

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rochester, Massachusetts  
16 Pine Street - Rochester, MA 02770**

**MEETING MINUTES  
May 5, 2022**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Thursday – May 5, 2022 at 6:30pm. This meeting was held full in-person and there was also a zoom link available.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sharon Hartley, Chairperson, Robin Rounseville, Jason Chisholm (arrived at 6:37), Anne Fernandes and Katherine Duggan.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools; Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Jannell Pearson-Campbell (via zoom), Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services; Charles West, Assistant Principal; Diana Russo (via zoom), Administrative Assistant to Supt.; teachers, students, members of the press and public.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm., by Chairperson Hartley. Ms. Hartley stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being video-taped.

**SCHOOL CHOICE HEARING**

**Chairperson Hartley opened the school choice hearing at 6:31**

Superintendent Nelson explained that the point of the School Choice Hearing is to really to look to see if Rochester School Committee is interested in accepting or enrolling any students from outside of Rochester to the Rochester Memorial School for the upcoming school year. Mr. Nelson explained that historically Rochester has not participated in the School Choice program and based on the current enrollment trends the administration is not making the recommendation to participate in the school choice program for the upcoming school year.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE FEEDBACK: NONE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

**School choice hearing was closed at 6:33 p.m.**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE RECOGNITION**

Ms. Hartley expressed that May is Teacher Appreciation Month and being so the School Committee would like to thank all of their teaching staff, she expressed that they are so grateful for everything they do every single day for our students. Ms. Fernandes read the following poem to honor teachers.

*Thank You, Mrs. Newby  
A happy smile, contagious to all,  
With a heart of gold that never falls.  
As my role model, you set the bar high,  
But you've taught me all I can do is try.  
As my friend, you support me,*

*Helping me achieve goals I never imagined I could reach.  
As my teacher, you motivate me  
To become the best I can possibly be.  
You're always there to help others,  
Putting yourself second and acting like a mother.  
You're a very admired teacher  
Who's caring, kind, and smart.  
Whether I like it or not,  
You're always here for me  
And with my best intentions in your heart.  
I always know you'll have my back.  
The way you love to help others learn  
Is something for which I will always yearn,  
And one day when I'm a teacher too,  
I will strive to be just like you.*

Ms. Hartley expressed that the next recognition is for both teachers and students. She reported that this group of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers decided to do some work to help our planet. They find out about recycling polyethylene plastic and they started to collect it throughout the town of Rochester and were able to collect 3,327 pounds of Recycled Plastic. Our 6<sup>th</sup> graders competed in the Northeast Region and they won, they were the Champions in the Northeast for the Trex Plastic Film Recycling Challenge. Ms. Hartley expressed that when she looked at the numbers, our numbers were way above others, she expressed that she remembered hearing about this project at the beginning of the year and we all said “I hope you win” and “you did it, so cool”, therefore the Rochester School Committee would like to recognize members of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class as well as their teachers for their hard work and dedication and recognition in winning the Trex Plastic Film Recycling Challenge. Ms. Hartley also presented the class with a book and with certificates of recognition.

Below is the Press Release regarding the initiative.

**ROCHESTER MEMORIAL SCHOOL STUDENTS TURN TRASH INTO  
TREASURE THROUGH TREX PLASTIC FILM RECYCLING  
CHALLENGE**

*3,327 Pounds of Recycled Plastic Earn National Recognition*

*ROCHESTER, MA, April 22, 2022 – The grass isn't the only thing getting greener this spring, thanks to the students at Rochester Memorial School. Over the past six months, RMS students collected and recycled a grand total of more than 3,327 pounds of polyethylene plastic as part of the [Trex® Plastic Film Recycling Challenge](#), which concluded on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. This impressive total, combined with creative promotion, RMS-PTO support and community engagement earned our school top honors along with a new eco-friendly bench for the school's campus. Nationwide, RMS topped the competition as 9th among elementary schools and 15th overall among 686 schools participating from grades K through 12.*

*Hosted by [Trex Company](#), the world's largest manufacturer of high-performance, low-maintenance composite decking and outdoor living products, the nationwide challenge kicked off last fall on America Recycles Day (Nov. 15). Between that observance and*

*Earth Day, K-12 students across the country competed to collect and recycle the most polyethylene plastic film for the chance to win Trex products for their schools. For the first time ever, students involved in the latest challenge also had the chance to win cash prizes, thanks to corporate sponsor [Charter Next Generation](#) (CNG), one of the leading providers of specialty polyethylene films in North America.*

*“The Trex Plastic Film Recycling Challenge put our students on a mission to collect as much recycled plastic film as they possibly could, proving a fantastic opportunity to connect and engage with our local community,” said Ms. Tracey Forns, Grade 6 Teacher. “Each student had a lot of fun in the process, while learning a tremendous amount about the necessity and value of recycling. It was a phenomenal experience, and we are so proud of everyone’s efforts to make a positive difference within our school campus, as well as in our community.”*

*Every aspect of the months-long project was tied to curriculum goals. Mr. Forrest Cote taught Gr 6 students how to build spreadsheets and a database to track donation quantities. Ms. Teves taught students to research/write about why it is important to recycle plastic film. “Students were grouped into specialized roles,” said Ms. Tracey Forns. “The ‘Educators’ visited RMS classrooms to explain the film recycling process. The ‘Public Relations’ group coordinated outreach with the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library and provided daily in-school announcements. Mr. James DellaCioppa provided ELA support to students writing to the Council on Aging and local press. The ‘Historians’ included a student who created a slide show overview while other Historians maintained paper records. ‘Graphic Designers’ created print and digital media using a pro-version of Canva which was funded by the RMS-PTO.”*

*The Grade 6 Team would like to thank the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library and Stop & Shop, Fairhaven, MA for their partnership and commitment to this project-based learning endeavor. Many thanks to the family volunteers who stepped up weekly to transport our large quantities of plastic film!*

*Students from 686 schools participated in the 2021-2022 challenge and, together, collected a combined total of 323,586 pounds of polyethylene plastic film.*

*Background: Started in 2007, the Trex Plastic Film Recycling Challenge was conceived to educate students about upcycling and actively engage them in the recycling of plastic film, a key ingredient in the making of high-performance, low-maintenance and eco-friendly Trex® composite decking. In fact, Trex decking is made from 95% recycled and reclaimed materials, including a mix of industrial wood scrap and polyethylene plastic from a variety of common household items such as grocery bags, newspaper sleeves and bubble wrap, as well as retail plastic waste from pallet wrap and industrial packaging. Each year, Trex upcycles nearly 400 million pounds of plastic waste otherwise destined for incineration or landfills, making it one of the largest recyclers of plastic film in North America.*

The 6th grade class representatives shared the following statement for the Rochester School Committee:

*“Hello RMS School Committee, today we would like to inform you about the outcome of the NexTrex challenge. I’m Allyson Alford, I’m Avery White, I’m Emma MacLeod, and I’m John Ferreira, and we are representing the RMS community.*

*The outcome of the challenge was very successful, and because of the RMS communities' hard work, we were able to collect 3,327 lbs of plastic and prevent that from contaminating oceans and piling up in landfills.*

*In the NorthEast region for elementary schools, with 500-600 kids, we got 1st place. We also got fifteenth place overall throughout the U.S. Due to our efforts, we received a composite bench made of recycled plastic film from Nextrex.*

*One reason we were so successful was that we wrote articles about the challenge, which were then sent to various publications, such as The Wanderer, Sippican Weekly, and ORCTV. A video with Ms. Teves and students will be published later this month.*

*The challenge has come to a rewarding conclusion, but people still have excess plastic. To solve this problem, certain places are still accepting plastic, like the Stop & Shop in Fairhaven, the Shaw's in Wareham, and the Target in the Wareham Crossing Plaza.*

*Once again, we'd like to thank you for your support and contribution to this project. We would also like to thank the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library for all its help in this challenge. Thank you."*

## **I. Approval of Minutes:**

### **A. Approval of Minutes –**

Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: April 7, 2022

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the April 7, 2022 minutes as amended

SECOND: by Mr. Chisholm

MOTION PASSED

## **IV. General**

### **A. School Choice Vote**

Mr. Chisholm was not present during the school choice public hearing, he expressed that he believes the school choice program reaches the community and expressed that he would be interested in find ways to participate.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to opt out the school choice program for the 2022-2023 school year

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

MOTION PASSED 4:1 (Chisholm apposed)

### **B. School Committee Dates for 2022-2023 School Year**

Mr. Nelson reported that for the past several years the other school committees in Marion, Mattapoisett and Old Rochester have adopted a meeting schedule that meets every six weeks or eight meetings per year, with a caveat that if ever anything comes up, we will schedule additional meetings as needed. Therefore, we have given you two proposals for consideration, one would follow that same schedule and the other is a monthly schedule. Mr. Nelson expressed that it's important to know that even with our current schedule we sometimes cancel meetings or we call additional meetings. Mr. Nelson expressed that knowing that the Central Office team is shared there are a number of night meetings we simply ask for your consideration to see what makes the most sense for Rochester School Committee.

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE FEEDBACK:

Ms. Fernandes expressed that at one point the school committee did do the 6 week meetings but then went back to monthly, she believes it was because we needed the extra meetings, Ms. Hartley also added that it was because most of the departments in town were meeting monthly.

Ms. Fernandes asked if the main concern is the wear and tear of Central Office Staff, because they have so many meetings? Mr. Nelson expressed that's certainly part of it, but also there are certain months that we really don't have many items to place on the agenda, he expressed that there are certain months when he questions if the meeting is actually needed to do standard school business.

Ms. Hartley expressed that she would be willing to try the six-week schedule again, she expressed that a number of school committee members also need to attend the Joint School Committee meetings and the ORR School Committee, therefore we could try this schedule and see if it works and as Mr. Nelson explained if something critical comes up we will schedule additional/emergency meetings as needed.

Ms. Duggan also expressed that she is in favor of the six-week schedule especially knowing that other meetings could be scheduled if anything comes up.

Mr. Chisholm also agreed with Ms. Duggan.

Ms. Rounseville expressed that she would also be willing to try it, she expressed that the last time they tried it she felt a little too removed, she expressed it might have just been her, she expressed that she's willing to try it again.

Ms. Fernandes expressed that would be her concern as well, she expressed that there's a lot of work to be done in the next couple of years, but that is also considerate of the Central Office staff and their time. Ms. Fernandes asked if we had to vote on the format tonight.

Ms. Hartley expressed that these are typically voted on at the May meeting, but she referred to the school committee members for their input. School Committee members expressed they are ready to vote on this tonight.

MOTION: by Mr. Chisholm to approve the meetings for the 2022-2023 school year (the six-week schedule as presented)

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan

MOTION PASSED 4:1 (Fernandes opposed)

## C. Student Handbook Revision

Mr. Barber explained that he is recommending that the district provide families a second opportunity of repair or replacement, which would be a device insurance plan, he explained that the district has worked through the technology department to develop a new device insurance proposal for an annual cost of \$25.00 per student, he explained that each student would be able to register their unit through the school device coverage agency and that this insurance plan would cover all of the replacement costs of the device. Mr. Barber explained that this is simply a second option to our previously approved replacement fees. Mr. Barber explained that currently replacement costs are the following: Complete Chromebook: \$300, Chromebook Screen: \$50, Keyboard: \$50, iPad Complete: \$325, iPad Case \$50.

Mr. Nelson expressed that this is simply to give families options, he reported that if approved they would share these options with families at the beginning of the year so they could make the best decisions for their family and it also allows us as a district to be able to maintain our technology equipment which is very important.

#### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE FEEDBACK:**

Mr. Chisholm just wanted to make sure he understood that the \$25 cost is per device, therefore if you had two children in the system it would be \$50 correct? Mr. Barber responded, “yes” the fee is per device per student.

Ms. Duggan asked if this would cost the district anything. Mr. Barber explained that this would not have a cost associated to the district but that there was a vetting process to make sure we had the very best insurance for our students and families, we wanted to make sure that it was one fee for all devices and not varies fees depending on the device.

Ms. Rounseville asked if Mr. Barber has spoken to other school districts who have used this insurance plan and are they user friendly, she expressed that her concern with insurance companies is always to make sure that they are easy to use for parents/families. Mr. Barber reported that used the information gathered from his technology team, he reported that they had the opportunity to work with various companies and really chose the one the best fits our needs.

Mr. Chisholm inquired if there was a claim would the family go through the district or the company directly. Mr. Barber explained that once the plan was purchased by the parent/student they would do most of the transactions themselves online. He explained that because they have a limited number of technology staff it’s really hard to maintain all of these programs with current staff, therefore any time we can outsource we do.

**MOTION:** by Ms. Duggan to approve the Insurance Policy option for the student technology needs as presented

**SECOND:** by Ms. Fernandes

**MOTION PASSED**

#### **V. New Business**

##### **1. Financial Report –**

Mr. Barber reported that of the \$6,798,275 appropriated to the district, consisting of both the Rochester School District and Bristol County Agricultural enrolled students operational as of May 5, 2022 there is a balance of \$395,540.

Mr. Barber also reported on facilities and food service.

#### **CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

Ms. Hartley reported that on April 25<sup>th</sup> the Rochester School Committee met with the Rochester Select Board to re appoint the member to the Old Colony School Committee, she reported that Mr. David Hughes was reappointed to the Old Colony School Committee to represent Rochester. Ms. Hartley also reported that there are two very important meetings coming up, one is on May 23<sup>rd</sup> which is the Annual Town Meeting, where the Rochester Budget will be reviewed for approval, she expressed that the School Committee usually attends this meeting and answers any questions about the budget, she expressed that the Town of Rochester has been very supportive of the schools and that they appreciate their support. She also reminded everyone of the Town Election on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Nelson thanked the teachers and students recognized at tonight's meeting, he expressed not only is it a great example of what happens here at Rochester Memorial but it's also a great example of Project Based Learning, he expressed that it was great to see their presentation, which gave them an opportunity to speak to and in front of a public board, he expressed that's the essence of how we want our students to learn,

Superintendent Nelson gave the school committee an update on COVID cases and protocols.

Superintendent Nelson also reported that the Summer Expansion Grant was accepted and the Rochester School District was awarded \$50,000. Mr. Nelson also reported that Mattapoisett, Marion and ORR each received \$50,000. Mr. Nelson reported that this means we will be expanding the SAIL program. Mr. Nelson thanked Mr. Davidson who took the lead on this initiative as well as Dr. Pearson-Campbell, Mr. Barber, Mr. West, Mr. Letendre and others, he expressed that it, he reported that it was a team effort.

Ms. Fernandes inquired if this would be in addition to the SAIL Program. Mr. Nelson reported that this would mean an expansion to the SAIL Program, he explained that he's hoping for more social skills development, enrichment opportunities, literacy and math support and so on.

Mr. Davidson reported that there was nearly \$9 million requested with only \$5 million available to award. It was a very competitive grant process and because of an abundance of interest by districts, Funding requests were reduced and no awards were made greater than \$100K to any individual school district. We received notification from the governor's office that each of our four school districts received \$50k to expand our current summer programming with a focus on the Social emotional well-being and the growth of students.

Mr. Craig Davidson – Director of Student Services reported the following:

Mr. Davidson expressed that more information about the SAIL Program will be going out to Tri-Town families in the upcoming weeks.

Mr. Davidson also gave the school committee an update on events that took place during the Week of Young Child.

Mr. Davidson also gave an update on the Kindergarten screening events.

Dr. Jannell Pearson-Campbell – Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning reported on the following:

The Office of Teaching and Learning has received approval from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the District's ELL Audit Continuous Improvement Plan. This is part of being identified as a Tier 1 district. Evidence was added to the DESE Portal and parents and guardians have received a language survey to support all families. We submitted the documentation to DESE on April 11, 2022. The next documentation upload of our progress reports will be on July 11, 2022. The next submission includes providing documentation of training for staff on the initial identification and notification of services for English Language Learners.

The Instructional Council Team sent Needs Assessment Google Surveys to staff, students and parents and guardians for feedback to support the creation of the 2022-2023 Professional Development Plan. We are in the process of reviewing the data. The draft Professional

Development Plan will be reviewed for approval at the Joint School Committee meeting on May 10, 2022.

Mr. Nelson wanted to thank Mr. Coellner the JHS Principal and the elementary Principals for supporting this work and also what they are calling our “Science Champion” and that is OpenSciEd, which is a Science Curriculum that is tied to Boston College Education School and it focuses on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade vertical alignment and we were awarded that Grant in all our of our districts, which we are extremely excited about, he expressed it’s a great opportunity to align the curriculum and give dynamic opportunities to our students. Mr. Nelson reported that he recently attended “a launch meeting” with other administration and teachers and he will have more information about this opportunity at upcoming meetings.

**PRINCIPAL’S REPORT:**

**Mr. West reported on the following:**

Congratulate our entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade team for winning 1<sup>st</sup> place in the NexTrex Challenge for the Northeast Region!!! Our students collected 3,327 pounds of polyethylene plastic. This impressive total, combined with creative promotion, RMS-PTO support and community engagement earned our school top honors along with a new eco-friendly bench for the school’s campus. Nationwide, RMS topped the competition as 9<sup>th</sup> among elementary schools and 15<sup>th</sup> overall among 686 schools participating from grades K through 12.

Attended the OpenSciEd Convening which was held at Boston College on Tuesday April 26<sup>th</sup> along with Mrs. Forns and Mr. Huckabee. The convening detailed what the next steps, professional learning and materials to be used with the OpenSciEd units would be as a result of our partnership through this potential grant opportunity.

Thank the RMS PTO for facilitating an amazing Teacher Appreciation week this past week in honor of our staff. Their continued support of our staff here at RMS is always so inspiring and appreciative.

Below is our May MCAS testing schedule:

**May**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
9	10 Grade 6 Math Sessions I	11 Grade 6 Math Sessions II	12 Grade 5 Math Sessions I	13 Grade 5 Math Sessions II
16 Makeups	17 Grade 3 Math Sessions I	18 Grade 3 Math Sessions II	19 Grade 4 Math Sessions I	20 Grade 4 Math Sessions II
23 Makeups	24 Grade 5 Science Sessions I	25 Grade 5 Science Sessions II	26 Makeups	27 Makeups

## **VIII. School Committee**

### **B. Committee Reports**

1. Budget Subcommittee- Ms. Hartley reminded everyone about the Town Meeting on May 23<sup>rd</sup> for final approval.
2. ORR District School Committee – Mr. Chisholm reported that the ORR School Committee met on April 27<sup>th</sup>, they approved the name change to the Anti-Racism Sub-Committee, a discussion of a volunteer grant writer position was had and was tabled for now,
3. SMEC- Ms. Fernandes reported that they next meet on May 31<sup>st</sup>.
4. READS- Mr. Nelson reported that READS has not met.
5. Tri-town Foundation- Ms. Rounseville reported four grant applications were received and that they will meet soon to discuss the recommendations of the grant committee.
6. Early Childhood Council- Ms. Duggan reported that the next meeting is on May 18<sup>th</sup>.
7. Policy Sub-Committee- Ms. Duggan reported the following:
  - KHB – Advertising in the Schools, which had been revised since the discussion at the Joint School Committee on January 20th and will go back to that body for approval at their next meeting
  - Section D – Fiscal Management policies, the substantive changes to which included updating the language and clarifying processes.
  - These policies were sent to all Tri-Town school committee members today and will be voted on at the Joint School Committee on May 10.
  - We also discussed revisions to AC Non-Discrimination Policy & AC-R Procedures for Responding to Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation. The big change here was to broaden “discrimination” to include harassment and retaliation.
    - Related to this, policy AC-R is new and we currently have a policy AC-R, which is the district’s Anti-Racism Resolution; it was therefore agreed to renumber the Anti-Racism Resolution to maintain policy naming consistency with MASC.
  - Policies ACAB Sexual Harassment Policy and ACAB-R Grievance Procedures for Sexual Harassment have been similarly revised to expand protected classes and adjust language to be in line with current federal and state requirements and recommendations.
  - Finally, we reviewed a new policy: JICK Harassment of Students. This policy covers both Employee-to-Student Harassment as well as Student- to-Student Harassment.
  - These last five policies will be reviewed again later this month, with a goal of making revisions and voting on adoption at the Joint school committee meeting in June.
8. Equity Sub-Committee: Ms. Duggan reported that the next meeting is on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **IX. Future Business**

### **A. Timeline**

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – June 1, 2022 @ 6:30pm in person at Rochester Memorial School.

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – May 10, 2022 @ 6:30pm; held remote through Zoom.

X. Open Comments: A member of the audience reported that she had a suggestion/comment regarding the technology fees, reported that the Jr. High School, instead of paying the replacement fees Mr. Coellner, the Principal actually sent her a link and she was able to purchase the replacement

part on amazon for a fraction of the price. Mr. Barber thanked her for the comment but per public comment policy could not respond.

Ms. Rounseville just wanted to thank the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers again for all their work on the recycling project, she expressed it was an impressive project and they did a great job with the students.

Mr. DellaCioppa thanked Mrs. Forns for all her hard work on the project he expressed that she really spearheaded the project.

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION: by Mr. Chisholm at 7:36 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of exception #3 and exception #7

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

ROLL CALL: Chisholm: yes, Duggan: yes, Rounseville: yes, Hartley: yes, Fernandes: yes

MOTION: by Mr. Chisholm to go come out of Executive Session at 8:05 pm only to adjourn

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

ROLL CALL: Chisholm: yes, Duggan: yes, Rounseville: yes, Hartley: yes, Fernandes: yes

MOTION to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. by Ms. Rounseville

SECOND: by Mr. Chisholm

Submitted,  
Diana Russo,  
School Committee Secretary