

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
ACSD Board
Board Meeting
Monday, February 12, 2024, 6:30 pm - 8:45 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

In-Person Attendance

Barbara Wilson; Brian Bauer; Ellie Romp; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jason Chance; Lindsey Hescok; Mary Heather Noble; Steve Orzech; Tricia Allen

Remote Attendance

Ellen Whelan-Wuest; Suzanne Buck

Not In Attendance

Joanna Doria

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff Barb Wilson 5 min

ACSD Staff present: Tim Williams, Interim Superintendent; Matt Corrente, Director of Finance & Operations; Nicole Carter, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Equity & Student Services; Emily Blistein, Director of Communications & Engagement (remote); Caitlin Steele, MUHS Principal; Courtney Krahn, Director of Teaching & Learning (joined later).

Others present: Sophia Lawton, Student Rep to the ACSD Board; MUHS 10th grade students Max Goodfellow and Navah Glikman. Student Rep Eddie Fallis joined later.

Note: Board member Joanna Doria not present because she was doing Board Engagement on the FY25 budget at the Rural Elementary School Concert at Salisbury Community School.

2. Public Comment on Agenda Items Barb Wilson 10 min

No public comment.

- B. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of 1/22/24 and 1/25/24 Barb Wilson 5 min

Barb Wilson asked the Board to approve the Board minutes separately, since some members were not present at both meetings.

Jason Chance made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 22, 2024 Board meeting. Jamie McCallum seconded. There were no comments on the minutes. Barb Wilson called the vote and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Jason Chance then made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 25, 2024 Special Board meeting. Jamie McCallum seconded. Tricia Allen noted that her name had been left off the attendance, and clarified that she was not present at the meeting. Barb Wilson called the vote to approve the corrected minutes, and they were approved unanimously. Tricia Allen and Ellen Whelan-Wuest abstained.

C. Approve ACSD Bills James Malcolm 5 min

James Malcolm presented the ACSD Bills, which were read by himself and Jason Chance on January 29, 2024.

Payroll: \$940,362.12

McGilton Fund: \$388.42

General Fund: \$836,074.26 (Note: ~\$500K of this is healthcare/benefit expenses)

Motion to approve payment of the ACSD bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Jason Chance Status: Passed

D. Report of the Student Representatives Sophia Lawton 5 min
Eddie Fallis

Sophia Lawton reported that MUHS just started their Winter Carnival activities. Hope Happens Here is also sponsoring a Mental Health Trivia Night soon.

Lindsey Hescocock asked Sophia about Winter Carnival and Hope Happens Here. Sophia provided a brief overview, noting the emphasis on building community and removing the stigma around mental health issues.

E. Report of the Superintendent Tim Williams

1. Proposed MUHS Schedule Change Presentation 20 min

Dr. Williams informed the Board that MUHS has been working on adjusting the schedule to address student and teacher concerns with the current format and create better alignment with the PAHCC. He reminded the Board that this is for the Board's information -- they are not seeking Board approval.

Caitlin Steele presented the process that was followed by MUHS teachers and staff, and the results to date. Highlights:

- Process of investigating new schedule began in Spring 2023. Started as part of the review of the IB program (what's working/what's not working). That analysis showed the schedule to be a barrier to IB working the way it should.

- Fall 2023: 15 faculty working on the schedule question with the goal of reducing stress for

both teachers and students, and increasing access to PAHCC offerings.

- 4 different models were reviewed, including the existing A/B day schedule. The one that emerged as best for students and teachers was the 3rd option "Draft C" because it offers 40 min of professional prep time, protected teaching team time for prep and meetings, allows for a late/soft start, and increases access to PAHCC.

- Other features of the proposed changes: Soft start allows for access to gym/weight room, breakfast, counselors, and clubs in the morning (and doesn't require early transportation); Advisory would meet once per day for ~25 min (all teachers would be available for student during this time); 3 lunch periods; "Skinnies" or shorter class periods for electives; 4 blocks so many classes can meet every day for a single semester (which means kids take less classes/semester and teacher teach less classes/semester).

- In December the team committed to Draft C and sought feedback from students. The main feature that students love is the late/soft start. MUHS Student Navah Glikman provided her research on benefits of a later start time for teen physical and mental health. MUHS Student Max Goodman also provided testimony in support of the proposed schedule change, including the ability to participate in band and choir without missing lunch, and being able to seek academic support without having to miss an elective class or interrupt a teacher's lunch. There is some concern about students being able to eat with peers in the new configuration, but overall support seems high.

- Issues: Still trying to figure out how this will work for DP students with their required coursework. But late start will still benefit them, esp students who participate in after school activities. Next steps: inputting the structure into PowerSchool with MUHS course offerings to see if schedule actually works. Plan is to implement for Fall 2024.

Board members asked several questions, including:

- If curriculum will be adjusted, esp. homework requirements. Caitlin responded that the plan is to match the schedule and structure to meet curriculum needs.
- Can students meet with teachers during the soft start "zero time"?
- Is it possible for students to participate in Band, Choir and PAHCC and not miss lunch?
- How will this work for early release days?
- What is the impact of a student missing multiple days? Will they miss more content with this configuration?
- How does this work for students who ride the bus and still arrive at school early?
- How does this help with stress for DP students if their schedule is too rigid to afford the benefits others will see?

There was some continued discussion, and Board members were reminded to direct their remaining questions to Caitlin.

2. Impact of Pending Act 127 Changes

Matthew Corrente 30 min

Matt Corrente presented details on the anticipated changes to Act 127 and the impact on the ACSD FY25 proposed budget. Summary:

- The VT legislature is expected to the original 5% tax rate cap. The reasons: the cap was artificially collapsing property yield. State economists realized that education spending was too high and tax rates would not support it.
- The 5% tax cap is being replace with a "Transition Mechanism" that pulls the focus back on

the intent of Act 127. Only those Districts negatively impacted by the new law qualify for a tax rate discount, and the discount is commiserate with the degree of impact to the District's tax capacity. The formula: \$0.01 tax discount for every 1% loss in tax capacity for the initial year, which then tapers over the next 5 fiscal years.

- This change has a significant impact on recovering the property yield -- with the original Act 127, the yield was a little over \$9,171, which drastically increase the EDTR. With the change, the yield is now estimated at \$9,975, which brings the discounted EDTR to ~\$1.52. If the yield moves up to \$10,000 (which is possible once all budgets for the state have been approved), the discounted EDTR would be closer to \$1.48.

- Given the likelihood of the higher property yield along with the \$0.13 tax discount from the state, the ACSD EDTR will end up being very close to the targeted EDTR that the FY25 budget was built around (e.g., between \$1.48 and \$1.52 with the discount transition mechanism, and \$1.47 under the original Act 127 conditions). The Administration does not recommend opening the budget or delaying the March 5th vote.

- The other factor to consider: the FY24 EDTR of \$1.40 is artificially low because it is a result of the state lowering tax rates with its COVID-era education fund reserves, which has created a trough. Taxpayers have seen EDTR at \$1.50 and higher before.

- Next steps: Closely monitor the proposed legislation, closely monitor the property yield to inform continued tax rate modeling. If yield follows forecasting, ACSD's voting timeline should be fine. If budget modification is needed, the Board would need to approve a delay by March 4th under the conditions set forth in the draft statute.

Board comments & questions:

Barb Wilson repeated the recommendation to proceed with the March 5th vote on the current FY25 budget. James Malcolm noted the benefit of the new transition mechanism in that it does not create a fiscal cliff at the end of the 5-year period.

Suzanne Buck mentioned hearing that the State does not have the funding to provide the income-based tax relief, so we still need to consider those people who can't afford tax increases. Jason Chance asked again the deadline for re-submitting a revised budget if it becomes necessary (warned no later than March 15th). Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked a clarifying question about historical tax rates and the "trough" depicted in one of the slides. James Malcolm complimented Matt Corrente for his hard work and vigilance in keeping the Board informed on the impacts to ACSD's budget.

3. Facilities Update

Matthew Corrente 15 min

Matt Corrente provided a summary of the Bruce Macintyre's "Repairs and Maintenance Project (RAMP)" Report to give Board members a sense of current/upcoming facilities needs. The administration is trying to keep track of ongoing maintenance and repair needs/expenses as it contemplates long term investment in capital improvements. The summary:

HVAC System needs:

Shoreham Elementary -- recent boiler failure revealed problems with HVAC system. Estimated cost ~\$1M, not including other related (domino effect) costs.

Cornwall School -- needs total HVAC replacement. Estimated cost at ~\$2M plus related expenses.

Weybridge School -- needs new controls to replace obsolete parts on existing system. Estimates at \$125,000.

Mary Hogan School -- A-wing HVAC project is scheduled and funded by ESSER money and some FY25 funds. C-wing HVAC replacement is estimated to cost \$2.5M.

The other schools have functioning HVAC systems that do not need immediate attention.

WATER System Needs:

Ripton recently replaced failing controls for its domestic water system. This cost ~\$25,000.

MUMS had \$20K-\$40K in damages from the fire sprinkler system failure and related flooding this winter.

MUHS has leaks in copper pipes that are imbedded within concrete blocks (part of original structure). Facilities Department does not yet have figures for this issue.

Other Required Renovations:

MUHS is converting an old computer lab to a learning lab for 504/IEP students. This involves installation of a wall/divider.

MUMS has some space reconfiguration/optimization needs to provide conference and learning lab spaces.

Central Office has had investigation work to address odors/poor air quality/animal infestation in the structure. There are no environmental hazards, and have removed dead animals/debris from exterior walls. Additional work needed to close access points and repair drywall, etc.

Matt Corrente also mentioned that the State is reportedly creating a Construction Aid Plan and will be soliciting pre-planned projects from Districts when the funding is ready -- ACSD will want to have projects ready-to-go to have the best chance at receiving this aid.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked how this report aligns with other needs that have been previously reported as part of the Facilities Master Plan needs. Are these recently-mentioned projects all at the same priority level?

Matt clarified that these issues are just what has been occupying the Facilities Department recently -- this is not the master plan, but should be taken into account as the Board contemplates a broader Bond initiative.

4. Action: Approve Faculty/Staff Appointments/Resignations

5 min

Tim Williams presented a summary of the faculty/staff appointments, retirements, and resignation to the Board.

Brian Bauer shared complimentary words about retiring science teacher Janelle Perry-Askew.

Motion to accept the appointments, retirements, and resignations as presented, including:

- a. Appoint Olivia Atwood as a Custodian, 1.0 FTE, Step 4
- b. Appoint James Sestokas as a Grounds Technician, 1.0 FTE, Step 25
- c. Appoint Kathrine Smith as a Paraprofessional, .50 FTE, Step 1
- d. Accept Retirement of Tracy Longchamp, Classroom Teacher, 1.00 effective 6/30/2024
- e. Accept Retirement of Janelle Perry-Askew, Science Teacher, 1.00 effective 6/30/2024

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Ellie Romp Status: Passed

- a. Appoint Olivia Atwood as a Custodian, 1.0 FTE, Step 4
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- d. Accept Retirement of Tracy Longchamp, Classroom Teacher, 1.00 effective 6/30/2024
- e. Accept Retirement of Janelle Perry-Askew, Science Teacher, 1.00 effective 6/30/2024
- f. Accept Resignation of Michael Sassin, Special Educator, 1.00 effective 6/30/2024

F. Report of the Chair

Barb Wilson 10 min

1. Annual Meeting Protocols

Barb Wilson provided an overview of the protocol for the Annual Meeting so that newer Board members would know what to expect. The meeting will be held in the MUHS Band Room. Governor Douglas has agreed to moderate again. Dr. Williams will act as moderator until the Board officially nominates and selects Governor Douglas as the moderator -- then the Governor will lead from there. The Board will need to nominate and vote on all of the positions, including Board Clerk and Treasurer, as well as the at-large ACSD community member to serve on the PAHCC Board. Barb reminded the group that the Board will make the nominations, but all in attendance will vote.

After that business is complete, the full budget presentation will proceed.

Barb then reminded the Board about Dr. Wendy Baker's visit to ACSD on February 13th -- she will be visiting Mary Hogan, Bridport, and Weybridge elementary schools.

Finally, Barb suggested that the February 26, 2024 Board meeting be cancelled since Annual Meeting is the following evening. If any urgent Board matters arise, she will have the Annual Meeting start early to take care of Board Business beforehand.

G. Report of the Board

20 min

1. Committee Updates

a. Communications & Engagement

Mary Heather Noble reported that the Communications & Engagement Committee has had a difficult time communicating the FY25 with all the changes around Act 127. What has been done:

- Budget page on the ACSD website with the budget book and other voter materials (the FAQs document, etc. will soon be outdated with the upcoming legislative updates to the new law).
- Board member outreach via Budget Info Tables at ACSD events. Mary Heather thanked Barb Wilson, James Malcolm, and Joanna Doria for their help with this.
- 15-minute information video about the FY25 budget, but the changes to Act 127 already render the video obsolete. Mary Heather thanked Eddie Fallis, Barb Wilson, Jason

Chance, and MCTV for their work to make the video, and suggested trying to re-do it with updated information.

Mary Heather thanked Matt Corrente for keeping the Board informed about all the changes and how they impact the FY25 Budget so the C&E Committee can quickly revise voter materials. Upcoming:

- New FY25 Budget FAQs document has been done to incorporate new Act 127 developments.
- Emily will be updating the FY25 Budget Summary sheet, to be posted on the Budget page and distributed throughout ACSD.
- Mary Heather and Barb will be hosting 2 more Board Tables at ACSD events.
- Barb Wilson and Tim Williams are both submitting Op-Eds to the Addison Independent to explain the changes to Act 127 and communication ACSD's decision re: proceeding with the FY25 Budget vote as is.
- The C&E Committee is hosting the Virtual Q&A Session on the FY25 Budget on Thursday, Feb 15th at 7:00 p.m.

b. Negotiations

Steve Orzech reported that Negotiations with both the Teacher and Support Staff Associations are ongoing.

c. Facilities

Jason Chance reported that the Committee hasn't met since the last Board meeting.

d. Finance

James Malcolm noted that the Finance Committee's work has already been shared with the FY25 budget activity.

e. Policy

Suzanne Buck reported that the Policy Committee has a meeting scheduled for February 26th. They are continuing work on the Wellness Policy, and will soon be tackling a policy on use of school buildings.

f. Addison Central SEPAC

Suzanne Buck shared that the next meeting is scheduled for February 26th. The group is working on developing parent resources for special education processes & issues that will span the full age spectrum of ACSD students.

g. Middlebury Community Television

Barb Wilson reported that the MCTV Board is meeting this week. No other news.

h. Parks and Recreation

No updates to share.

i. Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center

Steve Orzech shared that PAHCC had a very successful Open House. Attendance was great, and many people were pleased with the presentations. PAHCC was also recently rewarded with a \$550K grant for their advanced manufacturing program.

H. Public Comment - Any Topic

Barb Wilson 10 min

No public comment.

I. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Heather Noble
Board Clerk

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Jason Chance Second: Jamie McCallum Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 2h 20m

*Public Comment Guidelines:

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.