

# BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 24, 2022

The meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held virtually, via Zoom, on Monday, January 24, 2022.

Present: Marjorie McBride, Chairperson; Tara Thibaudeau, Vice Chair, Sheila Ellsworth, Treasurer; Victor Cabral, Secretary; Nicky Piper, Carly Reich, Erin Schofield, and Karen Cabral; Ana C. Riley, Superintendent of Schools; Diane Sanna, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Anthony Ferrucci, Chief Financial Office; Thomas Wood, Director of Facilities; Rose O'Connor, Director of Technology; Brenna Toland, Director of Student Support Services; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Diana Campbell, Recording Secretary. Guests: Dr. Deborah DiBiase, Principal of Mt. Hope High School, Michelle King, Assistant Principal of Mt. Hope High School.

## I. OPEN SESSION

Chairperson Marjorie McBride, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:06 p.m.

## II. OPENING BUSINESS

Chairperson McBride invited all present to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

## III. ACCOLADES

### A. 2021-2022 Mt. Hope All State Chorus Musicians

The School Committee along with the Superintendent congratulated the Mt. Hope High School's 2021-2022 RIMEA All-State Musicians. These students have thrived and excelled under the most challenging circumstances to receive these wonderful honors. The School Committee and the Superintendent are very proud of their accomplishments.

Thank you to Christopher Lambert, Band Director, David Lauria, Choral Director, and Virginia Boyle, Director for Guitar Ensemble and String Ensemble, for their excellent work with these students on a daily basis! Congratulations to: Sonia Bradley, Abigail Bratsos, Vic Bullard, Madison Campo, Jacen Douglass, Sophia Ferolito, Jeffrey Gonzalez, Nathan Macedo, Emily Marino, Analucia Romero, Carmen Tandoh, Lucien Chidester, Hannah de Jesus, Zelda Hayes, Sabella Matheson, Rachel Ouellette, Henry Scott, Eva White.

## IV. PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairperson McBride opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Alice Grantham, student at Mt Hope High School, wanted to discuss the proposed Class Selection for 2022-2023 Program of Studies. She is concerned about the loss of the Robotics I course offering. She explained that the course helped her through her years at MHHS, stating that because of the experience and skills she got from the Robotics course, she has been accepted at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She explained that the course provides students with the necessary skills and experience needed for either those planning to go to college and for those that do not plan to go to college, including teamwork, engineering, collaboration, and problem solving. These courses mean a lot to students, helping them to forge strong friendships and to learn life skills that will always be of value to them. She asked the School Committee to reconsider the decision to cut Robotics I this year.

Brian Conway, student at MHHS, also spoke in support of keeping Robotics I in the Program of Studies. He explained that the course gives students skills in teamwork, collaboration, problem solving, 3-D modeling, and programming. He noted that these are skills that any student will

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need for any career path they chose.

Michael Thibault, student at MHHS, also spoke in support of the Robotics I course in the Program of Studies, stating that it was an integral part of the technology curriculum, helping students prepare for college and the workforce. He also highlighted the skills, collaboration, teamwork, and problem solving, as some of what he learned in the course.

Chairperson McBride thanked the students for their comments and noted that their concerns will be addressed later in the meeting, during the Program of Studies presentation.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION: All items under the Consent Agenda were considered with one motion. Motion was made by Ms. Piper to approve the Consent Agenda; 2nd by Mr. Cabral. The Motion was approved unanimously.

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the August 30, 2021 and January 10, 2022 meetings**
- B. Approval of Property Disposal List**
- C. Approval of two (2) Homeschool Requests**

**VI. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Policy CN - School Improvement Teams - 2nd Reading**

MOTION: Ms. Schofield made a motion to approve the 2nd Reading of Policy CN - School Improvement Teams; 2nd by Ms. Piper.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Reich explained that this is a 2nd Reading for adoption of this policy. She gave a brief explanation of the School Improvement Team (SIT) Policy.

Ms. Thibaudeau noted that the Policy does not include “compliance with the Strategic Plan”. Superintendent Riley noted that it could be included under “Purpose”.

Attorney Carroll noted that the Policy reflects the Education Accountability Act.

Ms. Thibaudeau would like to see a member of the School Committee be appointed to each SIT at each school. She also noted that the application forms did not include one for a Community Member. Superintendent Riley stated that there can be a form for each category.

Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to add, “and in alignment with the Strategic Plan” to the first sentence:

*In accordance with the Rhode Island Education Accountability Act and in alignment with the Strategic Plan, as amended the Bristol Warren School Committee adopts this School Improvement Team Policy to establish a School Improvement Team (SIT) for each school in the District.*

Motion was seconded by Mr. Cabral.

VOTE: The Amendment was approved unanimously.

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VOTE: The Motion to adopt the amended Policy CN - School Improvement Teams, was approved unanimously.

### **B. Mt Hope High School Program of Studies**

Ms. Michelle King, Assistant Principal of Mt. Hope High School presented the Program of Studies for 2022-2023.

Ms. King started by explaining that the Program of Studies (PoS) is aligned with the new secondary regulations for High Schools. The document is designed to ensure that all students have the information they need to maximize their time at MHHS, making it relevant to their needs and interests related to college and career.

She noted that there are new opportunities for students:

- RIDE Accreditation for the new Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering CTE Program
- Pathways in Bioscience, Information Technology, Architecture & Construction, and Business & Finance.
- Work-based Learning Options: internships through Capstone courses, industry partners & real world problems, service-learning, and school-based enterprise.

At this point, Superintendent Riley addressed the Robotics I concerns brought up during Public Comment. She stated that Robotics I is not going away. It is integrated within the Project Lead the Way CTE program and, for those students that only want Robotics, there will be a Robotics Club.

Ms. King continued her presentation noting that the Revisions for 2023 are grounded in Secondary Regulations:

- Course leveling in all departments to ensure college and career readiness for all students
- Increases in appropriate intervention opportunities for students who need help achieving proficiency
- Alignment of math course sequence to the updated regulations as proposed.

She explained the Communication Plan for rolling out the new Program of Studies. The first step is to get the approval of the School Committee, then to bring it to MHHS Counselors, KMS Department Chairs and Counselors, and to provide informational meetings for families. There will also be a mass communication to promote the course selection process as well as individual (one on one) meetings between students and their counselors. The course selection process starts in mid-February. Course selection will be done on-line.

MOTION: Ms. Reich made a motion to approve the Program of Studies; 2nd by Ms. Thibaudeau.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Reich asked for an explanation of “course leveling”. Ms. King explained that all courses will be aligned, providing a rigorous curriculum for all students. Course offerings will move toward more heterogeneity and away from tracking. Students who need extra support will get it through intervention offerings.

Ms. Schofield asked how the leveling will work. Superintendent Riley stated that before there were 3 tracks; now all students will take similar courses with interventions happening in addition to regular classes. She stated that the SATs are the way that the State will be measuring achievement at the High School level, so that even if students do not intend to go college, they will need to take the SATs. By leveling the courses, students will receive the necessary education to achieve proficiency on the SATs. Ms. King added that there will be additional Algebra I support for those students identified with gaps that need to be closed. Ms. Schofield asked if the Algebra I support will happen during school hours. Ms. King responded that it would. Dr. DiBiase added

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that the Algebra I support will be offered as a semester course so students can exit at the end of the semester if they want to take a different elective.

Ms. Piper expressed her concern that Robotics I was cut. She asked if there was anything else cut. Ms. King responded that Classical History and Contemporary Issues were also cut due to low interest. Ms. Piper asked what the enrollment was for this year's Robotics I course. She also asked if a student needed to be enrolled in Project Lead the Way (PLTW) to take the Robotics course. Superintendent Riley responded that students who only want Robotics can join the Robotics Club which will be the same as it has been in the past. Dr. DiBiase responded to Ms. Piper's first question re: enrollment. She explained that Robotics I, II, and III were all offered at the same time, with 8 students in Robotics I, 10 in Robotics II, and 5 in Robotics III.

Ms. Thibaudeau had several questions/requests:

- Could there be a presentation to parents re: graduation requirements?
- Who will decide when Financial Literacy will be a requirement? Superintendent Riley responded that it's an elective now to fill the gap in offerings until the State makes it a requirement. The State will be looking for Financial Proficiency, which can be achieved by integrating the subject into other courses, not necessarily through a separate course elective.
- Trade courses for non-college bound students. She noted that there are 49 performing arts courses but only 4 classes for career-readiness. She is hoping that changes. She realizes that there are Pathways and CTEs, but if a student is looking for something else, will they need to take the course elsewhere?
- Would like to see more growth and stronger offerings for non-college bound students. She wanted to know how many students are leaving the District to get programs that are not offered at Bristol Warren.
- For SAT preparation in course, does having a heterogeneous enrollment in a course water down the curriculum? Superintendent Riley noted that all students must achieve proficiency on the SATs. That's why all students must take the classes. She stated that support will be provided for those students who are falling behind.
- If a student does not achieve proficiency will they still be able to graduate? Superintendent Riley responded that yes, students will be able to graduate.
- Are AP and Honors courses still offered? Superintendent Riley responded that yes, those courses are still offered.

Superintendent Riley offered that for the next meeting a presentation on graduation requirements be on the Agenda, stating that it will be timely.

Ms. Reich advocated for having a student member on the School Committee.

Ms. Schofield asked if it's more effective to have interventions instead of offering "teaching to the test" type of classes. Superintendent Riley explained that the goal is to achieve Proficiency. The courses focus on standards, not how to take the test.

Ms. Schofield also is looking for stronger transition support from 8th to 9th grade. Ms. King agrees that it is needed. There needs to be more to help students and families to understand the choices they're making when selecting courses. Superintendent Riley added that she is working on a Freshman Academy approach that will help with the transition.

VOTE: The motion passed with a vote of 7-0, with Ms. Piper abstaining.

VII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive Session pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a) for discussion of the following:

- A. 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining (BWEA) Contract Negotiation Discussion

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MOTION: Chairperson McBride asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. Ms. Piper made a motion to go into Executive Session; 2nd by Ms. Reich. All approved the motion.

At 8:15, Chairperson McBride closed the Open Session of the meeting and stated that the Committee was going into Executive Session and that there were no other items for the Open Session, except to Adjourn the meeting when the Executive Session is closed.

After the close of the Executive Session, Chairperson McBride re-opened the Open Session at 8:49 pm.

MOTION: Ms. Reich made a motion to seal the Minutes of the Executive Session; 2nd by Mr. Cabral. The motion was approved unanimously

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Ms. Piper made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Ms. Reich.

VOTE: The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Victor Cabral, Secretary /dbc