

# MINUTES



## Addison Central School District

### ACSD Board

### Board Meeting

Monday, June 12, 2023, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection

### *ACSD District Vision and Mission*

#### **OUR VISION**

*All students will reach their full academic potential and be prepared for success as engaged citizens.*

#### **OUR MISSION**

*To provide an innovative, rigorous, and supportive educational community that inspires a passion for learning and cultivates empathy and responsibility.*

### **In Attendance**

Barbara Wilson; Ellen Whelan-Wuest; Ellie Romp; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jason Chance; Joanna Doria; Lindsey Hescocock; Mary Heather Noble; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Tricia Allen

### **Not In Attendance**

Brian Bauer

#### A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. Barb Wilson notified the Board of an adjustment to the agenda -- instead of Item G going into Executive Session, the Board will take action on hiring an Interim Superintendent.

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff
2. Public Comment

Mary Slosar of Weybridge spoke to emphasize the importance of the ACSD Literacy Report. She hopes the Board will recognize how important the literacy issue is for our District. She mentioned that this is something that the Special Education community has been talking about for some time, and has been pushing for structured literacy programming. Aiming to have 90% of District 3rd graders meeting literacy standards in 3 years is a big goal -- this board will have to be curious about how to support the administration in meeting this important goal.

#### B. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of 5/22, 5/23, 5/30, and 6/5

James Malcolm made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes for May 22, 2023. Tricia Allen seconded. Barb Wilson noted a few confusing sections in the

public comment section, as if something had been truncated during cut & paste. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Steve Orzech made a motion to approve the minutes for the May 23, 2023 Special Board Meeting. Jamie McCallum seconded. The Board voted to approve the minutes. Jamie McCallum and Jason Chance abstained.

Joanna Doria made a motion to approve the minutes for the May 30, 2023 Special Board Meeting. Steve Orzech seconded. The Board voted to approve the minutes; Lindsey Hescocock, Ellie Romp, and Mary Heather Noble abstained.

Suzanne Buck made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 5, 2023 Special Board meeting. James Malcolm seconded. Jason Chance indicated that he was present at the meeting -- Mary Heather said she would check. The Board voted to approve the minutes; Tricia Allen, Ellen Whelan-Wuest, and Lindsey Hescocock abstained.

#### C. Approve ACSD Bills

James Malcolm presented the ACSD Bills as follows.

Read May 30, 2023:

General Fund -- \$1,098,161.56 (~\$450K of this related to benefits, and ~\$172K for Responsive Classroom Training, paid with ESSER funds)

Payroll -- \$907,028.47

Payroll -- \$594.02

McGilton Fund -- \$2,005.70

Read June 12, 2023:

General Fund -- \$217,375.50

Payroll -- \$1,126,117.81

Payroll -- \$20,789.17

Payroll -- \$25,342.55

Motion to approve the ACSD Bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

#### D. Report of the Superintendent

Peter Burrows delivered his final Superintendent Report for ACSD. He expressed gratitude for the Board and staff, and everything they've been able to accomplish. He looks fondly on the experience and will miss everyone.

Peter said that he has been working with the Leadership Team on a Transition Plan for his departure and welcoming the new Interim Superintendent. ACSD has very strong leaders, and we're hoping for an Interim Superintendent to provide some stability to maintain the course.

The Strategic Plan Action Team has been working with Emma to finalize the draft plan. They are close to the finish line but won't be ready to present the final report to the Board until mid-July. They will plan to deliver it to the Board and Interim Superintendent at an August Board meeting.

The Administrative Team is planning to have their retreat on August 3rd & 4th -- they will be incorporating elements of the Strategic Plan into their work. The Board will really need to work with the team on understanding resource allocation needs, especially in the wake of sunseting ESSER funds and implementation of the State's new pupil weighting study figures.

Hiring for next year has been going well, but the standard para positions remain open -- they are hoping the bump in pay from the Board's approval of the side letter to the contract will make these positions more competitive.

Finally, Peter reminded the Board that they will need to find another student representative to replace Nargis Anzali.

1. Discussion: ACSD Literacy System Development 20 min

Heather Gebo, ACSD Literacy Coordinator provided a detailed presentation of the work she has done over the last 2 years (included in meeting materials). In summary, she reviewed literacy instruction and intervention practices across the district and found many inconsistencies from one building to another. She has been introducing a new science-based reading instruction program to teachers, which includes new best practices that will take time to implement. The focus is on establishing strong foundational skills for prevention of literacy issues, with early intervention if/when student struggles with the foundational skills present. Report highlights:

- Introduction of Executive Functioning skills into the foundational pillars for literacy
- Earlier introduction of phonological awareness and word recognition
- Bridging processes,
- Requiring 90-120 literacy instruction every day.
- Direct literacy instruction with specific scope and sequence so issues can be identified & addressed early before they compound
- Benefits of the IB framework to support this structured work
- Shifting from Balanced Literacy curriculum to Structured Literacy curriculum

The Board asked questions around the District's commitment to this shift, use of literacy screening tools, how to involve parents in aiding this transition in how literacy is taught, and how the Board can support the work. The Literacy Coordinator position is ESSER-funded, so this will be a consideration with budgeting, as will professional development for teachers needing training in this new method.

2. Discussion: ACSD FY23 Assessment Report 20 min

Nicole Carter, ACSD Assistant Superintendent and Director of Equity and Student Services provided a presentation of the District's FY23 Assessment Report (included in meeting materials). She indicated that this information

provides essential baseline data for evaluating the District's strategic plan deliverables. One thing to note is that the data currently come from 10 different systems -- but the District is working to centralize data management so tracking and comparing student assessment information over time is more functional. ACSD just signed a contract with Educlimber, which will enable the District to query student assessment data more easily.

Highlights from the presentation:

- ACSD currently has 5 schools that receive Title 1 funding for economically disadvantaged students: Mary Hogan, Shoreham, Ripton, Bridport, and Salisbury. These schools receive additional dollars for Tier 1 and Tier 2 practices.
- Percentages of students needing plans (IEP, 504 and/or EST plans): 36% for MUHS, 52% for MUMS, 43% for Mary Hogan, 33% for Cornwall, 28% for Shoreham, 43% for Salisbury, 23% for Bridport, 41% for Ripton, and 34% for Weybridge.
- Schools with >25% of students with high SEL needs (self-reported for higher grades) include MUMS, Mary Hogan, Shoreham, Salisbury, and Bridport. (Note the overlap between these figures and the schools receiving Title 1 funding as an indicator of students living in poverty.)
- 4-year Graduation Rates at MUHS were 83% for 2019, 86% for 2020, and 83% for 2021. 6-year Graduation Rates at MUHS were 91% for 2019, 91% for 2020, 84% for 2021. Takeaway: MUHS needs more robust options for students, including flexible pathways and alternative programming. Other possible factors include culture and climate at MUHS and lingering post-COVID attendance issues.
- Work that is currently being done to address these patterns includes MTSS work, specialized training for special educators and professional development re: literacy instruction & interventions for teachers, improving assessment data management & analysis to properly track students with early screening, and refining Tier 1 instruction with a focus on preventing so much need for intervention. (see meeting materials for more detail).

Board members asked questions about the assessment tools and how the leadership is using the data to inform decision making about staffing and resource allocation. Several noted the challenges presenting for some schools with higher percentages of students living in poverty. Other questions came up about the challenges of reporting assessment statistics for schools with small student populations, and the inability to accurately report the number of students on plans due to privacy concerns.

Matt Corrente provided a brief summary of the FY22 audit, noting that no significant issues came up. He did mention the effort that the Finance Department is making to provide some consistency to the Student Activity Funds across the different schools -- many have special revenue sources (e.g., PTO funds, concessions, donations, etc.) that are overseen and handled at each building. The advantage of the method is that schools have easy access to the money for desired programming. The disadvantage is that the spending/use of funds is not always consistent across the district, and create potential equity concerns. They are working with the schools to see which student activities expenses should be handles through Central Office, and which ones can be handled through the school.

4. Action: Approve Tax Anticipation Note 5 min

Matt Corrente explained that the Board approves a Tax Anticipation Note every year to allow the District to borrow money as needed to pay bills during low cash flow times of the year. He explained that the motion needs to include the exact language in the meeting materials.

Motion to Approve a \$3,125,422.00 operating line of credit from the National Bank of

Middlebury, due no later than June 30, 2024, at an interest rate of 3.0% and authorize the Treasurer, Business Manager, and Assistant Business Manager to borrow against the line of credit as needed on behalf of the board.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

5. Action: Approve Professional Appointments 5 min

Steve Orzech noted the appointment for Haysal Jones only said "school" -- Peter Burrow explained the full position "school nurse" should have been included in the list.

Motion to approve the professional appointments as presented.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: James Malcolm Status: Passed

E. Report of the Board

1. Discussion: Committee Updates

a. Finance Committee Update: Transportation and Auditor RFP 10 min

Matt Corrente provided an update regarding the request for bids for auditing and transportation services:

- The Committee received 2 bids for auditing services -- 1 from the current provider (RHRSmith) based in Maine, and 1 local provider (Tom Telling). RHR Smith was a lower bid and has more relevant experience, so that's who they would like to select. Suzanne Buck reminded the Committee that the full Board needs to vote on the RFP, so this will need to be on a future agenda before the official selection is made.

- The Committee reported that the cooperative RFP for transportation services in Addison County (ACSD, ANWSD, and MAUSD) only received 1 bid from Betcha transportation. Other firms expressed interest, but indicated the need to additional ~18 month lead time to build capacity in their fleets to commit to a formal bid. So the Committee is looking at a 3 year contract with Betcha, but is thinking about going out to bid again within the year to attract other firms to the process for transportation services after FY27. James Malcolm also noted that the Committee needed to go through the practice of estimating costs of running a District-based bus fleet for comparison sake -still much too costly, even if shared between the 3 Addison County school districts. This will also be included in a future agenda for formal Board approval.

Lindsey Hescoock asked a few detailed questions about providing busing for after school activities -- Matt noted that the contract provides flexibility to allow the District to request this additional services, but that Betcha can also refuse if they lack the resources to meet the need. There was also some discussion around the section of the contract requiring Betcha to provide updates on transitioning their fleet to electric.

#### F. Other

Mary Heather Noble made a motion to hire Dr. Timothy Williams as the Interim Superintendent, pending contract signatures and approval from the AOE. She noted specific reasons for the Board's choice, including the 3 priority criteria it had identified for the search process:

- Experience as a Superintendent or Interim Superintendent: Dr. Williams has both, most recently in our own backyard as an Interim Superintendent for the Hannaford Career Center.

- Strength in developing and overseeing a district-wide budget: Dr. Williams has at least 8 years of experience with budget development as a Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent from 2015- 2023. Budgets for the Districts he has led range from \$4.8 Million with the Hannaford Career Center to \$64 Million with the York Suburban School District in York, Pennsylvania. Of note is Dr. Williams's assistance in helping the Hannaford Career Centro proceed with a Bond request in 2022 for capital improvements.

- Proven strength in leadership and unifying staff: Dr. Williams has 7 years of Superintendents of similar or larger size, some of which followed tumultuous leadership. He has a demonstrated ability to stabilize and organization in the wake of such challenges. He is familiar with the ACSD community and can assist the Board in recruiting and hiring a permanent Superintendent to lead ACSD into the future.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest made a comment to clarify that the Board does not regard leadership under current Superintendent as tumultuous; rather, his departure creates a leadership vacuum that requires stability. James Malcolm expressed

thanks to Barb Wilson and Mary Heather Noble for their hard work on the search process.

Mary Heather Noble and James Malcolm both expressed gratitude for the 10 years of leadership that Peter Burrows provided to ACSD, particularly in helping the District to anticipate state-level policy changes early and allowing the Board to take early action. Everyone wished Dr. Burrows well in his new position with the Milton MA School District.

Motion to hire Tim Williams as the ACSD Interim Superintendent, pending signature of the contract and final approval from the Vermont Agency of Education.

Move: Mary Heather Noble Second: Joanna Doria Status: Passed

G. Executive Session: Contract Negotiations VSA 313 (a)3 Not needed.

H. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 1h 10m

**\*Public Comment Guidelines:**

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.