

MARION SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 24, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Location:

This meeting was held remotely

Members Present: Michelle Smith, Chairperson, April Rios, Vice-Chairperson, Mary Beauregard and Nichole Daniel.

Members Absent: Jody Dickerson

Others Present: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning, Howard Barber, Asst. Supt. of Finance & Operations, Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services, Diana Russo, Administrative Asst. to the Supt., Marla Sirois, Principal, Sippican School, Sean Persico, Asst. Principal, Sippican School, teachers, parents and members of the press.

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chairperson Smith. Chairperson Smith reported that the following members were participating remotely: April Rios, Mary Beauregard, Nichole Daniel and herself Michelle Smith.

I. Approval of Minutes

A.1. Approval of Minutes- Regular Session:

January 19, 2021

Motion to accept the January 19, 2021 minutes as presented

MOTION by Ms. Rios

MOTION Seconded by Ms. Daniel

ROLL CALL VOTE:

4:0 (Smith; yes - Daniel; yes - Rios; yes –Beauregard; yes)

February 8, 2021

Motion to accept the February 8, 2021 minutes as presented

MOTION by Ms. Rios

MOTION Seconded by Ms. Daniel

ROLL CALL VOTE:

4:0 (Smith; yes - Daniel; yes - Rios; yes –Beauregard; yes)

A.2. Executive Session Minutes: These will be approved in executive session.

A.3. Budget Sub Committee Minutes: These minutes were held until the next meeting because Mr. Dickerson was not present.

IV. General

A. Updated of Reopening Plan

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

The last time we met as a school committee – we were making final arrangements and decisions regarding pivoting our youngest learners from the hybrid learning model to a full in-person learning model. Many individuals made major contributions to making the pivot nothing but a success. Our kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students have returned to school five days a week.

We ordered new materials and equipment, repurposed learning spaces, moved classrooms, asked staff members to adjust midyear, rerouted our busses, redesigned arrivals and dismissals and much more to make the pivot happen. All that effort was absolutely worth it. I am happy to report tonight that from my perspective the pivot has been a tremendous accomplishment. Our youngest learners are back in school five days a week. I cannot thank the many individuals who have made this possible enough— our teachers, their association president, administration, facilities, this school committee, and our students and families. Nevertheless, we recognize that we need to continue to look for new ways to improve not only the model for our youngest learners, but all our learners. Most recently – we received updated transportation guidance from the Department of Education – that lifts some of the previous restrictions. This guidance moves us closer towards a new normal. With that being said, as a school community we continue to monitor the most recent guidance and anticipate our educators being prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination. Yesterday, Governor Baker and Commissioner Riley from the Department of Education shared with Massachusetts a “phased-in vision” for students to return fully to school in-person this school year – starting with elementary schools - possibly in April. For Sippican School – this would mean grades 3 through 6, knowing that all other grades are now full in-person. While we wait for more in-depth guidance from the Department of Education – I have already connected with the teachers’ association leadership and begun a conversation in relation to this recent development. As a result, we will re-engage our full reopening team to plan for this possibility – this effort will include representation from all stakeholders. Moreover, we continue to monitor local and statewide COVID-19 data. At the close of the school day - Sippican School reported one individual in isolation as a result of testing positive for COVID-19, two individuals are presently quarantining, and one individual is awaiting testing results due to demonstrating COVID-19 like symptoms. We have seen data trends improve in recent weeks and we are hopeful that the numbers will continue to move in the right direction – even with our recent February vacation. Regarding our current enrollment numbers; we currently have 61 remote learners at Sippican School amongst all the different grade levels. As for in-person learning, we have 135 students participating fully in-person and 185 students participating in our hybrid learning model. Presently we have 21 home schooled students. At this time, I’d ask Principal Sirois to speak from her perspective regarding day to day happenings in the schools and the recent K-2 pivot that occurred.

Principal Sirois reported a smooth transition as Mr. Nelson expressed previously, she expressed that the children are very excited every single day this week, she reported that she couldn’t say who is happier the parents or the children. She reported that there have been a few changes in drop off and dismissal, she thanked the Sippican Staff for doing a phenomenal job at dismissal and making sure that all our children leave the building safely and she also expressed her gratitude to the parents, she expressed they are doing a great job with social distancing as they leave the property with their students. She expressed that buses are going back to Park Street and she expressed that she met with Police and Fire Chiefs before making any decisions on changes in traffic patterns and make sure that we assure public safety for not only for Sippican but for the entire Marion Community. She thanked them both for meeting with her and look at all the options and figure out what made the most since for everyone. Principal Sirois reported some schedule adjustments in the specialist schedules. She expressed that the Sippican Specialists have done a great job transitioning, she reported that they are now doing “remote learning”, “hybrid learning”, “in-person learning”, “5 day students”, she expressed that their schedules are constantly in flux and she absolutely appreciates their flexibility. She expressed that the teachers have done a great job making the children feel welcome, setting up the classrooms in a way that the children can feel like a part of their school community. Principal Sirois did report that currently the children are still eating in classrooms but have started to look at

other options in using the cafeteria moving forward, she reported that she met with Jill Henesey, Food Service Director and Gilbert Leonard, the Custodial Supervisor to review options and things to consider before we can make that kind of move and what the cafeteria would look like if we used it for some or all of our lunches.

Mr. Nelson expressed that in closing he believes these are all exciting happenings for the Sippican School Community even in light of the latest communication from Governor Baker and Commissioner Riley regarding a phased in approach, Mr. Nelson expressed that he feels like that's what they have been doing since August, he expressed that some of our students including preschoolers, student with severe disabilities have been in the buildings for an increased amount of in-person time since the start of the school year and now most recently bring back K-2, he expressed that was another large milestone for all of us, Mr. Nelson reported that next will be to start thinking about Commissioner's Riley proposal to his Board to approve and the next phase being grades 3 to 6. Mr. Nelson expressed that from his point of view he will take this opportunity and he feels there is mutual interests between the administration and the association based on conversations with the association leadership to really start talking about what that may look like and being proactive with our planning to make sure that we are ready for it.

Ms. Smith thanked the association and the leadership for their support, and she's thankful that the conversation has already started she believes it will put Sippican School in a good place. She expressed that the news from the State came as surprise to most people. She thanked the union and the administration for being proactive.

B. FY22 Draft Budget

Mr. Nelson made the following statement:

Tonight we felt it was important for the school committee as a whole to discuss the FY22 budget process and the current FY22 draft budget. The subcommittee has met numerous times in recent months to collaborate on the FY22 budget process with central office administrators, building administration, and our school committee representatives – Michelle and Jody. As a subcommittee we have discussed what we know of the financial landscape both at the local level and the state level, assessed our needs, and discussed our stakeholder priorities as a subcommittee and made decisions collaboratively on how best to navigate the budget process. Tonight, Mr. Barber will provide a general overview of the draft FY22 budget. Our subcommittee discussed at length our current needs as we navigate the present and anticipate what the start of the new 2021-2022 may look like. Based on all of the known factors, the draft budget you will hear about tonight represents what we feel as a subcommittee is a responsible - FY22 draft budget - and a budget that meets our educational needs at this time. The school committee is not expected to take any formal action on the budget tonight, but instead hear a presentation on the FY22 budget process and the draft FY22 budget.

Mr. Barber presented a budget presentation. (Please refer to attachment A).

Questions/Feedback:

Ms. Daniel expressed that in the past the Town has absorbed the cost for Bristol Aggie so that it didn't come out of the Sippican Budget, is that not happening for next year?

Mr. Barber explained that the Town pays for it but the cost is part of the overall budget, he explained that about three years ago two out of the three towns, Marion and Rochester that pulled out values out of values out of operating budget and recognized under a separate line but still part of the Sippican Budget, therefore at the Town Meeting it's recognized as one warrant for the school department.

Ms. Smith also agreed with Ms. Daniel that it had been separated as an agreement with the Town.

Mr. Barber explained that it's showed as a separate line but as per discussions with the financial officers at the Town it will be shown as one single warrant article at the Town Meeting.

Ms. Rios expressed that she remembers about a year and half ago when they were informed about the increase from Bristol Aggie that the Town stepped forward and said they would help pay for the transportation fee because it was such a large amount.

Ms. Smith agreed with Ms. Rios and expressed they even spoke about getting their own bussing to offset the cost and the Town was very generous to offset that was the deal going forward.

Mr. Nelson explained that there is two pieces of this from his perspective, he expressed he agrees and he remembers being part of those conversations, Mr. Nelson explained that the Town is being consistent with the way they have treated these funds in recent years as all of you indicated, although it's a line item that falls under the school department, it does not correlate to the bottom line percentage increase, therefore when we hear from the Towns about being as responsible as possible for a 2% or 2.5% the Bristol Aggie Tuition and Transportation amount is not calculated into that percentage.

Ms. Daniel and Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Nelson for clarifying that. Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Barber for his presentation. She expressed it was very transparent and the Marion School Committee appreciates all the time you've put into it.

C. Health Unit Application Approval

Mr. Nelson explained that each year the school committee must approve the School Medication Administration Application to submit to the Department of Public Health. This application allows for our school nurse to train administrative staff and teaching staff to administer medication to students as appropriate and needed on school grounds and on field trips or during extra-curricular events. The application that was provided to the school committee in your back up information has been reviewed and endorsed by Nurse Meg, Dr. Reynolds - one of our school physicians, and me. Mr. Nelson is asking for a motion – **to authorize the school nurses to delegate the administration of medication to other school personnel as presented in the School Health Unit Application.**

Ms. Daniel expressed that when she reviewed the document she was giving permission to two additional staff members. She asked who will be those staff members. Principal Sirois explained that it would be herself and Asst. Principal Persico so that if the nurse is out someone could administer medication on an emergency basis.

Motion to approve the Health Unit Application as presented.

MOTION by Ms. Daniel

MOTION Seconded by Ms. Rios

ROLL CALL: Smith: yes, Daniel: yes, Beauregard: yes, and Rios: yes

V. New Business

C. Business

1. Financial

Mr. Barber reported that as January 31, 2021 the Sippican Elementary School currently has \$326,257 available of the general funds appropriated in the 2021 Fiscal Year. Mr. Barber reported that per the report given to the school committee by Department, that the report recognizes that of the \$6,243,227 appropriated to the district, 85.87% is directly assigned and is spent or encumbered to student instruction.

Mr. Barber also reported on the Food Service and Facilities Departments.

Ms. Smith wanted to do a shout out again to Jill and her staff, they have been doing a tremendous job, she expressed they received recognition for all their hard work from the “Friends of Jack Foundation”, and she wanted to congratulate them.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Ms. Smith thanked the Administration, Ms. Sirois and her team, the association and the teachers for getting the plan together for the K-2 students to come back full time. She expressed that she’s heard nothing but great things about this week, she expressed both parents and students are very excited and she thanked everyone for making that happen. She expressed that we have some guidance in front of us and she expressed we will be ready to pivot for the next phase. She believes the reason why we are so successful is because we are working collaboratively.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS REPORT -

Mr. Nelson expressed that his favorite part of being at arrival and dismissal this week was watching parents taking photographs like it was the “first of day of school” and that just tells you how excited parents and students are about coming back full time.

Mr. Davidson wanted to thank Principal Sirois, Asst. Principal Persico and the entire Early Education Team, he reported that a Parent Information Session was held on February 3rd for our kindergarten students via zoom, focusing on the registration process. Mr. Davidson outlined the following important dates:

- March 1st - Online registration, required paperwork deadline
- April - Communication regarding kindergarten screening process
- May/June - Transition activities planned - social distancing protocols
- June - Kindergarten screening
- August - Classroom assignment letters mailed to parents

Dr. Pearson-Campbell reported that today she met with Instructional Council, she reported that they are creating a Professional Development Plan for the District. She expressed that two weeks they worked together to talk about AIMSweb and Principal Sirois led her team regarding literacy. Dr. Pearson Campbell reported that they are now preparing for our children to come back and focusing on the key issues especially supporting our elementary students.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT-

Ms. Sirois reported on the following initiatives at Sippican School:

- Principal Sirois reported that they are celebrating Black History Month. She thanked Tri-Town Against Racism, Mrs. Barrett and the sixth grade students and teachers for the wonderful and informative bulletin boards at Sippican School.
- Principal Sirois thanked VASE for providing enrichment for our 3rd and 4th grade students. A Japanese storyteller, Motoko, presented and provided folk tales and origami demonstrations for students.
- Principal Sirois also reported that there are countless examples of teaching and learning around the building, she reported that in her report she included samples of grade 6 science projects (lunar phases and solar and lunar eclipses) and Project Grow dental hygiene projects.
- Principal Sirois reported that our instrumental and music programs are in full swing, children are creating music and reflecting on musical themes. She reported that in her report she attached grade 5 musical theme projects and she also shared with the committee a video of a grade 2 group of students making music at Sippican.
- Principal Sirois reported that children have been busy creating wonderful visual art expressions, she shared a sample of the “Happy Chinese New Year” bulletin board.
- Principal Sirois reported that the Sippican School Council has met and has been working on the School Improvement Plan. She reported that the plan reflects teaching, learning, assessment, as well as community connections and using survey data to drive longer term planning. She reported that meetings continue to be held through zoom every third Tuesday of the month.

For more information please refer to “MSC 02242021 Principal Report”

VIII. School Committee

B. Committee Reports

- 1. Budget Subcommittee – Reported earlier in the meeting.**
- 2. Building Committee – NONE**
- 3. ORR District School Committee- Mr. Nelson reported that the School Committee met on February 17th to review the FY22 Draft Budget, discuss school choice and approve the School Health Unit Application.**
- 4. SMEC - NONE**
- 5. Early Childhood Council – Ms. Daniel reported that they did meet and Mr. Davidson reported on most of it during his report. She also reported that Project Grow and the ORR Tri-Town Preschool will start accepting applications March 1st. She reported that the in-person preschool screenings have started, and they spoke to Sonia Amaral who spoke about her work with Meeting Street Early Intervention and the work she’s doing with the local preschools. The Rochester Library is putting together book kits for families to borrow on different topics, they are also doing different online playroom groups. The next meeting will be March 23rd.**
- 6. READS- Mr. Nelson reported that he met with the READS Board and they reviewed the special educators report, review of the FY22 budget, the annual report and various policies.**
- 7. Tri-Town Foundation - NONE**
- 8. Policy Sub-Committee – Ms. Beauregard reported that they met on January 25th, she reported that they are working on a few policies at a time and reviewing MASC’s suggested changes, they will meet again March 1st.**

9. School Council – Reported earlier in the meeting.

10. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee – Ms. Beauregard reported that they met on February 10th, she wanted to thank Dr. Pearson-Campbell and Mr. Davidson, they are working with Cristina Brown, she expressed that they do a lot of work in between our meetings. She reported that students in grades 6 through 12 were given the opportunity to take a survey regarding inclusion and equity it wasn't required, but we did receive a lot of participation, the results of the survey will be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Smith reviewed the timeline and reported the next meeting of the Marion School Committee would be April 7, 2021.

Mr. Nelson asked permission for Mr. Howard Barber to attend executive session. Ms. Smith approved the request.

OPEN COMMENTS: NONE

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel at 7:07 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of exception #3, to discuss union personnel and #7 to comply with comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

SECOND: by Ms. Rios

ROLL CALL VOTE:

4:0 (Smith; yes - Daniel; yes - Rios; yes – Beauregard; yes)

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to go come out of Executive Session at 7:38 pm only to adjourn.

SECOND: by Ms. Rios

ROLL CALL VOTE:

4:0 (Smith; yes - Daniel; yes - Rios; yes – Beauregard; yes)

Motion to adjourn at 7:38 p.m.

MOTION by Ms. Daniel

MOTION Seconded by Ms. Rios

ROLL CALL VOTE:

4:0 (Smith; yes - Daniel; yes - Rios; yes – Beauregard; yes)

Submitted by Diana Russo