additional support
  - 2 Open LTS Special Education
- Transportation – No additional Capacity Needed at This Time
- Daily Attestation – My Med Bot
- COVID Cost Reimbursement – FEMA Reimbursement Submission

Hybrid Model – meets local and state health and safety guidelines.

- The academic program can be delivered in the hybrid model with some modifications to the delivery of instruction
- Hybrid Model requires lessons to be designed for remote learning and accommodate in person cohorts – Teachers will plan and deliver remote instruction for students to access from home or from school simultaneously

#### **6) Continued Business**

- Middle High School Remote Learning Progress Report  
Middle School Principal Maino and High School Principal Puglisi

#### **GENERAL UPDATES** – Middle High School

- Community & Relationship Building
- Cass of 2021 Celebrations
- Adapting Advisory Block
- Tech Bootcamp for Grade 6 Students

- Open House
- Clubs & Activities

## **ON CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

Grade 6: Prioritizing Reading, Who am I, Thanking Veterans and Cooperative Problem Solving  
 Grades 9-12 – Meetings with classes and teachers

## **IN-PERSON LEARNING FOR HIGH NEEDS STUDENTS – Middle High School**

- IRWL Program (Middle School)
- Transitions Program (High School)
- SWING Program (Middle/High School)
- Developed criteria for regular education students who demonstrate the greatest need
- HS Dean of Students meeting with students outside on the property to talk about the importance of engagement
- MS Dean of Students and School Adjustment Counselor check ins
- Staffing in-person proctors

## **ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Middle High School**

- Full day of professional development on November 3, 2020
- Going deeper with the Hyflex Teaching Model
  - Morning Sessions:  
Targeted strategies for teaching in the Hyflex environment  
Hands-on practice with Hyflex technology
  - Afternoon Focus:  
Independent time for teachers to practice what they have learn

Ms. Erdmann stated she loved the advisory groups and believes it is critical to keep the groups going. She asked how often the groups were meeting. Principal Maino stated the groups of 9 to 11 students meet Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 2:15 p.m. The groups engage in different activities from going through planners, reviewing homework and talking.

Principal Puglisi stated in the High School Ublock students are choosing to stay in and talk to on another. In the Spanish Ublock the students are speaking Spanish exclusively and getting a lot out of their Ublock time.

Ms. Whitman asked how often in person activities were going to ne scheduled for the MS and is School Councils are up and running. Principal Maino stated the planning group is still working on a structure for in person activities and School Councils will be meeting in November.

- 2020-2021 School Year Calendar Update

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the calendar would be edited to reflect additional early release days. Administration is committed to half day Mondays. The calendar will be printed and republished. If additional planning time is required, the District will let families know.

K-5 Half Days : Oct. 19, Nov. 2, 16 and 30, Dec. 14 and January 4, 2021.

Ms. Whitman asked if parent conferences were on the schedule. Superintendent Beaudoin stated not yet, Principals are not sure where to realistically schedule conferences and report cards. She understands this is frustrating, but this year reflects major changes and planning, and conferences and report cards are on the to be decided list.

- FY22 Budget Calendar & Goals

#### FY22 Budget Calendar:

- November 17, 2020 – School Committee Meeting – Initial FY22 Budget Discussion
- December 1, 2020 – School Committee Meeting – Presentation of Tentative Budget to School Committee
- December 9, 2020 – Public Hearing on Tentative Budget – Joint Mtg. Essex and Manchester BOS and Finance Committees
- January 12, 2021 – School Committee Meeting – FY22 Budget Discussion Anticipated
- January 26, 2021 – Public Hearing – 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing on FY22 Budget Joint Mtg. Essex and Manchester BOS and Finance Committees
- February 2, 2021 – School Committee Meeting – Adoption of FY22 Budget
- March 4, 2021 – School Committee Meeting – Certification of apportionment
- April 5, 2021 – Manchester Town Meeting
- May 3, 2021 – Essex Town Meeting

#### Budget Goals:

- Develop and deliver a fiscally responsible budget that maintains educational quality, supports District goals and recognizes the confines of Proposition 2 ½.
- Manage Enrollment
  - Strive to meet School Committee class size guidelines
  - Serve increasingly diverse student educational needs
- Exercise fiscal responsibility
  - Seek internal efficiencies to offset growth needs when possible
- Meet local, state and federal responsibilities while controlling growth

Ms. Cameron stated the Committee would be beginning the budget process without a State budget for FY21. She believes this piles uncertainty on top of other unknowns. She also stated the Budget Goals align with School Committee goals but is concerned with managing the budget and Covid crisis under Proposition 2.5%.

Ms. Erdmann suggested changing the language for Covid and Proposition 2.5% or adding a second goal. Ms. Cameron reiterated the Covid crisis present specific challenges for the District and she believes the District needs to highlight that fact.

Superintendent Beaudoin suggested revisiting goals at the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and settle on an agreement around what went into preparing for the Hybrid Model and if Covid reasserts or remains a dominant force the District will need language that spells out the challenge.

Ms. Erdmann agreed stating the District needs to recognize and be covered for a fluid situation. Ms. Cameron stated all this is moving forward but we cannot let it hamper the long term goals of the District.

**7) School Committee Comment --**

**8) Adjourn –**

*Ms. Cameron moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*