

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

**MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2022**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Thursday – April 7, 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 and Katherine Duggan.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Anne Fernandes

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools; Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services, Derek Medeiros, Principal; Charles West, Assistant Principal; Diana Russo, Administrative Assistant to Supt.; teachers, 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. Ms. Hartley expressed that April is National Poetry Month and therefore she would like to begin with a poem, Ms. Hartley read part of a poem by Amanda Gorman, a National Youth Poet Laureate. *“the new dawn blooms as we free it, for there is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it.”* She expressed that she offers that tonight and gives her an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who is here both in person and on zoom and for the light that you bring to our meetings and to our school.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: by Ms. Duggan at 6:33 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of exception #3 and exception #7

SECOND: by Mr. Chisholm

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

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to go come out of Executive Session at 6:53 pm and to return to the regular meeting.

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan

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

I. Approval of Minutes:

A. Approval of Minutes –

Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: March 3, 2022

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the March 3, 2022 minutes as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan

MOTION PASSED

IV. General

A. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve Memorandum of Agreement between the Rochester School Committee and the Rochester Support Staff Association.

SECOND: by Mr. Chisholm

MOTION PASSED

B. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee Name Change

Mr. Nelson expressed that this request came from the Anti-Racism Sub-Committee and that the committee is requesting that the School Committee take official action to the change the sub-committee name from Anti-Racism Sub-Committee to Equity Sub-Committee. Mr. Nelson expressed that Ms. Duggan serves on the Anti-Racism Sub-Committee and has a more detailed description of the request.

Ms. Duggan made the following statement:

“For the past few months, members of the Anti-Racism subcommittee have been deliberating changing the name of the subcommittee to better reflect the range of work it is undertaking. Subcommittee leaders Dr. Pearson-Campbell and Mr. Davidson led an input gathering process involving members of the subcommittee and interested community members and at our most recent meeting unveiled the proposed new name: The Equity subcommittee: celebrating and supporting inclusion, diversity and belonging. The feeling was that this name is more inclusive of all identities and that it represents what we are moving towards as a subcommittee and as a district. As the subcommittee representative to the RMS school committee, I support this proposed name change and am happy to answer any questions you may have”

Mr. Davidson expressed that Ms. Duggan did a really good job explaining the why behind the name change, he expressed that student voice is critical important in this sub-committee.

Mr. Nelson expressed that based on our unique structure we would have to have this approved at the four school committees. He expressed that the Mattapoissett School Committee met on Monday night and have endorsed and approved this request.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the name change for the Anti-Racism Sub-Committee (to the Equity Sub-Committee)

SECOND: by Mr. Chisholm

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 April 7, 2022 there is a balance of \$469,130.

Mr. Barber also reported on facilities and food service.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Chairperson Hartley reported herself, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Medeiros toured Rochester Memorial School with the new Town Administrator Glen Cannon, and she wanted to thank Mr. Nelson and Mr. Medeiros for setting that up and for welcoming Mr. Cannon, she expressed that it was great to

see the school, she expressed that Mr. Medeiros pointed out a lot of historical facts as we walked through our building and it was very interesting. Ms. Hartley also reported that as Rochester School Committee members we are often called upon to appoint a member to the Old Colony School Committee and there is a meeting on April 25th at 6:00 p.m., to do just that, she reported that Ms. Russo has indicated the date on our agenda and she would need a quorum, or three members present, she expressed that she will be present and she needs two more members. Mr. Chisholm and Ms. Rounseville both confirmed attendance. Ms. Hartley thanked them for their support.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

“As we move closer to April vacation from a COVID-19 standpoint our data remains in a good place since we returned from February vacation. Presently Rochester Memorial School has 0 positive cases and 0 individuals who are quarantining. We are still utilizing a layered mitigation approach that includes social distancing in our classrooms and our cafeteria, but I do continue to work with our local health officials and continue to review DESE guidance in terms of when it may an appropriate time to look at what our layered approach is and to think of what next steps may be, I will keep updating the school committee as that work continues.”

Mr. Nelson expressed that he agrees with Ms. Hartley it was great to tour the building with Mr. Cannon and it was great to do it while the building was filled with staff and students.

Mr. Nelson also gave an update from the Office of Teaching & Learning in Dr. Pearson-Campbell's absence. Mr. Nelson updated the school committee on the ELL Audit, a Proposal of the Professional Development Plan which she plans to present at the next Joint School Committee meeting.

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

- Week of the Young Child Events
- Special Education Transition meetings between Rochester Memorial School and Jr. High School, where liaisons from both buildings meet to review the needs of students transitioning to 7th grade. Mr. Davidson reported that this year they have increased the number of meetings to make sure that the transition is seamless.
- Community Talks Series: Part 4, which is the partnership between the SMEC Collaborative and Old Rochester Regional School District. Part 4 will be on April 12th and it will be hosted by Dr. Jesse Jackson III who will be talking about “How to speak to your children about cultural sensitivity? Or racial incidents that may occur at school or in the community.” Dr. Jackson has been visited and trained staff at more than 1,400 schools throughout the United States and we are excited to have him here at ORR.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

Mr. Medeiros reported on the following:

I would like to thank the Rochester Memorial School Parent Teacher Organization for facilitating another successful Book Fair throughout the week of March 17th through March 30th. The Book Fair sold over 2700 items and we earned over \$6000 Scholastic dollars!

On Thursday March 31st I attended a webinar through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education called Let's Talk About Literacy Curricula. Presentations focused on the difference high-quality materials can make for elementary and middle grades students. We also learned about two recently released reports on literacy programs with wide market share in

Massachusetts that did not meet expectations and heard from districts that have made the shift to high-quality instructional materials in literacy and what they've learned along the way.

ORRJHS Guidance Counselor Mrs. Julie Taylor and Instrumental Band Instructor Mr. Richard Laprise will be visiting our 6th grade students here at RMS on Thursday April 7th to discuss their transition to the Junior High School.

Mr. Medeiros also shared the April MCAS Testing schedule:

April 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	5 Grade 6 ELA Session I	6 Grade 6 ELA Session II	7 Grade 5 ELA Session I	8 Grade 5 ELA Session II
11 Makeups	12 Grade 4 ELA Session I	13 Grade 4 ELA Session II	14 Makeups	15 No School
25	26 Grade 3 ELA Session I	27 Grade 3 ELA Session II	28 Makeups	29 Makeups

VIII. School Committee

B. Committee Reports

1. Budget Subcommittee- Ms. Hartley expressed that the next step is to have the Budget approved at the Town Meeting on May 23rd.
2. ORR District School Committee – Mr. Chisholm reported that the committee last met on March 23rd, and several reports were heard from central office and also principals. The committee also took a vote to continue to participate in school choice and keep the numbers were they are currently. Mr. Chisholm also reported that the committee heard a request from the Old Rochester Youth Football Association to utilize their multi-purpose field, he expressed that no decision was made at this time and the item was tabled until all factors are known. Mr. Chisholm expressed that on a personal note he thinks we should be very careful when considering such requests, he thinks that youth sports are very important element of the development of a child into young adults and there's a really great opportunity here to try to support these organizations. Mr. Chisholm expressed that he was very interested in finding solutions for these challenges and asked his school committee colleagues for support and problem solving resolutions.
3. SMEC- NONE
4. READS- Mr. Nelson reported that they met on March 10th and heard reports from Special Education Administrators, they also approved the School Health Unit Application to the Department of Public Health, they also talked about the revised timeline for the FY23 Budget, and they ratified a one-year extension for their current CBAs with their different staff members and lastly they approved new staff appointments since the last meeting.
5. Tri-town Foundation- Ms. Rounseville reported that they have not met, however she did want to put out a reminder that the grant applications are due on April 15th and she also reported that the Tri-

Town Foundation website is located within the district website under community tab if anyone is looking for information about the foundation including the grants.

6. Early Childhood Council- Ms. Duggan reported last met 3/29/22. Updates from that meeting include preparation for the annual Week of the Young Child, which is this week. Various local businesses and community partners have been offering programming all week—more details can be found at the Early Childhood Services website. We also discussed the Kindergarten School Readiness Screening process, which will take place June 1 and 2. The next Early Childhood Council Meeting will be May 18, 2022.

7. Policy Sub-Committee- NONE

8. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee: Ms. Duggan reported that the Anti-Racism Subcommittee last met March 24th and heard reports from each of the school’s cultural proficiency teams. The Rochester Memorial team reported the Bulletin Board & Science updates around inclusivity and an upcoming visit by a drumming group. She reported that they also discussed the name change which this committee discussed earlier. There was also discussion about the Teacher Diversification PLC, the group is also looking at broader recruitment in support of a diverse teacher population.

IX. Future Business

A. Timeline

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – May 5, 2022 @ 6:30pm in person at Rochester Memorial School.

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – April 28, 2022 @ 6:30pm; held remote through Zoom.

X. Open Comments: NONE

MOTION to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. by Mr. Chisholm

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

Submitted,
Diana Russo,
School Committee Secretary