

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Monday, October 3, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mike Mucci, Adam Emerson, John Duval, Erin Milne, Regina Hill, Bethany DeMarco, Mike Henault

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Superintendent Aaron Dean

103979 Call to Order

Chairman Mike Mucci called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

103980 Public Comment or Questions - None

103981 Approval of Minutes - September 12, 2022

MOTION: On Motion of John Duval and second by Erin Milne:

VOTED: to approve the September 12, 2022 minutes. The vote was unanimous.

103982 Report of Treasurer/Business Manager -

A. To Reclassify Budget

Submitted herein for your approval is a request to reclassify the FY23 budget to align with projected expenditures. Be it hereby ordered to transfer funds between various accounts as follows: See attached Budget Transfer Request
Aaron: With the creation of new positions we are trying to move our core positions into the general budget. Erika: This fiscal year, we are able to make these moves, not exceeding our budget, working with Monica on the sped grants, making some nice shifts, which will set us up for the future. Trying to be mindful of our ESSR funds that will be ending in a few short years. No areas of concerns.

MOTION: On Motion of Regina Hill and second by Bethany DeMarco:

VOTED: To approve to Reclassify Budget. The vote was unanimous.

103983 Report of Sub Committee - None

103984 Communications - None

103985 Report of Superintendent -

A. October 1st Enrollment - You have the past 5 years of enrollment data in front of you. For the first time in a couple of years, we have increased the enrollment data. A positive is that we have 84 in 9th grade class, first time in a while. Looking at the early childhood numbers, pretty solid and consistent. Big cohort for grades 1 and 3. Kindergarten typically changes throughout the year, we expect to be around 80 students. Regina asked why we see such a drop in numbers from 3rd to 4th. Aaron, insight from several in the community about parents concerned with their 4th graders going up to the high school with 12th graders. Concerned about safety, those buildings do operate as 2 separate buildings and everything is done to make sure middle and high school students are separated. Mike Henault asked what caused the increase in the 1st grade cohort which is now 100 and was 82 last year? That is a 20 student jump. Aaron stated that it was probably just simply moves, that's how transient the population can be. Between us and

North Adams, there is a lot of back and forths. Adam Emerson: Grade 8 and grade 9 numbers, starting to see the effects of the changes we started to implement. How are we keeping that momentum going? Aaron: There is a lot of work and a lot of thought into retaining these students. Trying to reinvent our family and community nights, work going on with our new Family Community Coordinator. Adam: the small bumps in last year grade 6 to grade 7 and last year 7 to grade 8 what do you attribute those bumps in enrollment to go up 10 and 8 in those 2 grades Is that just from Savoy? Aaron: no, not just Savoy, we had several students that have started choosing in. These are encouraging trends. Working hard to be a match for students in our community and improve our programming.

B. MCAS/Accountability - Results are mixed, for the district, in terms of this data. In some ways surprising in some areas not. A lot of the work we are doing and have started and are digging deeper, really aligns with the needs of the students. We have done a solid job looking at our local data, past MCAS data and other data points to build plans for the areas that need addressing. Last year we mentioned that we saw a lot of growth that we haven't seen in the past with fastbridge, ELA in particular, we see solid growth in our students, but at a typical level. We didn't recover as quickly from the pandemic as some people have. We needed aggressive growth to get to where we were in 2019 when the last full test was taken. The takeaway, as we dig deeper into this data, is we know the areas where the work needs to happen. We are prime to use this as a baseline and move forward with it. The last time MCAS was fully given was before I started. 2019 full test administration, 2020 entered covid and no test administered; 2021 had half a test administered to lower level; and grade 10 full test administered. Last year was the first time fully given since 2019. Over that time period, we endured the pandemic and clearly a learning loss, to levels we were clearly concerned when we saw our benchmark data, did a lot of work to try to address it. On the state level, 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared with the 2021 scores; in general across the state ELA hasn't fully recovered, math has shown signs of recovery, almost fully, and science you are dealing with a new standard, which is tough to compare. The student absenteeism remains a challenge across the board for recovery efforts. It really had an impact. Encouraging pieces in our data: Typical growth across subject areas: 45% in ELA (looking between 40-60%) 44% in Math (Science was first year with new standards) our ELA side where we did a lot of work has shown improvement. Students in grade 4 had higher proficiency than state in ELA. Glows reflect our 2021-2022 DIP focus areas: Implementation of new ELA curriculum K - 12; Professional development focused on ELA curriculum implementation and instruction. 2 key areas of the work. We saw encouraging signs for the first year. Math performance was consistently lower than the state. Chronic absenteeism significantly impacted student data and accountability.

Adam Emerson: any chance the absenteeism rate is skewed because of COVID where you had to be out more than 10 days? Aaron: It certainly is a piece of it - we had waves of COVID that contributed to it, but it's not just because of COVID. This year, we need to focus on getting the students in and give students chances to recover their learning from the pandemic.

At the district level in terms of responses: Math: refined implementation of the Eureka math curriculum Pk-3 with a focus on pre-module assessments to drive explicit instruction in sub skills required to access the grade level curriculum. Training all middle school math, special education and title staff in (AVMR); Implementation of Eureka Math in grade 8 to ensure access to grade level standards and continuity of instructional experience for our students. Mike Henault: the trend across the state with math recovered quickly, our data showed we went down in math. Were these things that were implemented last year, are these in response to this week's data that says we need to do something differently in math? This is in response to our data, what we thought was in place was a solid math curriculum, we found out not so much. It was purchased in 2018, 2019 more of an implementation year, and then we got hit with the pandemic, and then everything kind of froze there. Throughout the pandemic people were using what they could, coming out of it, taking a hard look, we had to backfill and start training more. Chronic Absenteeism: Focus area for our new Family & Community Engagement Coordinator, increasing access to school and partnering with families to provide support including transportation and other resources; For the first time this year we provided transportation to families for open house, that was well received, a handful of people took part in it. Creation of attendance teams at each school to track data, identify students needing early intervention and examine ways to effectively address chronic absenteeism; Regina: are you seeing more absenteeism in one school than the other? Aaron: elementary we are, COVID hit us in the beginning, unfortunately still part of the equation. Utilizing student focus groups and surveys to help us get to the root cause of attendance issues. Declining student performance in grades 4 - 8 Assistant Principals of teaching and learning to provide critical job embedded professional development through collaborative planning around examining student data, implementing high-leverage instructional practices, and meeting diverse student needs; Having that person that curriculum and instruction ins their job, meeting with teachers, looking at data, problem solving, etc. trying to catch things early on. Professional development and continued implementation support of new and existing curriculum to ensure fidelity; and examining staffing structures and scheduling for effectiveness, relying on research and data to guide our decision making. Having the WIN blocks to get targeted instruction, looking at structures in grades 6 & 7. Deeper Responses: Acknowledging this as our baseline; Deeper district and school strategic planning; and targeted school-based response to MCAS data, identifying strengths and practices that need to be replicated and expanding them. Identifying areas for growth and missed opportunities and targeting them with coaching and improvement planning.

Mike Henault: - any thought in moving to an intermediate school model where 4, 5 & 6 together and then a 7-12 and maybe using resources better. If it hasn't already been thought about. Aaron: has been discussed, not convinced that our current structure is the best for our district. The elementary does work well up to grade 3 - Grade 8 at the high school is like its own high school. Aaron looked at the high school schedule last year, you had 2 schools in the high school, grade 8 and then 9-12. We need to take a look at this model. There will be a research base behind our decision.

Adam Emerson: Can we share this presentation with Adams/Cheshire leadership? They want to see what we are paying for? This shows what we are paying for. These are the results and this is what we are doing to fix it. This is why we have some good and some bad, It might go a long way. Aaron: trying to get engaged with both selectboards, wanted to have enrollment figures first. Can take this presentation and deliver it to the boards.

Adam Emerson: how long to do research on the data and think about Mike's plan? Can we see this in 6 months, a year? Aaron: We are already engaged in that deep dive. Using any resource to make sure we are looking at this the right way. Coming into the next meeting you will get an idea with our District Improvement Plan. There is more to come at the next meeting and throughout the year.

C. District Improvement Focus Areas - part of the MCAS accountability data discussed above

103986 Chairman's Report - None

103987 Unfinished Business - None

103988 New Business: - None

103989 Action Items - None

103990 For the Good of the Order -

Adam Emerson: went to the bonfire on Thursday, great seeing kids being kids again and the open house for the high school was a nice event and the transportation made a nice touch.

Erin Milne: pleased with the outreach in the community, the transportation and real drive towards equity. Knowing that we are high needs community.

Mike Mucci: open house was great, bonfire, kids playing sports and the homecoming dance, a lot of community engagement.

Bethany: the middle school was the most attended open house that she has seen from the community to the staff. Erika Girgenti and Chris Sposato did a great job.

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Behtany DeMarco:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary

