



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, April 9, 2024, 5:00pm

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School

Multipurpose Room

REVISED

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

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

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

Administration: Ms. Carol Costello, Superintendent; Mr. Dan Ayala, Director of Facilities Ms. Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Mr. John Campbell, Berlin Memorial Principal; Mrs. Jannel Fitzpatrick, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Ms. Renee Legendre, Tahanto Middle/High School Assistant Principal; Ms. Lisa Sequeira, Tahanto Middle/High School Principal; Ms. Sally Stukuls, Director of Curriculum and Grants, Grades 6-12; Ms. Cinthia Sykes, Boylston Elementary Principal

Also Present: Members of the public

- I. **Call to Order – Mrs. Grill called the meeting to order at 5:00pm**
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Moment of Silence** - led by School Committee Chair
- IV. **Public Comments** – Public comment made by Mrs. Jennifer McCafferty, who works in café and is a BBRSD parent. She hoped that Whitsons will stay and that they stay district employees. Many have put many years in with the district.

Mr. Jason Carol, who is a parent of child in the district through school choice spoke. They previously lived on the town line. There are many people in Clinton who send children through school choice. Mr. Carol expressed that he likes the district and hopes to continue to have the option to send his daughter to Tahanto.

V. **Communications** – Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti shared that the on April 2nd she attended the Master Planning Implementation Committee meeting in Boylston. They plan to meet quarterly. They were given the plan and will review it and meet again. Mrs. Degliaberti feels it may be something the Student Success and Technology subcommittee could look at.

VI. **Consent Agenda** – Motion made by Mrs. Lori Hart, seconded by Mrs. Julie Lee, 6-0, motion passes.

- Payable Warrants
- March 6, 2024 Budget, Facilities, and Safety Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
- March 12, 2024 Open Meeting Minutes
- March 19, 2024 Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes

VII. **Reports**

- Chair's Report – *Mrs. Meagan Grill* – Mrs. Grill did not have anything to report. Reminder Town meeting in both towns is on Monday, May 6. She stressed that it is important to attend, especially for the Berlin budget.
- Tahanto Student Council Representative - *Miss Emerson Walsh* – Miss Emerson Walsh informed the group that they have entered their 4th quarter. They previously had a spirit week and a pep rally. Spring sports started. The first track meet was taking place that day and clubs were planning for end of year items. The last Café for Cause is being scheduled and prom tickets are being sold. The last fundraisers of the year were being planned and last college acceptances were coming in. ELA MCAS was set to finish that week.
- Director of Finance and Operations - *Ms. Nancy Konisky* – Ms. Carol Costello introduced Ms. Alyssa Charles, Whitsons District Manager, who was at the meeting to answer any questions the committee had about the submitted proposal. Ms. Costello met with Ms. Charles and Mr. Rob Kilham. Mr. Kilham was unable to attend. Ms. Degliaberti asked about profits. There is a certain guarantee and anything additional would stay with the school district, in revolving accounts. This year the state had given supply chain assistance to the school districts throughout the state. An additional 30k was deposited to the Food Service Program and used to any expenses related to the program. Whitsons bid does propose keeping BBRSD employees. Mr. Totman wanted to know where in the bid that was stated. Mrs. Grill noted pretty much everything would stay the same. Mrs. Grill inquired about what would change. Ms. Charles noted they kept it consistent with what is going on now. Mrs. Degliaberti wanted to know if there will be bigger changes in elementary schools coming. Ms. Charles noted as Mr. Kilham gets to know everything better those changes will happen in the elementary schools. Whitsons does surveys for student feedback that will be going out after April break for parents and students if they are interested. Surveys are typically done in October and April

Ms. Costello explained that if BBRSD didn't vote at the meeting they would lose bid with Whitsons. Mr. Totman thought there was a 60-day window. Ms. Charles noted DESE needs the contract by their deadline of May 3rd. Only Whitsons submitted a bid. Ms. Julie Lee wanted to know what the bidding process was. Mr. Totman inquired about the District Food Director position and if anyone was interviewed. He felt Ms. Nancy Konisky should be at the meeting and asked where she was. Ms. Costello noted she was on leave. Ms. Charles explained that Ms. Konisky used the DESE public template for the RFP. Whitsons and one other company for a tour. Only Whitsons submitted a bid. The other company did not. Mr. Totman felt that in the motion in December they said to interview for the Food Service Director position. Ms. Costello did not recall that and would have to look at the motion in the minutes.

Mrs. Grill asked if the committee rather wait until April 23rd to vote via zoom. Mr. Totman expressed he had other questions and but was not sure if they would be able to be answered or would be better answered by Ms. Konisky when she returns. He asked about increases in lunches and was curious if that is because of Whitsons or other reasons. He noted he didn't have the September to October numbers, which might help answer that question. Mr. Kilham, the Food Services Director, was unable to be at the meeting to speak to that. Mr. Totman wanted Ms. Costello to get info for next meeting.

Additionally, Mr. Totman wanted to know if there was lots of food waste. Mrs. Lee confirms that the food is indeed better than before. Ms. Charles explained that Whitsons tries to introduce lots of new foods and greener initiatives. Sometimes with new items there may be extra and then next time they are able to account for it when being served again. They want to make sure the first students and last student have the same choices. That can lead to some waste or sometimes the special of the day is more popular and they have extra of other items. They can look into compositing and recycling with the committee and district. Whitsons has programs listed in their bid. Ms. Lisa Mair asked if the food gets donated. Ms. Charles explained it's a liability from when its picked up and to where it gets where its going. There are lots of regulations around food service.

Mrs. Grill noted only the cafeteria would know the amount of food waste. Ms. Denise Hughson is the lead cook and oversees food going out. She noted that food waste fluctuates. An appetizer sampler was a huge success, but other items were left. Next time they would prepare the appetizer and less of the other items. Mr. Kilham likes to try same thing twice even if it doesn't sell. They have been getting better on numbers and not throwing away as many burgers and chicken patties. Ms. Lisa Sequeira noted compared to the beginning of year the students really like the food they have now. She noted the staff seem to be in a better place than in the beginning, as well. She had noticed more fruits and vegetables are being eaten. Ms. Renee Legendre noted salad is one of the items they run out of the most. The beginning was a big shift, but she noted that keeping the staff has been good for the students, as well.

Mrs. Grill asked the committee to vote now or in April. The bid had been reviewed by Ms. Konisky. Mr. Totman was curious overall how people felt about it and again if increases were due to Whitsons or the economy. A survey will go out from Whitsons April 22, open for two weeks. The bid is for one year. Mrs. Lee shared she talked to kids and the community. Mr. Totman was concerned there was not enough data. Mrs. Lee had enough information to vote. Mr.

Totman asked about \$8K guaranteed surplus versus the projections for full year. The \$8k was in the RFP. The Projection for the end of this year includes supply chain funds, determined by the state.

Ms. Hughson noted students have been loving chicken patties and hamburgers daily and numbers are way up because of free lunch. She noted the students do like the fruits and veggies and the salads and side salads. She expressed that they don't have time for breaks some days if there are lots of components to the meal. Mrs. Grill asked if they needed another person. Cafeteria staff said there is not enough space for another person. Mrs. Degliaberti wanted to wait to vote. Mrs. Mair shared she liked Whitsons and it is a vast improvement and has heard good things. She felt information could be gathered over the year. The cafeteria staff felt a dishwasher may help to concentrate on food. Ms. Charles said she will work with Mr. Kilham. The bid would need to be changed if a Whitsons person comes on. Ms. Costello prefers to keep a person within district. Mr. Totman wanted more information to vote. Mrs. Lori Hart shared their biggest concern is keeping staff and if in a year will the committee have input. Ms. Costello said if it goes through Whitsons would come back and work with the school. She asked what information the committee needs to vote on 23rd. Mrs. Grill wanted the vote to be done at the current meeting. Mrs. Degliaberti asked if the data the committee was looking for in the motion.

- Administrator Reports (5 mins each)

- BES Principal - Ms. Cinthia Sykes – Highlighted that MCAS is ongoing, 3rd grade last week, 4th grade this week and 5th grade. Nature's classroom fundraising is ongoing and they will come to the committee in September next year to help fundraise early. There is an enrichment piece being worked on for math during lunch and recess. Area to work on at BES about providing interests for the students.
 - i. School Choice Recommendation, - There are two spots. One is filled currently. Second grade is where there is a little space. One child there has sibling coming into K. Ms. Sykes feels if you have a sibling in school they should be looked at. Preference would go to sibling. In the classroom there are 21 in there now and feels that it is high. Paperwork is coming in for school choice spots. Mrs. Degliaberti wondered when the new apartments were opening. Currently they are being leased. There were two spots before and one moved, remaining spot unfilled.
 - ii. School Climate Survey results – Mr. Totman noted in survey about verbal abuse and 20% did not feel comfortable. Ms. Sykes has gone to teachers and school council on these topics. She explained that when students have been disciplined she is not able disclose anything to parents and sometimes that is what they are looking for. Mr. Totman wanted to know if they are acting out and if disciplined does the behavior go down. He noted measures to help the school were cut. Mrs. Degliaberti mentioned that parents don't always know what is going on in schools. She spoke to how some teachers use apps and then next year the teacher may not. Ms. Sykes has talked with teachers asking them to be in communication with parents. It was

noted how nice the Celebration of Learning was. Mrs. Mair wanted to know from the survey if there was a way to see if its the same people who disagree. Ms. Sykes does not have exact Nature's classroom number.

○ BMS Principal - *Mr. John Campbell* – Mr. John Campbell shared that all three grades for MCAS have being going well.

- i. School Choice Recommendation – Given size of building and class BMS cannot accommodate any more.
- ii. School Climate Survey results – Mr. Campbell was surprised by the response to the question on having information needed to teach a student at home. He will be looking more into that one. Both Mr. Campbell and Ms. Sykes have been looking into behaviors. When something happens with a child parents want action. It is an area of concern and a place to establish trust. Communications are going out to parents. With the survey they can go back to teachers and show what that parents are saying. Mr. Campbell thinks emails are being read but not always being retained.

○ TAH Principal - *Ms. Lisa Sequeira* – Ms. Lisa Sequeira highlighted that it had been a difficult month and is incredibly proud of the Crisis Response Team. She thanked the community for allowing staff to come over. Riverside Trauma Center provided lots of support. MCAS is ongoing. Ms. Costello and Ms. Sequeira accompanied student to superintendent scholar events. Proud moment for both of them and for the student. The happiest moment in March was the Disenchanted performance. The program is a wonderful asset to the community. The Student Showcase format had great feedback.

- i. School Choice Recommendation – For FY25 Ms. Sequeira went into PowerSchool to look at current 5th grade numbers. There are 75 incoming sixth graders. Five spots would bring to a total of 80, which has been the trend. No school choice for seventh, eighth or ninth. Tenth has four, eleventh has five, and twelfth has five, but she did not recommend having more although there is space. School choice as senior is something she would pause on. Mrs. Mair asked if a school choice senior could be kid coming from bad situation. Ms. Sequeira agreed there are lots of varying reasons, but they are not allowed to look into backgrounds. She noted in her report she put the actual PowerSchool currently enrolled students.

Mr. Totman felt the ratio of school choice to in town students was too high. Ms. Sequeira expressed she would have zero all the way. Her numbers were reflective of space available and not a request. She said they are in a rock and a hard place with the budget and if no new slots are opened there is no new money in the budget. If she has to open slots that is her max. Mr. Totman was concerned about the ratio of the grade 11 students. 1/3 of the class is School choice. He felt more students in the class takes away the attention the students receive in the class. It was noted that they are already asking tax payers a lot for students.

Ms. Hart has always been pro school choice. Massachusetts is the only state that has a law that anybody who comes to the state gets housing. If there are students coming in who may not speak the language, how does the district deal with that. With the little money schools have and items already cut how does that work. Ms. Degliaberti noted the apartments could have lots of teenagers coming in. Mrs. Grill agreed it could be a big influx for BES and TAH. She is okay with no slots except kindergarten. Ms. Sequeira agreed. Mrs. Lee mentioned that last year they were in the same spot and suggested doing exit interviews with students. Mrs. Grill asked to make it an initiative of TAH maybe by the assistant principals. Mrs. Lee felt it was a mistake to not open up slots. Ms. Renee Legendre noted a good handful of 6th graders will leave for St. Johns, etc. 9th grade is also when students leave. She felt it would be important to also hear from the parents. Mrs. Lee explained students are leaving the district for sports and there are less activities after school. She felt they should be adding in numbers because its more kids participating. It was asked if when kids enroll in other schools if there are deadlines and would they have a better idea of who is leaving. The feeling of less community in the upper grades is a product of Covid-19. Over next few years it would be good data to look at. Ms. Legendre was comfortable with doing the exit interviews and wants specific questions from committee that they want. It was noted that some students just want to go to the private schools. Mr. Totman wanted to know why they are leaving. It would help identify why if it is something the school district can address. Ms. Sequeira gave numbers for available space, but is not necessarily numbers she would want. 80 is the number comfortable per class with the size of the building.

Mrs. Hart wanted to note how many middle school students' parents showed up for the Celebration of Learning and said that the district has done lots of work to get the parents interested. Mrs. Grill shared they had two more minutes for school choice. Mr. Totman expressed the committee should not be rushed through the meetings to make decisions. Ms. Sequeira expressed being worried about adding more spots and the impact on the building with the unknown of how many students would come in from the apartments. Ms. Sequeira is unaware of other siblings. There may be some school choice students who have siblings. Teachers are allowed to school choice in but there needs to be an approved spot. Teachers and siblings get preference in the lottery. Ms. Sykes wanted the sibling (one spot) k and one in second grade which is already existing. Mrs. Lee believed if BBRSD can build middle school culture they can do better to keep the kids. There are new private schools opening in 7th and 8th grade, Mrs. Lee opposed to no spots at Tahanto. Julie would like 90 -7,8,9. BBRSD is only notified by the parents if student is leaving. The school has no way of knowing. Most residents still enroll in case something falls through. 10-13 kids per class have historically left.

- i. Special Education Report Findings - Mrs. Jannel Fitzpatrick's report was in collaboration with Ms. Sally Stukuls and Mr. Campbell. They were disappointed upon receiving a need intervention rating. It came as a surprise and have taken time to dive into that rating. There are eight ways DESE supervises school districts. It includes TFM rating. The TFM rating was in compliance. They had an extensive look at procedures polices, and included interviews. Despite all the proper implementation the outcomes for special education students is not where they would like it to see for students. Most issues were corrected before rating report came out. The TFM was completed by DESE. They review the districts in many different ways. Indicator three is a reference to MCAS and is broken into four areas. It is a comparison of students with or without IEPs. Ms. Fitzpatrick would need to look into what acceptable gap is. Orton Gillingham follows science of reading and modern philosophies. Educators have been doing it about for about five years. There are a few Orton Gillingham certified teachers in BBRSD, as of now. Mrs. Degliaberti mentioned the half days could help with implementation of that across the district.

Ms. Stukuls noted a coach from DESE was just approved. Mrs. Mair wanted to know if this was a trend other school districts were seeing. Mrs. Fitzpatrick wasn't aware. She noted the criteria can change year to year and she understood there were more substantial changes this year. There are many variables and she thinks the size of a district could contribute to a rating. Mr. Totman wanted to know if schools were told beforehand of changes so they can work on those areas. Mrs. Fitzpatrick explained they do not know what criteria will be included in the rating. BBRSD was ½ a percentage point away from the rating above. There is a rating below where BBRSD fell. BBRSD had 100% of students participating in MCAS. Most students are receiving their instruction in regular classrooms. She hopes to increase time students have with their teachers. Mrs. Fitzpatrick felt it was a tough rating, but many of the issues were already addressed before this rating was released.

Indicator 13 – There are measurable goals for IEP students and there was a technical error that one of the goals did not get updated. A meeting had been held with the student, but it was just a matter of that one box being missed. Additionally, some students work with outside services and there was a misunderstanding with inviting that person, but it was corrected.

Five areas from the Problem Resolution System (PRS) were all corrected. November 2024 bullying policy needs to be updated. MASC lets BBRSD know when policies need to be updated. Mrs. Degliaberti mentioned creating a calendar for when policies are due. Mr. Totman noted that they have one.

- ii. PPS/Curriculum Report – See above

○ Director of Curriculum and Grants, Grades 6-12 – *Ms. Sally Stukuls*

- i. Wellness Policy - **First Read** – Ms. Stukuls shared that Mrs. Mair is also on the committee and they took a course on how to write a policy. It was reviewed by coaches associated with DESE. Mrs. Hart noted Ms. Stukuls came to a policy meeting and felt that policy was nicely done and very professional. Mrs. Mair explained there were lots of tools that made it easy on what to add and feels happy about it. Mr. Totman asked about a sign for a Chipotle fundraiser. It was noted it is held outside of school hours. He wanted to make sure all policies across the board are in line. Mrs. Degliaberti expressed concern that it could handcuff some fundraising efforts. The directives used for the policy are more federal based. The question was, could these items be allowed to be advertised in the schools or in the newsletters. Mrs. Grill asked if any PTOs were aware. Their plan was to communicate it after approval. The items were federally mandated. They also need to look into items sold at the school. Ms. Stukuls will go back to the coaches to see how the mandates apply to the flyers.

Mrs. Degliaberti wanted to know why recess was 20 minutes. Ms. Stukuls explained it is just the minimum. She let the group know she can address any questions between now when it goes up for vote. Mrs. Mair explained the Wellness Committee will monitor once it is implemented how it's being followed and will help educate. Mr. Totman pointed out there was a portion that said food could not be used as a reward or punishment for class performance. Many concerned about the impacts this could have on some functions and trying to understand better what is allowed. He also noted if the policy didn't exist BBRSD still needs to follow federal guidelines.

- Subcommittee Updates

- Student Success and Technology Subcommittee - *Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti – Did not meet*
- Budget and Facility Subcommittee - *Mrs. Meagan Grill – Did not meet*
- Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee - *Mrs. Lori Hart – Did not meet.* They plan to meet a lot in May. The week after they will do self-evaluations for the school committee and then for the Superintendent.
- Policy Subcommittee - *Mr. Michael Totman –* There were a handful of policies from MASC around technology. Mr. Paul Mara has weighed in on them. They also went over the Wellness Policy. There are some policies that need clarification from Ms. Kim Rozack.

- Superintendent of Schools Report - *Ms. Carol Costello –*

- Student Nurses – Ms. Costello wanted to make the committee aware of QCC student nurses doing rotations in BES and TAH.

- Berlin Lease – In February BBRSD got together with lawyers and the town on the language used and cleaned it up. The big piece is the town will follow what BBRSD policy is and then the lease will not need to be updated if changes happen. On April 22 the selectboard will be voting. It allows BBRSD to make decisions for the school building. Ms. Costello got together in February with Mr. Spencer Holland from Mirick, O’Connell and their attorney, Ms. Heather White, and Kristen Rubin to review it.

Ms. Costello wanted to know if the committee wanted to use the April 23rd meeting to prepare for town meeting. Mr. Totman wanted to know if the committee will get an update on budget numbers since the budget hearing and if Ms. Konisky would be back. Ms. Costello noted she was unable to speak to that.

VIII. Business Items

- Approval of School Choice – **Vote - Motion to approve school choice at BES 1 spot in K and one spot in second grade. Motion approved by Mrs. Lori Hart and Mrs. Lisa Mair, 5-1, motion passes. Motion to approve no spots at BMS. Motion approved by Mrs. Lisa Mair and seconded by Mrs. Degliaberti, 6-0, motion passes. Motion to approve no school choice at Tahanto. Motion approved by Mrs. Lisa Mair and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart. Vote 4-2, motion passes.** If there are some changes it could go on next agenda.
- Approval of Senior Field trip overnight to Great Wolf Lodge – Vote Two seniors from Tahanto came to speak to the committee. They shared that they had passed out pricing between class funds and students would attend on May 29th to May 30th. It would run from 4pm on the 29th and they would be dismissed at 10am on the 30th. They would then report back to school for graduation practice. No bussing would be provided. Students will have to sign off on the form that they have transportation. Three teachers and one parent are lined up for the trip. Mrs. Lee asked what made them pick Great Wolf. Lots of students wanted outdoor trip, but it is a hard time of year. Ms. Costello went to a meeting and has seen all the hard work that has been put in.

Mr. Totman wanted to know how many in the class were going. There are 80 students, but only 36 going. There were no other ideas proposed. In past years there have been lots of students who have not gone on the senior trips. This year is the first overnight for this district. Ms. Sequeira noted over the past few years they have been talking how to get students engaged and more involved. The timing also plays into decisions on whether students can attend. The trip cost \$1600 is from the class funds. The students noted that there has not been lots of participation for fundraising. They encouraged students who would not be attending to plan something later after school concludes. Mrs. Hart loves the idea of the trip. **Motion approved by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti, 6-0, motion passes.**

- Approval to accept the donations to pay for BBRSD Nature’s Classroom Field Trip – Vote Jessica noted more donations will be coming. It will be on agenda. **Motion approved by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair, 5-0, Mrs. Degliaberti abstained, motion passes.**
- Approval of BEF Bingo fundraiser and service of alcoholic beverages – **Vote – Mrs. Grill shared that BEF will host bingo night outside of the school with an outside alcohol service. It**

has been previously held and went well. **Motion approved by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair, 5-0, Mrs. Grill abstained, motion passes.**

- Approval of Berlin Lease (final) – **Vote – Motion to approve the Berlin lease as written. Motion approved by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Jess Degliaberti, 6-0, motion passes.**
- **Approval of awarding the Food Service Company bid – Vote Motion to approve with the stipulation that school district and Whitsons must provide specific data to the committee by March 2025 such as, feedback from parents, staff, teachers, and the committee will be involved in the decision for the next bid. Motion approved by Mr. Michael Totman and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart, 6-0. Motion passes.**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm

IX. Upcoming Meeting

- April 23, 2024 As needed

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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