

**MARION SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MARION PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Marion, Massachusetts**

**March 14, 2024
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
16 Spring Street, Marion, MA 02738**

Regular meeting of the Marion School Committee was held on Thursday, March 14, 2024 and called to order by Chairperson Nye, at 6:32pm.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: April Nye, Chairperson (in-person), Mary Beauregard (remote), Nichole Nye McGaffey (remote) and Nichole Daniel (in-person).

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Michelle Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools (in-person); Sharlene Fedoworicz, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Howard Barber, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, Doreen Lopes, Early Childhood Director (as Principal) (in-person); Melissa Wilcox, Recording Secretary (in-person); staff, parents, members of the press and public.

Chairperson Nye, stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the agenda has been set, the meeting is being recorded, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the agenda will be followed as outlined. Chairperson Nye read the following statement: *This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format. School Committee, Administrators and the public will have the option of meeting in person at the Community Room of the Sippican School located at 16 Spring Street, Marion, MA 02738 or via zoom.*

I. Approval of Minutes:

A. Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2024

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to accept the meeting minutes of February 8, 2024 as presented

SECONDED: Ms. Nye McGaffey

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beauregard; yes

Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2024

MOTION: by Ms. Nye McGaffey to accept the meeting minutes of February 8, 2024 as presented

SECONDED: Ms. Nye

MOTION PASSED 2:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes

IV. General

A. Approval of Transportation Contract

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review the transportation contract for FY 2025-2027.

Superintendent Nelson explained that Mr. Barber and Mr. Jones recently completed the bid process for a new transportation contract. It has been a difficult process due to the cost of doing business in many areas, but especially in transportation. The trend statewide is a significant increase. He noted that year five of the current agreement is coming to an end of the previous three-year contract in which the District utilized two option years where the price has not gone up during the last two years.

Mr. Barber explained that the initial bid was for a complete regionalized agreement with all four districts under one contract. Only one vendor responded and it was an increase of over 60%. This was rejected and a second bid was put forward separating each district into its own agreement. Two bids were received in response but it is still greater than a 35% increase. The school committee is voting this evening on the contract that supports residents of Marion grades K-12.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Daniel asked what would happen if the bid was rejected. Mr. Barber said they would need to start the process over again soliciting new bids. He feels the district has done their due diligence and the agreement is similar to what is being received by other districts in a similar situation. Ms. Daniel asked if this cost can be absorbed into the

budget. Superintendent Nelson said it cannot necessarily be absorbed but it is a required cost and has created a very difficult budget season for the district. He added that Rochester and ORR School Committees have taken action to approve this.

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to award the transportation contract to Amaral Bus Company, Inc. as the responsive and responsible bidder.

SECONDED: Ms. Nye McGaffey

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye: yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beauregard; yes

B. Approval of Grant

Recommendation:

That the School Committee review the FY2024 Safe and Supportive Schools Continuation Fund Code 337 in the amount of \$10,000.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Daniel asked what the money will be used for. Superintendent Nelson explained that it will support the four to five individuals leading this work in the form of stipends and/or support supplies needed in year two. A team was formed last year in each building with the first part of this grant. Each of the districts received and approved year one funds of \$10,000 each last year. There was no additional application process for year two which will consist of unpacking Fly Five materials and discussing the right time to pilot.

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to approved the FY2024 Safe and Supportive Schools Continuation Fund Code 337 in the amount of \$10,000.

SECONDED: Ms. Beauregard

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye: yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beauregard; yes

C. FY25 Budget Update

Recommendation:

That the School Committee hear an update of the FY25 Budget.

Superintendent Nelson explained that, as the members know, this has been a difficult budget season, here in Marion, in all of our school districts and across the state. It posed challenging conversations for the Budget Subcommittee and at this time a level service budget is being proposed at \$7,080,780. The administration has continued conversations with the Town officials and he thanked them for their ongoing efforts to look at the budget for Sippican. The Town ultimately asked the administration and Budget Subcommittee to look at the proposed budget again to determine any areas where reductions can be made. The Subcommittee will convene again next week to hear recommendations.

School Committee Feedback:

Ms. Daniel asked to confirm what the contract custodial services line item was. Mr. Barber confirmed this was the cleaning company used for second shift at Sippican. Ms. Daniel asked if it would be less expensive to have our own staff. Mr. Barber explained that the expenses shown include benefits, insurance, etc. which all add up, along with the difficulty of hiring custodians at this time. Superintendent Nelson added that the budget difficulties are a state-wide trend, and the same in all of the Union's districts. Although it is not a surprise, he said it does not make it any easier of a situation to navigate.

V. New Business

C. Business

1. Financial Report

Mr. Barber reported the following information to the school committee:

The Marion School District currently has \$336,854 available of the general funds appropriated for the 2024 Fiscal Year. Per the attached Year to Date Budget Report by Department, we are able to identify how our funds are encumbered and expended. This report recognizes the activity of the total \$6,666,193 appropriated to the Marion School District.

\$ 6,666,193 - General Funds Approved

\$ 6,329,339 – Obligations Paid Year to Date

\$ 336,854 - Remaining Available Funds

2. Food Service Report: Mr. Barber reported on the following from Food Service Director Jill Henesey:

- Friendly reminder any extra items are available for purchase this year; limited snacks, beverages and second entrees at an extra cost.
- Had a successful week serving the students in the Math Acceleration Program.

- Additional repairs to the dish machine.
- Currently working on procuring food and supplies for next year.
- Meal participation continues to grow strong.

3. Facilities Report: Mr. Barber reported on the following from Facilities Director Eugene Jones:

- Met with Town, Garden and Administration Reps for final phase of Garden Project
- Rear playground 70% completed, weather permitting will complete by 3/15.
- Fire alarm inspection and testing completed per NFPA72.
- Completed plant equipment inspection by state
- Conducted routine maintenance on all facility equipment and systems.

D. Personnel

Superintendent Nelson discussed that as the school committee is aware, in recent days, Principal Brown shared that she would not be returning due to a personal health situation. He thanked Principal Brown for her leadership during the last few years especially during the pandemic with a new administrative team. He is grateful for Ms. Lopes for stepping in and being willing to remain for the rest of this school year. They have begun planning for the 2024-2025 school year and the job is posted for the principal position. He also expressed a sincere thank you to the faculty, staff, parents and guardians, and the students for their ability to be resilient during this change. He also shared that Mr. Crisafulli will not be looking for a successor contract at the conclusion of this year, as he was recently engaged and will be returning to Western Massachusetts where his family resides. Superintendent Nelson thanked Mr. Crisafulli for his leadership and contributions over the last three years at Sippican School as well. The Assistant Principal position will be posted soon. Chairperson Nye thanked Ms. Brown for her time and she much appreciated working with her over the last few years. She also thanked Ms. Lopes along with the families and children at Sippican. Ms. Daniel added that from a parent perspective with a student at Sippican, it has been a seamless transition with Ms. Lopes. The kids know who she is along with Ms. Millette, and her child comes home happy.

VI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chairperson Nye took a moment to recognize Mr. Barber and the Central Office staff for putting together the information and reports monthly, but also for the budget. She thanked Superintendent Nelson and his office's work as well. She knows it has been a tough budget season. She thanked Shay Assad and members of the Marion Finance Committee for supporting the schools. Next, she thanked Geoff Gorman, Town Administrator and Heather O'Brien Finance Director, for meeting earlier this week. She knows they have a lot to look at in regards to the entire town and she appreciates them prioritizing the children and having tough conversations this year. She also thanked Toby Burr for always supporting the school committee and Sippican School. She knows it is never easy for the administration to deliver tough news.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Superintendent Nelson thanked Chairperson Nye and agreed with her remarks and appreciation. He said there of course is so much more the administration would want to do if funds were available. He shared with the school committee that great progress has been made in regards to a comfort dog in Marion. Recently, he met with District Attorney Tim Cruz along with Chief Nighelli and Geoff Gorman when they were presented the first check. He said there is close to \$19,000 awarded to bring a comfort dog to the Town and he appreciates working with the Marion Police Department on this. He shared that Grow Education continues to move forward on Phase II which is the flagpole. Town representatives, Jody Dickerson along with Mr. Jones met with Grow Education to discuss Phase II plans and continue the work.

Dr. Fedoworicz shared the following:

We had our Family Literacy night, which was held on Feb 7th at the ORR cafeteria to showcase the new K-6 IntoReading curriculum through an overview presentation followed by teacher-led small group presentations per grade level where families were able to look at the books, materials, resources and digital components.

- *A special thank you to the PTO for the giveaway baskets and to our teachers that participated to share the new literacy curriculum.*

We had our last learning walk in November. Our next and last learning walk is next week for Sippican. We are looking forward to visiting classrooms.

Last Wednesday, March 6 was our second to last PD day. Our teachers focused on Data Analysis, Small Group Planning and Progress Monitoring with the new literacy curriculum implementation.

During our last New Teacher mentoring time, Kris Lincoln provided a thorough overview of the Student Services office which included an eloquent presentation and activities related to accommodations and modifications to help new teachers better understand the learning services provided for our students. Thank you Kris.

At the end of February, we had another Project 351 workshop on the ORR Campus where the upper elementary students met and collaborated on leadership and sense of belonging scenarios. In meeting and working with students, they were excited and engaged, and worked so well together. The upper elementary students from all three districts met before lunch as a team on the same workshop. This was organized by Ms. Millette, which then concluded in a collaborative lunch. Our next workshop is next Tuesday.

Today, during an afternoon and evening session, we held a community input and feedback forum on the 3-year Student Opportunity Act (or SOA) plans. The SOA plan serves to describe how we will utilize evidence-based approaches and strategies to address closing learning gaps for these student groups. A survey for community input is on the website, went out as an email and is coming in Sunday's SMORES. We hope you are able to spend some time filling out this important feedback survey.

Last- what a phenomenal performance by our elementary and secondary students at the FORM chorus and instrumental concerts the past two weeks. The teachers and students are so talented and it was a pleasure to be able to hear them perform. Congratulations to them and a special thank you to FORM. That concludes information from the Office of Teaching and Learning.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Lopes said it is truly an honor getting to know the children and families, and all of the great things of Sippican. She thanked the teachers for embracing her 'how do I do this' and going through it with her. She also thanked VASE. Their support of the school is unmatched.

She reported the following:

Marion Occupation Program (MOP): Thank you to the volunteers that joined us at MOP for Grades 5 and 6 earlier this month. Students learned about a variety of different careers.

Term 2: Grades closed for Term 2 last week. Report cards will be issued March 15.

FORM Concerts: Chorus on March 5th and Instrumental on March 12th at ORRHS.

Grade 5 Field Trip: On March 4th, 5th grade students visited Bronsiegel Auditorium. This was the final culmination of New Bedford Symphony Orchestra's Learning in Concert program entitled, Adaptations in Motion: Animal and Musical.

Professional Development: A half day of professional development was held on March 6th. Sippican staff focused on Literacy, MCAS response analysis, OpenSciEd planning and investigating history curriculum mapping.

School Council: The next school council meeting will be on March 19th at 3:15pm. Agenda topics include a review of target dates for the School Improvement Plan, summary of the proposed school budget and school community updates.

Boosterthon: The Boosterthon raised over \$20,000 and ended on Tuesday with a Glow Run.

Project 351: Please support the Project 351 8th Grade Ambassadors and all of our Project 351 Playbook Workshop Influencers by donating new or gently used clothing for all ages in support of Cradles to Crayons. Please note that all underwear or pajamas donations must be new. All Project 351 Playbook Influencers are encouraged to bring their donations to the next Project 351 Playbook Workshop, held at the high school on March 19th as a Day of Action Service Leadership Initiative.

ORRconnect: The Superintendent's Office launched ORRconnect mobile app and Facebook page. Be sure to check them out and follow Sippican on Facebook as well!

Upcoming Events

March 15 - Irish Dance & Musical Performance at All School Meeting 2:00pm

March 18 - Class of 2024 - Family Meeting for Camp Burgess @ 6pm

March 19 - School Council Meeting

March 20 - 5th Grade Field Trip to the New Bedford Whaling Museum

March 21- 29 - Spring Book Fair

March 22 - 6th Grade Basketball Game

April 3 - Toe Jam Puppet Band Pre-K, K and 1

April 10th - Arts in Action

VIII. School Committee

A. Committee Reports

1. Budget Subcommittee – No report.
2. Building Committee – No report.
3. ORR District School Committee- Ms. Nye reported they approved foreign travel, which is a great opportunity for students along with donations. The most notable donation was from Marion resident John Menzel who contacted the school interested in giving back. He donated \$4,000 for 3d printers to the high school. They also approved the \$10,000 Safe & Supportive Schools Grant and approved a Thrive Act resolution which will be shared with local legislators regarding MCAS not being a graduation requirement.
4. SMEC – No report.
5. Early Childhood Council- Ms. Daniel reported they will meet on March 27th.
6. READS – Mr. Nelson reported they met earlier this morning and the main item was FY25 tuition and fees approval.
7. Tri-Town Education Foundation Fund – Ms. Daniel reported they met today and Tricia Grimes from the Southcoast Community Foundation discussed helping with a new online application. They also discussed a new timeline for this year with applications due by April 27th and awards being selected by May 31st.
8. Policy Subcommittee – No report.
9. School Council – No report.
10. Equity Subcommittee- No report.

IX. Future Business

A. Timeline

The next meeting(s) of Committee will be held as follows:

<u>Marion School Committee</u>	<u>Joint School Committee</u>
March 26, 2024 @ 6:30pm	March 28, 2024 @ 6:30 pm (to be rescheduled)

X. OPEN COMMENTS

Chairperson Nye stated:

Public comment is governed by approved school committee policy. Per the committee's policy we will offer up to 30 minutes for public comments this evening. Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the school committee. However, the committee takes any public comment made seriously and appreciates hearing from the public. Anyone looking to provide a public comment must be acknowledged by the Chairperson before addressing the committee. Those making a public comment will have up to three minutes to address the committee and must start their comment by stating their name and the town they reside in. For those in person there is a sign in sheet for those looking to make a public comment located on side wall and those on zoom, you can send a message in the chat with your name and the town you reside in. The chairperson will alternate between in-person and zoom participants. The school committee reserve the right to address any comment that present incorrect information at our next meeting.

There were no public comments.

VIII. Executive Session

Recommendation:

That the School Committee enter into executive session for purposes of exception #3, To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and exception #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to enter Executive Session at 7:25pm for the purposes of exception #3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and #7, to comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements and to return to the regular meeting after exiting executive session only to adjourn.

SECONDED: Ms. Beauregard

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beauregard; yes

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to exit Executive Session at 7:37pm only to return to regular session to adjourn.

SECONDED: Ms. Nye McGaffey

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beauregard; yes

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by Ms. Daniel to adjourn at 7:38pm

SECONDED: Ms. Nye McGaffey

MOTION PASSED 4:0

Roll Call: Nye; yes, Daniel; yes, Nye McGaffey; yes, Beauregard; yes

**Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa Wilcox**