



Mission Statement: To support and challenge all students to achieve personal and academic excellence in a student-centered environment.

BERLIN-BOYLSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 26, 2023, 5:00pm

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School

Multipurpose Room

Stream link <https://www.youtube.com/@bbrsdlive2893/streams>

This meeting may be recorded, and your image or voice may be broadcast.

School Committee: Mr. Michael Totman, Chair; Ms. Meagan Grill, Vice Chair; Ms. Lori-Anne Hart, District Clerk; Ms. Jessica Degliaberti; Ms. Julie Lee; Ms. Lisa Mair

Administration: Ms. Carol Costello, Superintendent; Ms. Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Mr. John Campbell, Berlin Memorial Principal; Ms. Jannel Fitzpatrick, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Ms. Nancy Konisky, Director of Finance & Operations; Mr. Paul Mara, Technology Coordinator; Mr. Michael Onorato, Director of Food Services; Ms. Lisa Sequeira, Tahanto Middle/High School Principal; Ms. Cinthia Sykes, Boylston Elementary Principal.

(Open Meeting Minutes taken by Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent)

Call to Order – Mr. Michael Totman called the meeting to order at 5:00pm

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Comments – A public comment was made that a committee meeting video regarding a book list was posted and then removed on a BBRSD page. Mr. Totman explained it was not on a BBRSD page, but a page run by a private citizen. No action has been taken with the books other than a list being generated. Policy KEC – Public Complaints about the Material – The policy points to the School Committee being responsible for curriculum, which includes library books. An idea would be to start a committee to look at books with parents.

IV. Communications – Ms. Jessica Degliaberti noted she received messages about the video post. The Boylston Library Director, Ms. Erica Hout, emailed the school committee and superintendent with concerns about book bans in libraries. Documents were requested for public records and she is willing to help the committee if they need it or BBRSD library staff with book processes.

V. Consent Agenda – 6-0 vote with amendment passes

1. Payroll and Payable Warrants – approved by Ms. Lori Hart and seconded by Ms. Julie Lee
2. September 6, 2023 Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes- **Ms. Jessica Degliaberti made a motion to include – missing KEC policy and request for library books, Ms. Lori Hart seconded. All in favor 6-0 vote**
3. September 11, 2023 Student Success and Technology Subcommittee Meeting Minutes- **Vote**
4. September 12, 2023 Open Meeting Minutes – **Vote**

Mr. Totman spoke about the areas the School Committee oversees, which are hiring a superintendent, the budget, and policy. He noted the committee will be following policy more closely, especially KEC.

VI. Reports

1. Director of Finance and Operations-*Ms. Nancy Konisky*
 - a. Business Office Update/Budget Timeline –
 - i. The budget process is beginning for FY25 and is due on Oct 15th. This is a preliminary budget before being reviewed at a later date. It will continue to be worked on until the public hearing in February.
 - ii. All transportation issues have all been resolved and addressed. The Where is my Kid app is up and running. Updated routes will be posted to the BBRSD website by the end of the week.
 - iii. Boylston and Tahanto both need cafeteria staff. A flyer will be sent out to the community.
 - iv. Closing figures for last school year are being finalized to present at the next school committee meeting.

After the second meeting in October Mr. Totman has invited Chairs of both towns, both select boards, finance committees, and town administrators to discuss the budget. Mr. Totman asked Ms. Konisky for an update on Oct 10th for above level service items. Nancy has asked principals to include supplies that teachers normally ask parents to purchase in the budget with the dollar amount.

2. Chair's Report - *Mr. Michael Totman - 5 mins*
 - a. Chair Appointment – Ms. Hart will chair the Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee. The committee will include Ms. Grill and Ms. Degliaberti. The evaluation process will be well documented. Negotiations are handled separately.
 - b. Handbook Formatting – The Success and Technology Committee will review handbook going forward before the School Committee approves in the fall
 - c. BBRSD School Tours – On September 19th BBRSD administration met with town administration, and school committee members, to tour BBRSD schools. The BES front yard has been upgraded. Mr. Totman thanked the individuals who helped make improvements to the school. Mr. Totman also thanked members from the towns who came to view the buildings. Items will be addressed through the budget and potential policy to upkeep the buildings. BBRSD needs more equipment to do so. A facilities discussion will be had about renovations, repairs, or a possible new school to see what can be redone. Mr. John Campbell noted that a timeline for a new school would take ten years from go ahead to kids in the doors. The towns and state would need to be involved with architecture and building codes, then the site decision, site prep and building. There is the potential to use a floor plan of the school that is already built to help speed up the timeline. The HVAC installation is to begin after school ends for the day

3. Budget & Facilities Subcommittee - *Ms. Meagan Grill*
 - a. District Improvement Plan – The plan identified a list of priorities for the district. Ms. Grill mentioned that the committee reviewed the high level “asks” for the district, which were staff and a few capital items.
 - b. Available dates to meet with town boards in Berlin & Boylston - Meeting in October

4. Policy Subcommittee - *Ms. Lori Hart* – Ms. Hart mentioned two policy votes IHAMA - Parent Notification Related to Sex Education and EDCFA - Face Coverings, three first reads, DGE - Procurement Requirements, EFE - Vending Machine Procurement, and IMGGA - Animals in School. Suggestions from MASC and from BBRSD in the procurement document. Policy EFE is proposed to be changed to EVE since a new EFE policy has come out by MASC, on a different topic. Ms. Carol Costello mentioned a wellness committee that addressed vending machines in schools at the time for BBRSD EFE. IMGGA is a brand new policy for review.

5. Student Success and Technology Subcommittee - *Ms. Jessica Degliaberti* – The committee reviewed the RF (radio frequency) safety data. Ms. Mair provided information on safety. The plan is to see how town wiring goes before proceeding with anything further in the schools. The BES structures were also reviewed. The committee is looking at elementary levels having a second recess for future items. Mr. Campbell noted that is a recess challenge because of the limited time of the school day and what you can go without. Weather is also a component and adds on time. Ms. Sykes has spoken to Boylston fire and police and a morning recess creates issues with cars and staffing. BES has incorporated additional movement breaks integrated throughout the day with students. Ms. Grill proposed a class outside for outside learning. The schools have built in ways for outside learning and this has been done in the past.

Mr. Totman informed the group that there has been mention in other places of schools wanting to extend the school day and the school year. Ms. Costello noted this would be a new concept to MA, which would have numerous obstacles with the union, DESE, sports, families and with kids at multiple schools. May need to be a movement as a state. Mr. Campbell talked about schools breaking up the school year in different blocks rather than having a huge summer break.

Ms. Mair is looking to invite an expert in the field of radio frequencies at 1870 town hall. Ms. Mair will share the presentation she viewed from North Carolina on the subject.

6. Superintendent of Schools Report - *Ms. Carol Costello - 20 mins*
 - a. Introduction of New Staff by School (Principals) – Ms. Lisa Sequeira introduced– Ms. Micah Cash, Ms. Jennifer Thorburn, and Ms. Mary Sara-Loosemore. She also welcomed Mr. Michael Onorato and thanked being able to work with him at Tahanto. Ms. Cynthia Sykes introduced Ms. Brooke Demanche, who started as sub this year and is now a paraprofessional.
 - b. Superintendent Goals – Review and Approval – Ms. Costello is working with the new administrative team towards her goals and has taken time to discuss instruction and who BBRSD is as a team. She has incorporated community outreach to get out to the towns to interact and see what is going on. Ms. Sheila Muir, a recently retired superintendent from the Quabbin Regional School District is mentoring Carol ins areas of policy, budget, etc. Ms. Hart commended Ms. Costello on how goals have been crafted. Ms. Mair proposed to have the school committee go out into the community and

if the public has questions they can be accessible. October is Ms. Costello's first meeting with the PTO (LINK, Inc.) BMS Link group held a successful dance event. Ms. Lee asked if she could add a sporting event to her goals.

- c. Follow-ups: Confirmation of dates for MARS workshop on budget preparation – The date has been confirmed for the Oct 24th workshop from 5-7pm and one for November 28th. The idea is to go over how the budget process works, stakeholder roles of the towns and school committee, calculating out assessment, then a Q and A. Ms. Muir will bring in scenarios from other districts at the second session.

Comprehensive Health Frameworks – Ms. Costello explained that the health frameworks that have been released are new frameworks, but will not be rolled out this year. The teachers will have time to review and to see what resources are needed. Portions may be rolled out next year. These frameworks came out faster than was anticipated considering controversial topics. Mr. Totman noted that gender is a controversial topic mentioned 52 times, nutrition 31, and exercise 10 times. Mr. Totman explained that the focus needs to be for BBRSD specific needs.

Ms. Costello has extended invitations for the Portrait of Graduate work. All administrators are serving on the team, as well as several parents. Ms. Costello invited a representative from the School Committee to join. She explained it is a time to define who we are as a district in relation to who our students in the schools are today, as well as what they need for their future.. Multiple school committee members are welcome to come, however, Ms. Costello would like it to be the same person for consistency.

7. Technology Coordinator – *Mr. Paul Mara*

- a. Fiber Grant update – The town of Boylston received a 335K grant that includes cables to connect the buildings. There were early September kick off meetings and a site walk was done on September 19th to determine the map. Next steps are the pole drawings submissions. The 140-70 route is starting soon. Anything between buildings now has to go out to the cloud and back to the building. This process would allow for the phone system to be consolidated with a potential cost savings with running one system and the same thing with the network. There are four servers in each building now. One central network would be created. Backup time will be improved for BBRSD data. Boylston Police already had some fiber cables in place which helped with cost.
- b. Capital Funding - updates on purchases – New student devices which have been configured have been purchased along with all new copy machines and a phone system. In November or January there will be a further update. A 3D printer is expected to be installed on the October Professional Development day. The Central Office phone system is up and running. A capital request has been put in for a security camera at Tahanto. Network upgrades have begun at Tahanto as a part of the fiber project. The federal government will reimburse up to 40% of the cost, which will allow for more to be done.
- c. Website – The administrative team selected templates for the new website. It should be in production at the beginning of November for viewing before potentially rolling out in January – Ms. Grill requested that a populated calendar with school events be included in the website. Ms. Bilotta will coordinate the district calendar. The individual school pages and calendars are run by the principals. Links can be put on the town sites to link to school calendars. Administrators will be responsible for managing their own pages.
- d. Electronic Forms – Through PowerSchool, the IT coordinator is creating electronic forms for parents to use. This has started at Tahanto. The goal is to get the elementary students and parents involved for trials. Mr. Mara will go to parent-teacher conference night to get parents signed up. Ms. Lee asked for a note on the website about being under construction.

8. Director of Food Services – *Mr. Michael Onorato*
 - a. School Lunch Report – Mr. Onorato informed the group that school lunch is free for all students again this year. This takes away the financial burden for families and avoids having children hungry in school. He is working on hiring more staff members, to include a floating position for all 3 schools. They have received a \$5,700 grant for working farmers and local produce from the area in the spring. The Breakfast After the Bell program is pushed by DESE to be in all districts in the Commonwealth. Mr. Onorato has experience with the program and has seen improvements with the students. School lunch funds were used to repair equipment and uniforms were purchased. They are calculating meal participation to ensure the success of the program and would like it to be around 70% participation. More training is to be done with staff on what items go out on the tray and nutritional guidelines for students. Changes are being made to make sure they are in compliance. Students can purchase extra food to include an entire lunch or one item (a la carte sales, not part of school lunch program). There has been good feedback given for new menu choices within the start of the school year. Mr. Onorato will serve on the district wellness committee organized by Ms. Sally Stukuls.

VII. Business Items - [Berlin- Boylston Online Policy Manual](#) –

Mr. Totman and BBRSD admin are working on organizing the school committee drive for documentation of items on the agenda. He would like items up for voting to have good documentation so the committee knows what they are voting on.

- Approval of Student Handbook (TAH) – **Vote - motion approved by Ms. Lori Hart and seconded by Ms. Julie Lee** - The Student Success Subcommittee will help redo formatting in the future. There have been issues with google docs conversion with word document version. Ms. Lee explained that the athletic handbook rules cannot be less restrictive than the MIAA rules. Students are bound by academic eligibility standards. The MIAA rules state that students need passing in all classes. BBRSD is not in line with MIAA rules. The committee will also look further into which policies are required to be in the handbook. Ms. Costello proposed an ad hoc committee to be in charge of handbooks in the future. The Code of conduct was updated this year and needs to be approved by students. **Ms. Grill made a motion to amend the vote not to approve the handbook as is but to approve only the discipline code. Ms. Degliaberti seconded the motion. 6-0 amendment approved.**
- Approval of Middle School Math Curriculum – **Vote – motion approved by Ms. Degliaberti and seconded by Ms. Julie Lee – Motion on the table. Vote 5-1 Ms. Hart elected to abstain** - The material is a math book being used in class that was reviewed, and selected. It should have originally been approved last year. Ms. Costello asked the committee to approve the resource under the guidance of what they had in place when they picked the book.
- Approval of Boylston Lions Club Donation for Katie’s 5K Road Race Proceeds – **Vote – motion approved by Ms. Lee and seconded by Ms. Degliaberti, 6-0.** Donation addressed to the Art Department for visual art supplies.
- Approval of Stipend Positions for Tahanto – **Vote – motion approved by Ms. Grill and seconded by Ms. Hart 6-0.** This money is just being reallocated for positions. There are no individuals interested in the mentor program this year.

- EBCFA – Face Coverings – **Vote – motion approved by Ms. Lee and seconded by Ms. Hart, 4-2 Ms. Degliaberti and Ms. Mair abstained.** Language that is different from the MASC version was proposed. If a mandate came down for masking this would allow for the school committee to have a discussion before implementing. All nurses’ offices in the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District have pulse oximeters and if someone is not feeling comfortable they will not be punished for not wearing one.
- IHAMA – Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education – **Vote – motion approved by Ms. Lee and seconded by Ms. Hart, 6-0**
- MASC DJE – Procurement Requirements – **First Read**
- MASC EFE – Vending Machine Procurement – proposed name change to policy EVE – **First Read**
- MASC IMGA – Animals in Schools – **First Read**

VIII. **Future Agenda Item Proposals** - 5 minutes

1. Future Town Hall Meeting Re: BES building
2. Presentations by Month:
 - i. October – TAH School Counselors
 - ii. November – Nurse Leader – Lisa Lamoureux – EpiPen med delegation
3. Accountability Reports; Final spring Aimsweb reports- Mr. Totman wants to know the plan to address the low points and would also like to celebrate the high points. MCAS is only a one-day measure.
4. Preliminary topics for October 24th, 2023
 - Understanding DEI – Ms. Sally Stukuls
 - Cursive – Mr. John Campbell and Ms. Cinthia Sykes
 - Financial literacy - Ms. Lisa Sequeira
 - MCAS and accountability – Mr. John Campbell and Ms. Cinthia Sykes
 - MIAA rules - Mr. Matt Porcaro
 - EpiPen Training and Approval - Ms. Lisa Lamoureux
 - Counseling Department
 - Cell phones - a potential policy in the future for discussion
 - A list of attending colleges by recent graduates

Mr. Totman made a motion to adjourn at 7:53pm – 6-0 vote

IX. **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 5:00pm in person

The listing of items is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

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