

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
VIRTUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, May 24, 2021**

The meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in-person, with virtual public access through Zoom Conferencing, on Monday, May 24, 2021,. Chairperson Marjorie McBride, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

**Present:** Marjorie McBride, Chairperson; Tara Thibaudeau, Vice-Chair; Sheila Ellsworth, Treasurer; Victor Cabral, Secretary; Nicky Piper, Carly Reich, Sarah Bullard, Erin Schofield, and Karen Cabral; Jonathan Brice, Ed.D., Superintendent; Diane Sanna, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Thomas Wood, Director of Facilities; Rose Muller, Director of Technology; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Edward Clarke, M.Ed.,CAGS, Director of Student Support Services; Lee Ann Beaupre, Human Resources Manager; Diana Campbell, Recording Secretary. **Guests:** Dr. Deb DiBiase, Principal of Mt. Hope High School, Dennis Morrell, Principal of Kickemuit Middle School, Deborah Kearns, Principal of Colt Andrews Elementary School, Beth Roman, Principal of Guiteras Elementary School, Miranda Carpenter, Principal of Hugh Cole Elementary School, Tara McAuliffe, Principal of Rockwell Elementary School

**I. Open Session**

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson McBride called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 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**

**KMS Girls Soccer Team**

The School Committee congratulated members of the KMS Girls Soccer Team for their undefeated season this year: Aralyn Bradshaw, Elizabeth DaCosta, Sage DelPonte, Emily Moran, Olivia Morrissett, Lilliana Redman, Lola Silva, Adriana Botelho, Miley Boucher, Madison Butterworth, Lilly DaSilveria, Thea Jackson, Thea Adkins, Kendra Ascoli, Aubrey Cummings, Scarlett Jackson, Elise Lanoie, Ava Morrissette, Sara Nencka

**Feinstein Scholars Golden Ticket Winner**

The School Committee and Superintendent Brice congratulated Connor Corriveau for being named a recent Feinstein Scholars Golden Ticket winner,

**NELMS Scholar Leader Award**

The School Committee and Superintendent Brice congratulates two Grade 8 students, Ethan Martel and Analucia Romero, for being named as the New England League of Middle School Scholar Leaders.

**National Junior Honor Society Outstanding Achievement Award**

School Committee and Superintendent Brice congratulates 8th Grader on the Trailblazers Team, Zahra Sheikh, who was selected as an NJHS Outstanding Achievement Award recipient.

**Former School Committee Chairperson**

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The 2020-21 School Committee recognized and honored former School Committee Chairperson Erin Schofield, who held the leadership role for the School Committee from 2018 to 2020.

### Teachers of the Year

The School Committee, Superintendent Jonathan Brice, and Building Principals, honored and celebrated the many teachers and support staff who do extraordinary things on behalf of students, the schools, and the district. This year the following teachers were nominated by their schools, for their dedication to the profession and commitment to their students!

- Colt Andrews - Lianne Logan, Reading Specialist
- Guiteras - Nancy Patalano, Special Education Teacher (Grades 1, 2 & 3)
- Hugh Cole - Sherri Mallon, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Rockwell - Sarah Jacobs, Art Teacher
- Kickemuit - Erin Welchman, Nurse Teacher
- Mt. Hope - Ellen Estrella, Nurse Teacher

These educators are truly deserving of this recognition. Their principals provided countless examples of how they contribute to their school's success and why they are valued members of the school community.

From this list of outstanding educators, a District Teacher of the Year for 2021 was selected by the district administrative team and school principals. After much consideration, the District Teacher of the Year was announced:

- **District Teacher of the Year - Ellen Estrella, Nurse Teacher**

### Support Staff Persons of the Year

The School Committee, Superintendent Jonathan Brice, and School Principals also recognized the District's support staff. This year, the following support staff members were nominated by their building administrative teams:

- Colt Andrews - Peggy Rodrigues, Teacher Assistant
- Guiteras - Jillian Amato, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Hugh Cole - Sherri Mallon, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Rockwell - Kathryn West, Teacher Assistant
- Kickemuit - Denise Goodman, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Mt. Hope - Edmundo (Eddie) Figueiredo, Custodian
- Oliver Administration - Sandy Borges, Clerk - Benefits/HR

Their contributions to their building were well noted. Each staff member has played a critical role in supporting the education of Bristol Warren students.

After much consideration, it was decided that all of the Building Support Staff Members are the 2020-2021 District Support Staff Persons of the Year:

- **District Support Staff Persons of the Year**

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- Colt Andrews - Peggy Rodrigues, Teacher Assistant
- Guiteras - Jillian Amato, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Hugh Cole - Sherri Mallon, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Rockwell - Kathryn West, Teacher Assistant
- Kickemuit - Denise Goodman, Special Education Teacher Assistant
- Mt. Hope - Edmundo (Eddie) Figueiredo, Custodian
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**IV. Public Comment**

Chairperson McBride recognized Daryl Gould to provide a public comment. Mr. Gould started to speak about a member of the School Committee but was interrupted by Attorney Connell, who declared that the comment was not appropriate. Chairperson McBride, seeing no further requests, closed the Public Comment.

**V. Consent Agenda**

\_\_\_\_\_All items under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the School Committee and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Committee member requests, in which event the items will be withdrawn from the general order of business and considered in the normal sequence on the agenda. Consent Agenda items are received and filed with no discussion or further action taken.

- A. Approval of May 10, 2021 School Committee Virtual Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of May 17, 2021 School Committee Virtual Meeting Minutes
- C. Approval of Contract for Chief Financial Officer
- D. School Property Disposal Form - Athletic Equipment
- E. One (1) Home School Request

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Ms. Thibaudeau. The Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson McBride invited Superintendent Brice to introduce the new Chief Financial Officer, Anthony Ferrucci. Superintendent Brice introduced and welcomed Mr. Ferrucci, noting his experience with UCOA and RIDE school finance practices. He expects Mr. Ferrucci to be able to “hit the ground running”, working with staff and the Budget Subcommittee to oversee the District’s Financial Department and provide the reports and support documents needed by the School Committee.

**VI. Discussion/Possible Action**

**A. Policy GCAA - Employee Recruitment and Retention, 2nd Reading**

MOTION: Motion was made to accept Policy GCAA as a 2nd Reading was made by Ms. Reich; seconded by Ms. Thibaudeau.

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to amend the policy to include, “Qualified residents of Bristol and Warren will be provided with an interview opportunity for vacant positions unless they have been previously interviewed within one year by a lead administrator.” Motion was seconded by Mr. Cabral.

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**DISCUSSION:**

Ms. Reich provided background on the discussions of the Policy at the Policy & Curriculum Subcommittee, which included guidance from the District's Attorney, Mary Ann Carroll, Esq. She does not feel that the appearance that it gives of the community is not inclusive, making the District more open to highly qualified outside candidates.

Ms. Bullard further qualified to ask why this is different from the Policy that already states that "qualified" candidates will be interviewed. She asked Attorney Carroll if the amendment could be considered discrimination. Ms. Carroll provided her opinion that the statement does not appear to be discriminatory, noting that other groups could be included with additional amendments.

Chairperson McBride does not have an issue with the amendment, but does want to be sure that the statement does not mean that "only" candidates from Bristol and Warren would be interviewed. Attorney Carroll stated that she is concerned about providing courtesy interviews to local candidates does not mean that the District will not interview other candidates. Hopes that in implementing the Policy, the District also provides courtesy interviews with other groups to avoid an appearance of discrimination.

Ms. Piper noted that the language seems redundant. She feels that since it stated that "all qualified candidates" will be interviewed, then the new text seems redundant and unnecessary.

Ms. Bullard did not understand the intent of the Motion. Are Bristol & Warren candidates given preference.

Ms. Thibaudeau stated that she feels that this motion strengthens the feeling that the community is invested in its school district.

Superintendent Brice noted that the District interviews all qualified candidates regardless of where they live and where they grew up because it is the only way to attract the best candidates. He asked if the reason for the motion is because there is a belief that residents that are qualified are not interviewed.

Ms. Schofield echoed Superintendent Brice's question re: the concern that qualified residents are not being interviewed. Ms. Thibaudeau explained that her motion reflects similar policies in other Districts. Ms. Schofield asked which other Districts? Chariho and East Providence

**VOTE:** The motion to amend Policy GCAA passed with a vote of 5-4; Ms. Reich, Ms. Piper, Ms. Bullard, and Ms. Schofield voted in dissent.

**MOTION:** Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to amend the Policy to include: "Consideration should be given with the search interview committee to include members of the school community, related to the vacancy. It is also suggested to include an invitation to participate, to a member of the School Committee." This would be under the Section 5. Administrators and Other Personnel Not Assigned to Individual Schools. Motion was seconded by Mr. Cabral.

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Attorney Carroll stated that the District cannot mandate that a School Committee member sit on the Superintendent's Committee because the current law takes away the rights to hire from School Committees and gives them to the Superintendent. As long as the policy says "consideration" and does not mandate that the Superintendent include a member of the School Committee it would be legal. Mandating that a School Committee member be on an interview team goes against the Education Accountability Act and the changes in the statute.

Ms. Piper stated that the new language is redundant and not definitive, at a time when the committee is working to make policies more definitive and concise.

Ms. Schofield reflected on the Policy Subcommittee and stated that wording like, "consideration" is not something that could be enforced.

Ms. Thibaudeau stated that her purpose in proposing the amendment to the Policy was to make the District more transparent and open. Ms. Schofield followed up to ask how the School Committee member would be chosen. Chairperson McBride stated that an internal policy covers who would be on the interview teams. She questioned whether or not the practice would be handled internally or if it's necessary to make it an official part of external policy.

Ms. Reich stated that the new language may not be clear to outsiders, which is what the Subcommittee is trying to move away from. She also feels that School Committee members may not be qualified to sit on an interview committee.

Superintendent Brice reminded the members about current practice, when hiring high-level personnel, which is to go through an application process and two-round of interviews. The first round is 6-8 people. The second round interview includes Superintendent Brice, and 3-4 members of District leadership. This allows for the individual to be seen by multiple representatives from across the District. This allows for a robust interview panel to determine that the candidate is the most qualified and that it meets the needs of the District. Additionally, moving forward, members of the SIT will be required to participate in the interview process, which should provide for the kind of oversight that Ms. Thibaudeau intends with her motion. He further stated that he did not think that School Committee members need to sit on interview panels, because it has always been practice to arrange for interested members of the School Committee to meet with the candidate before the decision is made. He does not feel that including them needs to be written into Policy. He feels that the proposed amendment is not necessary.

Chairperson McBride stated that, based on personal experience, she feels that sometimes a member of the School Committee can be a value to the interview process.

Ms. Thibaudeau stated that she would be willing to change her amendment to remove "community members" given the feedback from Superintendent Brice re: the inclusion of the SIT team.

Attorney Carroll pointed out that the motion was relevant to non-school related positions. The SIT teams will only participate in interviews for school-based positions. She further stated that the Superintendent should "consider", but noted that the sentence does not hold a lot of weight,

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because the Superintendent can also consider not to include a member of the School Committee. The Superintendent can ask, but it cannot be required that he ask for a member of the School Committee on his interview team. The amendment is not enforceable.

Ms. Thibaudeau responded that the Policies are guidelines, even if not enforceable.

Ms. Bullard inquired if the amendment could be coercive to the Superintendent, given that the School Committee is responsible for the Superintendent's hiring/firing.

Attorney Carroll restated that the law has given full responsibility for hiring to the Superintendent.

Ms Thibaudeau stated that the intent is that a member of the School Committee, with the permission of the Superintendent, be included on the interview team.

Superintendent Brice wanted to be clear that, from his perspective, it is his job to work together with the School Committee. If this language is included, he did not think he would follow it unless there is an area where a member of the School Committee has expertise that he does not have. He felt that making the amendment could open up a potential problem for the School Committee in the future.

Ms. Reich reviewed that policies come through the Attorney's office to help the district to be in compliance with the law. Attorney Carroll followed up that the District can make changes to the first draft, but her role is to make sure that the changes keep the District within the law.

Ms. Ellsworth noted that some Districts in RI that include similar language. Attorney Carroll responded that she is not familiar with the other districts' policies. She pointed out that the School Committee has the ultimate control over hiring because they control the contract.

VOTE: The motion to amend Policy GCAA passed with a vote of 5-4; Ms. Reich, Ms. Piper, Ms. Bullard, and Ms. Schofield voted in dissent.

VOTE: The motion to approve the amended Policy GCAA passed with a vote of 5-4; Ms. Reich, Ms. Piper, Ms. Bullard, and Ms. Schofield voted in dissent.

**B. Policy AB - Title IX**

Attorney Carroll stated that this policy reflects the changes to Title IX by the previous President's term, swinging the pendulum giving more assistance to the perpetrator than to the victim. This policy needs to be enacted because it's required by law.

MOTION: Chairperson McBride asked for a motion to approve Policy AB - Title IX for a first reading. The motion was made by Mr. Cabral; seconded by Ms. Thibaudeau.

VOTE: The motion passed with a vote of 8-1; with Ms. Schofield in dissent.

**C. District Office Relocation Update**

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Superintendent Brice explained that he investigated two options: Mt. Hope High School and Reynolds location. The high school was not chosen because it would require the local police department to have to reconfigure their building security plans because it is not designed to have multiple visitors and it would not be safe to have to block one of the doors used by the Administration, should there be an emergency.

Mr. Woods reviewed the process and considerations that went into choosing the Reynolds building for the future location of the District Administration.

**DISCUSSION:**

Ms Reich asked about the need to have a separate entrance (at the high school) a legal requirement. Mr. Woods stated that visitors to the Administration may not have the required background checks and it may not be safe to have them walking through the halls with the students. She regretted that some of the tenants of the Reynolds building will be displaced as a result of the move.

**MOTION:** Ms. Ellsworth made a motion to support moving the Administration offices into Reynolds School and that the School Committee authorize Attorney Carroll to negotiate with the Town's solicitor a lease agreement that is based on the requirements that have been provided to the committee and the solicitor. Once the agreement is approved, the School Committee shall turn over the Reynolds School to the Town of Bristol. Motion was seconded by Mr. Cabral.

Ms. Piper asked if the Reynolds building would require a complicated network setup to tap into the existing network. Chairperson McBride stated that this will be part of the negotiations and cannot be discussed at this time.

As a follow up, Ms. Piper asked if we would be taking on another building. Ms. Ellsworth responded that this would be a rental. The landlord would be responsible for building repairs.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Develop District Resolution: Transportation**

Chairperson McBride introduced the idea of writing a resolution. Ms. Thibaudeau explained that transportation costs are significant and should be paid by the state by law. Many other districts are writing Resolutions to the State Congress and Senate and the Governor, to forward to the RI General Assembly a request that they support the reimbursement to School Committees for transportation costs of students to external locations.

Superintendent Brice stated that rather than just sign on with other Districts' resolutions, the School Committee might consider writing its own Resolution to be given to local officials. He offered to provide the School Committee with copies of all the Resolutions from other Districts.

**MOTION:** Ms. Bullard made a motion to direct Superintendent Brice to draw up a resolution requesting reimbursement for transportation costs, per House Bill 60-30. Motion was seconded by Ms. Thibaudeau. All approved the motion.

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Chairperson McBride asked the Superintendent to send a copy of his draft to the School Committee.

**E. Purchase Requisition Approval - RIASC Membership Fee for 2021-22**

Ms. Ellsworth asked what was included in the purchase requisition for the cost of \$7423. Superintendent Brice listed some of the benefits: Legislative support, advocacy for the District, conferences, and newsletters. The downside would be no support and information. Ms. Thibaudeau added that the Membership also provides data on other districts.

MOTION: Ms. Reich made a motion to approve the purchase requisition for \$7,423 for the RIASC Membership fee for 2021-22; seconded by Ms. Thibaudea. All approved.

**F. Acceptance of Donation from Samsung for KMS Solve for Tomorrow Team**

Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that as the winners of the Solve for Tomorrow competition, the Solve for Tomorrow Team was awarded a donation of \$15,000 that can be used for technology and STEM supplies. Team Advisor Mary Cabral led the team to solve a problem by creating a life-saving device for swimming in riptides. A video is available on the District's website. Superintendent Brice commended the students on creating something that has an impact on the community and possibly saves lives.

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to accept the donation from Samsung for the KMS Solve for Tomorrow Team; seconded by Ms. Piper. All approved.

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (Closed to the Public)**

MOTION: Motion was made by Ms. Thibaudeau to recess to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL § 42-46-5(a) for discussion of the following: 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining/BWEA Contract Negotiation Discussion. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bullard. All approved

**VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned following the adjournment of the Executive Session.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Victor Cabral, Secretary**  
**/dbc**