

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

**MEETING MINUTES  
June 14, 2021  
Meeting Held in Hybrid Format**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Monday – June 14, 2021 at 6:30pm.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sharon Hartley– Chairperson, Anne Fernandes – Vice-Chairperson, Robin Rounseville and Katherine Duggan

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools; Jannell Pearson-Campbell, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Instruction; Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services; Derek Medeiros, Principal; Charles West, Assistant Principal; Diana Russo, Recording Secretary; teachers, parents and members of the press and public.

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 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, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the Agenda will be followed as outlined. Chairperson Hartley stated that this meeting is being conducted in a hybrid format and the School Committee and Administrators and attending in person at Rochester Memorial School, located 16 Pine Street, Rochester, MA 02770 and Public Access is available through zoom. Superintendent Nelson also introduced the school administrators in attendance.

**RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT-** Chairperson Hartley recognized retiring staff members Karen Della Cioppa, STEM Teacher, Karen Lefebvre, Elementary School Teacher, and Donna Abaray, Principal Secretary and presented them each with a book that will be donated to the Rochester Memorial School in their honor.

Superintendent Nelson also welcomed the three retirees and thanked them for their service to the children of Rochester Memorial School on behalf of the administration and the staff.

**I. Approval of Minutes:**

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: May 6, 2021

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes to approve the May 6, 2021 minutes as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan

Motion Passed

**IV. General**

**A. Approval of Leases**

Superintendent Nelson presented to the committee two renewal leases, one lease with SMEC Collaborative, he explained that SMEC uses two full size classrooms and one small classroom/therapy space. He explained that SMEC has added a clause to this year's contract outlining that in the event that final or updated DESE guidance on operating schools during the COVID-19 pandemic requires Rochester School Committee to reclaim the SMEC classrooms for district use, the district will provide as much notice and assistance to SMEC as possible for the Collaborative to make other facilities arrangements. Mr. Nelson explained that the SMEC rates are approved by the SMEC board which is comprised of the school committee members from the various school districts including Rochester.

Mr. Nelson also presented to the committee the lease for Bonnie Morrison, Countryside Child Care Center, and explained that Countryside uses one classroom. Mr. Nelson expressed that the increase in the lease agreement for Countryside was based on operational costs. Mr. Barber concurred.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the SMEC Lease for the 21-22 School Year as presented.

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan  
Motion Passed

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the Countryside Lease for the 21-22 School Year as presented.

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes  
Motion Passed

#### **B. Approval of School Committee Dates for 21-22**

Mr. Nelson presented the school committee dates for the upcoming school year as follows: 9/2, 10/7, 11/4, 12/2, 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5, and 6/1, explaining that these are monthly meetings and all but the one in June are all Thursdays as in previous years.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the school committee dates for the 2021-2022 school year as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan  
Motion Passed

#### **C. School Improvement Plan Process**

Mr. Nelson expressed that he thought it was important as we continue to shift our lense from operational/COVID 19 back to teaching and learning to bring up the School Improvement Plan process with the committee. Mr. Nelson expressed that this has been a unique school year and that our focus has been safety and well-being of our students and families but as an administration and a faculty we are truly begin to reflect on the impact of the pandemic, focus our summer planning in terms of preparing for the fall and we thought it was important for you to hear about other work that has been done this year. Mr. Nelson reported that during the summer months the administrative team will be revisiting the Strategic Planning where they will be moving into year 4 of a five-year plan and reevaluate the work that has been done and how we've had to adjust in light of the pandemic and make a realistic roll moving forward. Mr. Nelson asked Mr. Medeiros to speak briefly about the work that has been done here at Rochester Memorial School and Mr. Nelson also informed the committee a formal School Improvement Plan would be brought forward in the fall for review and approval of the school committee.

Mr. Medeiros expressed that as Mr. Nelson stated this year's main focus has been on the health and safety of our students and staff, with that said Mr. Medeiros also expressed that they did still work on certain parts of the Strategic Plan, Mr. Medeiros reviewed each goal with the school committee, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Goal, Global Citizenship and Social and Emotional Learning Goal and different initiatives in each goal.

#### **D: Approval of School Health Unit Application**

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 Ellen Murphy, 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.**

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the School Health Unit Application as presented  
SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes  
Motion Passed

#### **E. Approval of Donation**

Mr. Medeiros explained that in the past Mr. and Mrs. McGee's donation through The Brendan McGee Music Scholarship Fund was offered to a sixth grade student graduating to 7<sup>th</sup> graduate to purchase an instrument of their choice, however this year they wanted to shifted their focus and really enhance the whole music department at Rochester Memorial School, Mr. Medeiros explained that the McGee's reached out to Ms. Williamson and Ms. Audette to get ideas from them , and this year they will be donating 1 yamaha bantone saxophone, 1 yamaha bass clarinet, boomwackers, tambourines, hand drums & assorted drums, cymbals & finger cymbals, castanets, rhythm sticks & mallets and triangle holders to our music department and we are very thankful.

Ms. Hartley also thanked the McGee Family.

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes to approve the donation of the McGee Family through The Brendan McGee Music Scholarship Fund as presented  
SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville  
Motion Passed

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

##### **1. Financial Report**

Mr. Barber reported that as of May 27, 2021 the Rochester Memorial School currently has \$111,666 available of the general funds appropriated in the 2021 Fiscal Year. He also reported that per the Year to Date Budget Report by Department, we are able to identify how our funds are currently encumbered and expended. This report recognizes that of the \$6,609,831 appropriated to the District, including Special Bristol Aggie assessment. 84.85% is directly assigned and is spent/ encumbered to student instruction.

**2. Budget Transfers-** Mr. Barber also reviewed a summary overview of \$306,800 worth of budget transfers with the School Committee. Mr. Barber explained that this was due to staffing changes

due to the COVID scenario as well as other expenses. Mr. Barber explained that by making these transfers we are simply just balancing out the FY21 operating budget. Mr. Barber explained that he would leave it at the discretion of Chairperson Hartley if she wanted to approve a motion to accept these transfers, however he did explain that it was not necessary because the school committee approve the budget in its' entirety and not each program.

Ms. Hartley explained that typically the school committee does always authorize these budget transfers, therefore she asked for a motion to approve the budget transfers.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the Budget Transfers as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Duggan

Motion Passed

Mr. Barber also reported on facilities and food service.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Ms. Hartley reported that she attended the Town Meeting in May and everything went very well. She also reported that she attended various negotiations meetings with many of the people present and she also attended the ORR High School graduation, she expressed that it was such a joyful event.

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

Mr. Nelson expressed his gratitude to the school community for all their hard work and perseverance during this very difficult year, he expressed that he's proud of being the Superintendent in the Tri-Town and he's proud of what the staff and students have accomplished. He also thanked the school committee and the administrative team for all their support.

Mr. Nelson expressed that he did receive some new guidance from DESE regarding masking and the message is simple and it's to prepare for a "new normal", with the big question mark around masks for next year, he expressed that the administrative team would be excited about eliminating them, but that's the big question mark at this point especially with the younger unvaccinated population. Mr. Nelson expressed that as new guidance comes out from the state he will keep the school committee informed.

Dr. Pearson-Campbell – Asst. Supt. of Teaching and Learning reported the following:

*On June 8th was a half day of Professional Development for the district. School educators met as grade level teams to review student placement for the fall. They reviewed student learning profiles and met with the next grade level to discuss students. Also Special Education teachers finalized their plans to prepare for the end of the year.*

*The English Learner Self-Audit is complete and has been submitted to DESE. The self-audit allows the district to identify any gaps and examine protocols to support students who are identified as English Language Learners. DESE will visit the district via Zoom next year to discuss our EL programming at all of our schools with EL students.*

*Educators will be invited to participate in examining our curriculum with an inclusion focus, progress monitoring, literacy and grade level expectations over the summer. It will be hybrid using our Google Classroom as a tool to share resources and communicate with fellow team members. This will be a busy summer supporting teachers and our learning community.*

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

*Recently awarded the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant #237 - total grant funding is \$47,589. We take pride in our district when students enter our programming- our office already knows them. Goals of the grant are, Family engagement, working with families, birth to 3 year olds in all three towns of the tri-town; act as a referral agency to support families; enhanced referrals within the district such as mental health; medically challenged; highly at risk for needing interventions.*

*This grant allows us to meet these goals stated above by covering salaries within the district that oversee the grant initiatives, programming opportunities for our youngest learners and resources for families - such as transition activity books for all kindergarteners in our districts. Overseeing pre-school and K-referrals providing preschool and K - the ages and stages developmental questionnaire.*

*We recently also had our Kindergarten Screening.*

*Sail Program: Spaces are still available for programming. Please visit the district website.*

### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:**

Mr. Medeiros reported the following:

On June 7<sup>th</sup> all grade level teams will participate in vertical discussion focusing on class placement as part of the district half day for professional development.

All incoming kindergarten families have participated our kindergarten meet and greet which was on Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Incoming kindergartners met a kindergarten staff member out at our K playground and participated in an early childhood screening. Any incoming kindergarten student who was not able to make this meet and greet or requires additional screening will do so during the first week of school in August.

Below is the list of culminating events for our grade 6 students:

- ORRJHS Guidance Counselor visiting RMS grade 6 students Thursday June 10<sup>th</sup>
- Nature on Wheels Sargent Camp visit Friday June 11<sup>th</sup>
- Grade 6 Carnival Day Wednesday June 16<sup>th</sup> rain date June 17<sup>th</sup>
- Grade 6 Promotion Ceremony Friday June 18<sup>th</sup> 1pm - 2:25pm rain date June 21<sup>st</sup> 9:30am – 10:45am
- Grade 6 Car Parade June 18<sup>th</sup> 3:30pm rain date June 21<sup>st</sup> 12:45pm

For more information please refer to “RSC 06142021 Principal Report”.

### **VIII. School Committee**

#### **B. Committee Reports**

1. Budget Subcommittee- NONE
2. ORR District School Committee – NONE
3. SMEC- Ms. Fernandes had the following report:
  - Minutes of March 30, 2021 were approved, as submitted
  - Staff Appointments and Reductions were reviewed, and placed on file, as presented, noting that resignations have been heightened, and that new staff recruitment is a current challenge

- Operating Spending Plan and Revenue Update was reviewed and approved, as submitted
  - The Board reviewed and authorized the Executive Director and the Director of Finance to continue negotiations with the town of Fairhaven for the leasing of the Roger's School addition, as well as, the publication of bidding documents and the procurement process for the Roger's School Project
  - The Board reviewed and approved a Therapeutic Learning Center expansion at the Quinn Elementary School in Dartmouth
  - The Board reviewed and approved several salary and position adjustments
  - The Board received and accepted the first reading of the FY22 budget, meeting June 22, 2021 for the second reading
  - The Board reviewed and approved FY22 tuitions and fees
  - The Board reviewed and approved three policy revisions
  - The Board received, accepted, and placed on file its OPEB Value and Activity Statement (Other Post-Employment Benefits)
  - The Board reviewed and approved the retirement of the existing SMEC COVID Operations Plan as of June 15, 2021 consistent with the expiration of the State of Emergency in MA, and to resume normal agency operations while following evolving state agency guidelines relevant to each program
  - Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, 2021
4. READS- Mr. Nelson reported that they met on June 3<sup>rd</sup> virtually and reported the following:
- Approval of minutes
  - Report of Special Educator Administrator Report
  - Conducted Evaluation of Treasurer
  - Conducted Evaluation of Executive Director
  - Report regarding E-Rate
  - Reviewed and approved new non-discrimination policy
  - Approval of FY22 projected staffing needs.
  - Reviewed and approved meeting calendar for new school year.
5. Tri-town Foundation- Ms. Rounseville had the following report.  
reported the following Grant Recipients for 20-21:
- First Grant was awarded to DECCA the Business & Financial Education Enrichment Group led by Mr. Gonet for \$2,763. This is already an existing group who does great things such as supporting students who are not able to afford the registration and materials
  - Second was awarded to the Anchor Family Outreach group led by Lisa Horan, for \$502.59 – this group runs over the course of the school year – began 2016-2017 school year and will continue into the future – this project is a year-long family outreach program – this goes well with the Family Engagement Framework that we are supporting as a district
  - Third grant was awarded to the Diversity Literature Library led by Courtney Aarsheim, for \$806 – this grant will provide an opportunity to build a diverse classroom library and provide opportunities for diversity lessons and social/emotional lessons through mentoring skills
6. Early Childhood Council- Ms. Duggan had the following report.
- Last met 5/18/21
  - 2021 Kindergarten Transition Plan Reminder
  - Discussed EEC Updates: Revised guidance update as of May 18, 2021 most notably removed the requirement for children to wear masks outside
  - Workforce and Facilities Grant available to local center based and family based centers (<https://www.mass.gov/handbook/workforce-facilities-grants-for-early-education-care-critical-infrastructure>)

- Doreen Lopes, Director of Early Childhood Ed, walked us through Part 2 of her Family Engagement Framework Presentation
    - This presentation centered on culturally responsive family engagement and responsive Practices
    - Also highlighted were transitions - inclusive of developmental transitions, everyday transitions, transitions between systems, and unanticipated transitions. General supports were discussed for kids and families navigating life transitions at all these scales
  - We began a discussion of local Summer Program Offerings, but much is still tentative as the COVID regulations continue to evolve. Doreen will share out the information for any programs she hears about this spring
  - Finally, pending final approval of the district calendar, we reviewed the proposed dates for the 2021-2022 Early Childhood Council Meetings.
  - If all goes as planned, the next Early Childhood Council Meeting will be 10/19/21.
7. Policy Sub-Committee- Ms. Duggan had the following report.
- Last met 5/17/21.
  - We first took in an excellent presentation by two high school students who were representing the ORR Gender Sexuality Alliance, or GSA. Their presentation was titled “Inclusive Policy at ORRHS” and reviewed some relevant definitions, as well as various aspects of the LGBTQ+ experience at ORRHS. They also suggested revisions to some policies to bring them more in line with practice and to be more inclusive.
  - The policies we reviewed were:
    - ACAB - Harassment Policy – This policy was recently revised by the State and MASC revised the policy for the school setting. Given the changes to national Title IX policy, this policy was very different from the existing ORR policy so the subcommittee decided to have the language reviewed by legal counsel before proceeding.
    - JBB – Educational Equity Policy - this was a new proposed policy
    - JII – Student Complaints and Grievances Policy
    - JJA – Student Organizations Policy
    - JJH-R – Travel Regulations Policy
  - EBCFA – Face Coverings Policy - at the time of this meeting the only proposed change was to remove the mask wearing exemption for students grade 1 and below.
  - The next meeting of the Policy Subcommittee was held on 6/8/21.
  - The policies we reviewed were:
    - ACAB-Harassment Policy: Mr. Davidson had been able to confer with the District’s legal counsel on the proposed changes, and the policy subcommittee was able to review those changes with legal counsel present at this meeting, leading to a final draft of proposed changes.
    - JLCB – Inoculation of Students Policy
    - JLCC – Communicable Diseases Policy
    - JRA – Student Records Policy
    - JRD- Student Photographs Policy
8. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee: Ms. Duggan had the following report.
- Last met 6/1/21
  - We reviewed the accomplishments and work done over the last year. This included some keynote speakers, who discussed topics such as internet safety and mindful digital environments, and cultural proficiency.

- We brainstormed where we would you like to see the district at this time next year in our Anti-Racist work and discussed exploring how we as a district can think about tying in restorative justice with responsive classroom practices.
- We reflected on the importance of student Voices, including the opportunity for student voices to be heard in school based activities and the creation of a leadership team supporting culture in schools.
- Building Based Cultural Proficiency Teams were busy this past year, and there was an emphasis on social emotional learning, demonstrated part through the climate survey that went out to students in grades K-12. Building principals also examined hiring practices and systems to increase the number of diverse candidates.
- Moving forward, goals for the next year include the creation of a district-wide inclusive calendar supporting diverse cultures and the creation of a draft to support hiring practices in the district, as well as the examination of our curriculum to ensure different perspectives are supported in our curriculum.
- The Anti-Racism Subcommittee is planning a summer update meeting, then will plan meeting dates for the fall.

### **C. School Committee Reorganization**

Chairperson Hartley explained to the rest of the school committee that they had received notification from the Town Clerk that there was a vacant seat on the Rochester School Committee and therefore someone will need to be appointed at a joint special meeting of the Selectboard and the School Committee. Ms. Hartley explained that she is working with the Town Administrator to secure that date, but until then she suggested that some vacancies be filled until we meet in September. The School Committee all agreed and the following appointments were made.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to appoint Ms. Kate Duggan to serve as the Rochester Representative on the ORR School Committee  
 SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes  
 Motion Passed

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes to appoint Ms. Sharon Hartley to serve as the MASC Representative  
 SECOND: by Ms. Duggan  
 Motion Passed

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to appoint Ms. Anne Fernandes to serve Capital Planning Committee  
 SECOND: by Ms. Duggan  
 Motion Passed

### **IX. Future Business**

#### **A. Timeline**

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – September 2, 2021 @ 6:30pm.

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – June 17, 2021 @ 6:30pm; held remote through Zoom.

X. Open Comments: Ms. Rounseville expressed how appreciative she is of everyone, especially this school year. She expressed that she has been very impressive throughout the year with all that's

gone on in the schools. She expressed that's she's proud of all the opportunities that were created for our children.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville at 7:37 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of exception #3 and exception #7

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

ROLL CALL VOTE: (Hartley; yes - Fernandes; yes – Rounseville; yes- Duggan; yes)

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to go come out of Executive Session at 8:30 pm and to adjourn

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

ROLL CALL VOTE: (Hartley; yes - Fernandes; yes – Rounseville; yes- Duggan; yes)

MOTION to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. by Ms. Duggan

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

ROLL CALL VOTE: (Hartley; yes - Fernandes; yes – Rounseville; yes- Duggan; yes)

Meeting of the Regular Rochester School Committee meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Submitted,

Diana Russo, Recording Secretary