

Approved 12.18.14

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Office of the Superintendent
Wenham, Massachusetts 01984

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 4, 2014
To: School Committee Members
From: Michael Harvey, Superintendent of Schools
Re: Thursday, December 4, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: Bill Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:08 in the Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

Present: Bill Wilson, Larry Swartz, Barbara Lawrence, Stacey Metternick, Jeanise Bertrand

Absent: William Derry, Sheila MacDonald, Deb Evans, Roger Kuebel

Others Present: Michael Harvey, Celeste Bowler, Jeffrey Sands, and student representative Dana Valletti

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE all rose for the Pledge of Allegiance

CITIZENS COMMENTS

- Ms. Ariana McDonough (49 Rust St, Hamilton) commented on the current iPad program at the high school. On a positive note, her child is more organized due to the iPad; as a deficit, she sees that he reads less. She questioned how the district was measuring success of the program and is there a way to assess objectively (not subjectively/anecdotally) whether the iPad affects student performance.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Bill stated he was not in attendance at the last meeting but went over the changes made on the SC Protocols and was pleased and Dr. Harvey had the edits and documents prepared for signature; a great step in helping us govern as body
- 9C cuts- an agenda item for tonight
- Reserves update- previously discussed meeting with joint FinCom on last 11/18 meeting. It's a collaborative start to budgeting season. Jeff Sands has had recent discussions with joint FinCom. It's an ongoing discussion to educate; finalize our Reserve policy in the next 30 days.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

- *Special guest coach Steve Sawyer and some members of the girls cross country team- Division 2 state champions.* Coach Sawyer has team goals to compete at national level; it takes kids, parents, and the community to buy into the program. Attend invitational meets that are highly competitive. Team accomplishments: 10 Cape Ann League championships in row ; 7 CAL Open championships in row; won 9 division 5 state championships past 10 years; won 5 All-State championships in 1999, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2014; National Federation of High Schools awards These girls are chasing national record- (started 2004) with 118 consecutive wins. Individual runners recognized: Rebecca Erhard (9); Bailey Wallick (11); Anna Murphy (11);

Mazy Loomis (10); Catherine Howley (10); Anna Cassidento (9); Jeanine Zheng (11); Olivia Horgan (10); Megan Stone (11); Grace Moroney (9); Emily Weigand (12).

- MRMS will host 28 students from Donglu Middle School in Shanghai, China during the first week of February; the students will stay with MR host family, attend classes, and there will be a cultural show at end of week to generate even more interest in our Mandarin Chinese program. Principal Hovey will send out a ConnectEd message with more information regarding host families this week.
- Bids for the Winthrop window replacement project opened; contract awarded as early as next week. Bids are in acceptable range; checking references.

Dana Valetti- Student Representative

- Just wrapped up spirit week; organizing candy cane fundraiser

CONSENT AGENDA

No member(s) requested to remove any items from the consent agenda.

- A. MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2014
- B. HAMILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION DONATION
- C. SKI FIELD TRIP REQUEST

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee approve all of the remaining items on the consent agenda; Passed unanimous 5-0-0

OLD BUSINESS

A. 2ND READING OF POLICIES

1. RETIREMENT OF CAPITAL ASSETS

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve the Retirement of Capital Assets Policy as presented. Stacey Metternick seconded. No discussion. Approved 5-0-0.

2. STUDENT FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve the Student Fundraising Activities Policy as presented. Stacey Metternick seconded. No discussion. Approved 5-0-0.

3. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve the Student Involvement in Decision Making Policy as presented. Stacey Metternick seconded. No discussion. Approved 5-0-0.

4. STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve the Student Publications Policy as presented. Stacey Metternick seconded. No discussion. Approved 5-0-0.

5. STUDENTS' RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Policy as presented. Stacey Metternick seconded. No discussion. Approved 5-0-0.

B. RESCIND POLICY – EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN HOME OR HOSPITAL

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve to rescind the Educational Services in Home or Hospital Policy as presented. Stacey Metternick seconded.

Dr. Harvey explained we have another policy (H8017) making this redundant. Approved 5-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. RECOGNITION OF GIRLS X-C TEAM AND COACH SAWYER (completed above)
- B. 9C CUTS LETTER TO LEGISLATURE (Exhibit G)
- The committee received a letter from Stephen Hemman Executive Director of MARS regarding 9C cuts. Bill traded voice mail messages with Rep. Brad Hill today. Mike Harvey explained that we had assumed level transportation funding, so the cut back to the 14 level is still level. The letter requests a contribution from the school committee for a legal fund to explore bringing a suit forward for violating the 2010 law. The committee discussed the \$500 contribution and felt it was money well spent. Stacey also requested that each school committee member write an email based on the seven talking points provided in the MARS letter. Bill will follow protocols- put this on the agenda for a motion to contribute \$500 from the legal fund.
- C. Q1 FINANCIAL REPORT (Exhibit H) Jeff Sands
- FY15 Budget Transfer-- operating budget did not include COLA adjustments, new instructional leadership, etc. District staffing reorganization plan resulted in \$345,000 in savings which is recommended and earmarked to cover cost of COLA, etc. Changes are self-funded through staff adjustments. Net impact on budget is \$0. We repurposed the funds. Jeff will supply detailed spreadsheets/audit trail (65 pages/revised budget file) to committee members.
 - Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to approve the 7 FY15 budget transfers by categories as outlined in exhibit H. Approved 5-0-0.
 - FY15 Forecast- actuals as of 11/21/2014-- Salary Costs and Operating Costs; look at what was spent in 3.5 months and project out. Forecast becomes more accurate the further we get through the year. Projection assumes SPED costs for Out of District Tuition will exceed budget by \$450,000 in FY15. Forecast assume \$125,000 will be covered by FY15 Operating Budget savings (from lower Insurance, Retirement, Other costs) and \$325,000 covered by available Circuit Breaker funds. There were 10 fewer health care enrollees than anticipated leading to the \$125,000 surplus.
- D. REVIEW OF BUSINESS OFFICE & OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES (Exhibit I)
- Jeff Sands explained the main purpose is to inform the school committee of the prioritization of everything they have asked for. Met with Mike Harvey and Bill Wilson. Forty-Five projects were then prioritized into 35-high (top 10), medium (18) and low (7) to get a flavor of what we are trying to accomplish. These priority projects do not include the day-to-day responsibilities of the Assistant Superintendent.
 - Larry will continue to push to prioritize a joint DPW with the two towns. He is not ready to put the death knell on it.
- E. SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PRESENTATION (Exhibit J)

- Katherine Harris presented the district's mission, core beliefs, and specialized programs in Special Education. The district makes mindful decisions in the team meeting process; all the members of the team responsibly determine what a child truly needs. Students are educated in the least restrictive environment and they are afforded opportunities to increase independence.
- As a district we try to build programs to keep students in the district; we are a small district and may have only two or three students who need a program. It's wrong to have a program with just one child. We have to weigh the benefit of having an in-district program and the needs of the child.
- The percentage of special education students served in the district is not far from the state average. The middle school number (15%) is higher than others; middle school is a difficult transition for students; changes in the instructional model create challenges. This number was 17%, so it is decreasing. Continuing discussions on building general education interventions, the projected team model, differentiated instruction and assessment may help reduce the need for special education direct services. All of the research says students educated and challenged with peers perform better consistently.
- Out-of-District placements have increased-- (elementary and high school). Nationwide there is a significant increase in children with mental health issues. Students have needed to be in a separate special environment where their physical safety is ensured and they can receive the therapy needed to get back into learning. The goal is to have students come back to the district, but that is not always the case.
- Changes to the programs include Elementary and Secondary Special Education coordinators Maureen Smith and Kristin Flaherty. We also have an in-district Assistive Technology Coordinator (previously contracted an outside provider) providing direct service and students as well as providing assistance and training to staff.
- SPED goals include supporting district general education Differentiated Instruction; assisting in implementing effective Instructional Support Team (IST); continue relationship with SEPAC, particularly to prepare high school special education students in transition planning and post high school options.
- Larry questioned if there is still a lot of disagreement between the district and parents regarding out-of-district placement. Kathy responded it still happens; sometimes the district has to weigh the cost/benefit of litigating a case which can cost as much as private school tuition. In response to Bill regarding additional future costs for out-of-district placement- the numbers are fluid; students can move into the district. As the year progresses, we are only paying for a partial year tuition.
- Jeanise queried how students formerly served in the skills classes at the high school are being served. Kathy answered as determined by the team, they are in supported or co-taught classes; they have an academic support block; they receive modifications as needed. Stacey asked if we are keeping track of former skills class students and how are they succeeding in College Preparatory? Mike and Kathy responded that it was a directive from the DESE to change to inclusion. We are all committed that all students' instruction is of the highest caliber and rigor. We hold differentiation as an expectation of our staff.

- F. ED TOPIC: IPAD UPDATE PRESENTATION (Exhibit L)
- Eric Tracy and Brian Menegoni provided the iPad 1:1 learning update. Participation is high: 118 iPads leased in grade 9, 123 in grade 10. Other students are BYO-iPad. Students can opt out; many bring their own device (MacBook; smartphone) and iPads can be borrowed from the library.
 - Important events include device distribution to students and teachers; 9th & 10th grade digital citizenship curriculum; and parent technology events. Upcoming event on 12/15 on managing the device with your student. Additionally, 16 teachers attended the iPad summit in Boston last month.
 - The digital environment allows district goals to happen faster; they are lofty goals that show the direction we want to go in.
 - Surveys data has been collected from teachers, students, and parents. Successes include organization, collaboration, creativity, and mobility and the the use of other learning spaces. Challenges include technology issues, distractibility, and variability in skillset/use.
 - Next steps include ongoing assessments; prepare for roll-out to next group of 9th grade students (perhaps starting in 8th grade); continued professional development and parent outreach. We want to get our brand out there and extend our influence beyond the campus.
 - In response to a question by Barbara Lawrence, Brian gave specific examples of differentiated learning end product with the iPad in Spanish, SPED with assistive technology and using notability app.
 - Dana Valletti commented that there is concern about distractibility; she spoke with 9th and 10th graders who stated the iPad is great in class, but can be really distracting as well. It's a great idea to have the mentoring program with the freshmen to rein everything in. Brian stated that he expected the distractibility factor to wear off by now and some measures may need to be taken to limit what's on an individual iPad. The 9th graders are doing no worse than freshmen always have. We have to do a better job for next year. Starting while they are still in 8th grade is the time to do it and remind them as freshmen.
 - Eric responded to Bill's question related to leases and breakage that the tech team immediately switches the device out. We work with Apple to get it fixed under the three year lease.
- G. 1ST READING OF POLICIES
1. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (Exhibit M)
 2. CURRICULUM ADOPTION (Exhibit N)
 3. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (Exhibit O)
 4. PROMOTION & RETENTION OF STUDENTS (Exhibit R)
 5. WELLNESS (Exhibit V)
 6. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (Exhibit X)
- The committee has never had a policy on graduation requirements so this is taken right from the handbook; new is the credit for foreign study.

Adjournment

Larry Swartz moved that the HW Regional School Committee move to adjourn Approved 5-0-0 at 10:20 pm