

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

**MEETING MINUTES
January 18, 2022
Meeting Held in Hybrid Format**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Tuesday – January 18, 2022 at 6:30pm.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sharon Hartley– Chairperson, Anne Fernandes – Vice-Chairperson, Robin Rounseville, Jason Chisholm and Katherine Duggan (all participating remotely)

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

Meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm., by Chairperson Hartley. Ms. Hartley introduced the Rochester School Committee members and stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being video-taped. Chairperson Hartley noted that tonight’s agenda would be abbreviated and that the School Committee would meet again on February 3rd at 6:30 p.m. Chairperson Hartley stated that this meeting is being conducted in a hybrid format and the School Committee and Administrators are participating through zoom. Superintendent Nelson also introduced the school administrators and noted they were all participating via zoom.

Chairperson expressed that she would like to make a brief statement, she expressed she would like to offer a “simple Thank You” to all who are involved in our school district, she thanked them for the complex work that is being done every day these days, by those who lead, those who teach and those who care for our children. She expressed the school committee is really grateful, she expressed that it’s amazing when you think about the depth of the work and the complicated nature of the work that needs to go on these days.

I. Approval of Minutes:

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: December 2, 2021

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes to approve the December 2, 2021 minutes as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

ROLL CALL: Chisholm: not yet present, Duggan: yes, Fernandes: yes, Rounseville: yes, Hartley: yes

Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: January 5, 2022

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes to approve the January 5, 2022 minutes as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan

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

C. Approval of Budget Minutes – December 2, 2021

MOTION: by Mr. Chisholm to approve the December 2, 2021 minutes as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

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

IV. General

A. Tiered Focused Monitoring Audit Update

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

Recently we received our report for the Tiered Focused Monitoring Audit that looks at our schools' implementation of both special education and civil rights regulations. The Department of Education – looks at relevant documentation, student records, interviews staff members and solicits parent and guardian feedback. I want to thank Director Davidson for his leadership on working through this cumbersome process and recognize the positive feedback we received.

Mr. Nelson thanked the staff members, both special education and regular education teachers, building administration, central office staff, students, parents/guardians and everyone else who ensured that the regulations implemented, meaning that our students are getting the highest quality of education and receiving high expectations regarding their individual learning profile

Mr. Davidson, could you share the results with the committee at this time?

Mr. Davidson reported that District/charter schools are reviewed every three years through Tiered Focused Monitoring. This review process emphasizes elements most tied to student outcomes.

Last year we went through a Self-Assessment Phase:

- reviewed special education and civil rights documentation
- reviewed a sample of special education student records selected across grade levels, disability categories and levels of need.
- Upon completion of these two internal reviews, the district/school's self-assessment is submitted via WBMS to the Department for a team to review.

This year we had a team from the Department of Education visit for an On-site Verification Phase:

- Review of student records for special education that our Liaison's and Special Education Secretary Kim Amato worked extremely hard on preparing.
- Review of additional documents for special education or civil rights.
- Surveys of parents of students with disabilities
- Interviews of parent, staff and administration
- Observations of classrooms and other facilities:

Our district was found to be in compliance with all of the criteria monitored during the TFM Review and no corrective action is required at this time.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Hartley thanked Mr. Nelson and Mr. Davidson for their report and thanked the staff and administration for their hard work.

Ms. Fernandes expressed that having lived through that process a number of times, she would just like to echo what Mr. Davidson said about all of the hard work that goes into something like this, she expressed that from Central Office to our own office at Rochester Memorial School, to

classroom teachers to special education teachers, she expressed it is “quite a process, very deliberate, painstaking and you guys did a great job, thank you for everything.”

B. 2022-2023 School Calendar

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

Tonight is the first look at the 2022-2023 draft calendar. Remember – this committee does not approve the calendar that action belongs to the Joint School Committee. At this point, we are in the process of sharing the draft calendar with the building administration, school councils, associations, and the school committees for feedback. All feedback will be shared with the Joint School Committee for discussion.

Mr. Nelson reviewed the school calendar month by month with the school committee, with the following highlights:

August

First day is the 30th

September

The 2nd and 5th would be off for Labor Day Weekend

Our first early release PD day would fall on the 21st

October

On the 10th we would observe Columbus/Indigenous People Day

Early releases on the 20th and 21st for parent conferences at the elementary schools

November

On the 10th we would have our first full PD day and then on the 11th recognize veteran’s day

Thanksgiving break will run the 23rd through the 25th

December

School vacation would start on the 22nd with an early release day and run through the 2nd of January

January

On the 16th we will recognize Martin Luther King Day and on the 17th hold our second and final full PD day

February

Will have an early release day on the 8th for PD purposes

School vacation will run from the 20th to the 24th

March

The 8th will be an early release PD day

The 23rd and 24th will be early dismissal days for parent conferences

April

April 7th – no school

April 17th through the 21st will be school vacation

May

We will recognize Memorial Day on the 29th

June

Our last half PD day will be on the 7th

June 16th will be the last day of school if there is no need to cancel

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Fernandes noted that as she was reviewing the calendar and noticed a 3-day week in January she wondered if it would make sense to move the professional development day after the MLK Holiday to another week and make that week a 4-day week instead of a 3-day week. She noted that she does remember it was done to extend the weekend for families, however she expressed

concern about having 3-day weeks, she believes as we look at instruction we might want to consider moving that PD day, she noted that it's also done in November to celebrate Thanksgiving.

Mr. Nelson expressed that from a historical standpoint there was concern about having 4-day weeks and there was a push to have as many 5-day weeks as possible, but there's certainly merit in terms of how you view it as well, he believes that was the reasoning for making that week a 3-day week.

Ms. Hartley did explain that the school calendar would be discussed again at the Joint School Committees meeting on January 20th.

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 January 13, 2022 there is a balance of \$626,297.

Mr. Barber also reported on facilities and food service.

Ms. Hartley inquired about the free meals currently being provided to our students and if that federal program would be extended into the 2022-2023 school year.

Mr. Barber reported that the USDA has not provided any guidance for the upcoming school year.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

No report was given, it was agreed that it would be reported at the meeting on February 3, 2022.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

No report was given, it was agreed that it would be reported at the meeting on February 3, 2022.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

No report was given, it was agreed that it would be reported at the meeting on February 3, 2022.

VIII. School Committee

B. Committee Reports - No report was given, it was agreed that it would be reported at the meeting on February 3, 2022.

1. Budget Subcommittee- Mr. Nelson reported that he feels that substantial progress has been made in terms of developing the FY23 budget. He reported that the budget sub-committee has met several times in recent weeks to work on the drafting of the FY23 budget and so far the process has shown momentum as they continue to work towards a budget that we believe meets the educational needs of our students and families and enables are faculty to do the great work that they do – he noted that it's also important to work with a mindset that our budget needs to be fiscally responsible as well to the Town of Rochester as a whole. Mr. Nelson expressed that the education of children certainly requires fiscal support and we are moving towards having a draft that we are ready to share with the town stakeholders and the school committee as a whole. Mr. Nelson expressed that at this point one of their top priorities includes securing professional development to support teachers adult learning

regarding literacy. It is our hope to hold our budget public hearing at one of our next school committee meetings so that our stakeholders can hear about our budget and the work that's been done and that our school committee take official action to approve the FY23 budget for consideration at the spring Town Meeting.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE FEEDBACK:

Ms. Chairperson expressed that are looking forward to talking to Town officials, she expressed that it's helpful to hear their questions and to help clarify our goals and our needs as we move forward with the budget process.

- 2. ORR District School Committee – NONE
- 3. SMEC- NONE
- 4. READS- NONE
- 5. Tri-town Foundation- NONE
- 6. Early Childhood Council- NONE
- 7. Policy Sub-Committee- NONE
- 8. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee: NONE

IX. Future Business

A. Timeline

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – February 3, 2022 @ 6:30pm.

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – January 20, 2022 @ 6:30pm; held remote through Zoom.

X. Open Comments: NONE

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville at 6:57 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of exception #3 and exception #7

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

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

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to go come out of Executive Session at 7:10 pm and to adjourn

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

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

MOTION to adjourn at 7:11 p.m. by Ms. Duggan

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

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

Submitted,

Diana Russo, Recording Secretary