

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Monday, September 23, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.
Hoosac Valley High School - Resource Room
125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: John Duval, Adam Emerson, Robert Tetlow, Erin Milne (6:37 p.m.) Fred Lora, Andy Przystanski, Mike Henault

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Superintendent Aaron Dean

104229 Call to Order

Chairman Adam Emerson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

104230 Public Comment or Question - None

104231 Approval of Minutes - August 26, 2024

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by John Duval:

VOTED: to approve the August 26, 2024 minutes. The vote was 5-0-1

104232 Report of Business Manager - S.C. Order 2406 - Reclassify Budget

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by Robert Tetlow:

VOTED: Submitted herein for your approval is a request to reclassify the FY24 budget to align with actual expenditures. See attached transfer funds. The vote was unanimous.

104233 Report of Sub Committee -

A. Audit & Evaluation - See district wide meeting update under Superintendent's report

104234 Communications -

A. Principals Update - Kristen Palatt, Curriculum Director, reported that the School Improvement plans are currently in the process and will be on the November agenda. Wanted to share some of the back to school information. HVE: Beginning of the year updates: Erin Beaulac - kicked off the year with our P.D. this summer all around our MTSS, working on internalizing this work. Had a consultant from foundations and did a staff wide presentation. Dean of Students and Teacher of Department conducted a P.D. around MTSS through the lens of behavior management. We went from Tier 1 to Tier 2, to Tier 3 to make sure staff had a clear understanding of the language to use. We are in week 3 and started to see some of that rollout already. Hoping, as we embed this work throughout the year, that our students' needs are going to be met more than ever before. All staff support - looking at each member and what resources they need, our faculty meetings are now including paraprofessionals once a month. Faculty meetings, CP (common planning & ILT (instructional leadership team) - different this year, our district has a consultant who came in and worked with our AP of Teaching and Learning and created a playbook that has really rooted our common planning. SPED Coordinator, working with K-3 and she is facilitating our IEP meetings and writing our IEP's. That role paired with a new IEP is extremely inclusive of all our students and staff, a positive change. HVM: Beginning of the year updates: Lisa Lesser: New schedule: a lot of time rolling out the new schedule, had a few bumps along the way, students have adapted faster than our adults, now we are in the flow of things, getting easier - part of the new schedule was made to fit our Advisory Program; we have 28 advisory across our building. RISE, RESET & ACE - last year we had student support, this year we broke it down into these three spaces based on the

students needs. Two big opportunities this year - Ramblewild, Nature's Classroom; 5th grade has an opportunity to work with Ramblewild, 3 times this year, all 91 5th graders will be going, free trip sponsored by them. Applied Learning Grant - on year 2. SRO at the middle school has been added this year. HVH: Beginning of the year updates: Colleen Byrd: we have identical rooms in ACE/RISE and RESET as the middle school, Colleen spoke about how the programs work. Academic, behavior, SEL supports ACE/RISE/RESET; Crew - students and staff love Crew - students wanted to stay in the same crew as last year, started building relationships. SRO added this year, going well. ILT - applied learning and the playbook; POG; SAAB - student and adult advisory board, ties in the POG. We want to hear the student voice, this board is made up of 36 students (put out to every student and staff) we have 4 staff members, Keith Wright our Chemistry Teacher is running the advisory board. The goal is to hear from the students. What they want to do at Hoosac Valley. One or two things they would like to change and they will start working on making those changes.

Supporting the schools through the expansion of Portrait of a Graduate - focus on instructional improvement and increased student engagement and inclusion of the middle school. The systems: looking at student work protocols, Instruction Rounds - Strategies: Shifting the cognitive lift, making students think visible. Supporting the schools through access to high quality instructional materials - increased rigor, culturally responsive pedagogy, applied and student centered learning. Supporting the schools through implementation of 4 key systems in our district-wide instructional improvement handbook. The handbook was customized for Hoosac Valley, it took into account almost every stakeholder in the building. This has provided us with a clear purpose and focus. Huge focus on instructional improvement this year.

Supporting the schools through implementation of the new IEP. Monica Zanin, Director of Student Services spoke about the new IEP plan. Looking at the process, how we are breaking barriers with special and regular education. Shifting our work to help general educators and being more collaborative, so that our teachers are learning how to plan meaningful lessons for all students at all levels. Doing a lot of work with general education teachers. As a parent, new things for IEP meeting, always a student there, a voice at the table if a student can't be there, non-verbal students, having a voice at the table, making it more student and parent friendly. Looking at goals with a team to plan thoughtfully for students. Had a number of meetings this way, parents had positive feedback at these meetings.

Mike Henault: presented a lot of work - will save his questions during the SIP presentation. The last few years, we had a lot of areas of growth. To see the work that has been done, just building a team that presented tonight, the cohesion of the group has been awesome.

Adam Emerson: improvement handbook - where can we find it? Kristen Palatt: It will be posted on the website.

B. Principal Lisa Lesser reporting on Nature's classroom - Lisa Lesser presented the annual Nature's Classroom information. Returning to Charlton, MA. The trip would be March 4th - 8th, 2025 - will have activities for students who decide not to attend Nature's Classroom.

Mike Henault: Will all students be able to attend, even if they can't afford it? Lisa Lesser: no student will be left out due to financial restraints. Possible Fundraising. Aaron stated that they use ACE grant and can use student activity monies. Adam Emerson: any academic or behavioral restrictions? Lisa: working with families and students along the way, any issues will be communicated with families.

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by Erin Milne:

VOTED: To approve the Nature's classroom trip to Charlton, MA March 4th- 8th, 2025. The vote was unanimous.

104235 Report of Superintendent

A. Sub Rates - Aaron discussed the proposed changes in sub rates - will help align us with other districts. See attached proposed rate changes.

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by Andy Przystanski:

VOTED: to approve the FY25 Substitute Sub Rates. The vote was 6-0-1.

B. Summer Programs- Aaron went over the summer programs. Been able to do more because of ESSER funding. Programs are enrichment programs and special education programs. Open Labs: - Families were given individual invites for their children to participate in open lab times utilizing the Lexia and Happy Numbers programs. Adams site: 23 daycare students attended computer labs anywhere from 2 to 8 times. Approximately 32 SPED students attended weekly on Wednesdays. 27 students that were brought in by their parents attended at least 2 times; either after the breakfast program or before the lunch program. Youth Center Site: Average of 30 students a day. Aaron discussed the middle school summer camp - offered a 2 week camp - explore and discover camp (July 15th - 19th) and build your own adventure camp (July 22nd - July 26th) - Free cost - runs from 8:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. A total of 47 campers in the two camps. Four groups broken down by grade levels. The camp was run by Mr. Mullany, Mrs. Shea, Mrs. Perras, Mrs. Turoczy Mr. Luciani and Mrs. Cooper. The High School summer program was offered for the purposes of credit recovery and skill building. Credit recovery is for grades 9-11 students who miss more than 20 days for full-year classes/10 days for semester-long classes without qualifying notes to excuse the absence. The skills building course is offered to incoming 8th graders identified as at risk students. Letters were sent to families of the students needing to retake courses and to all 8th grade families. Seven 8th graders obtained passing grades in ELA and math using the iReady program. Six high school students passed their courses using the Edgenuity program for their area of study. Alleviates the doubling up of classes and the holding back of students that may have had unforeseen circumstances that did not allow them to pass a course. Funding Sources: Elementary: Title grant funds; Special Education Grant; Middle School: After school and out of school time grant funds, Special Education Grant; High School: ESSER funds, Special Education Grant.

C. District Wide Meeting Update - Aaron Dean reported that Tom Bernard is going to moderate the district wide meeting. Met earlier with the Town Clerks of Adams and Cheshire regarding the process. Tom reported that he familiarized himself with the warrant and to make sure we do everything as transparent as we can. Went over the meeting set up. Everyone will come through the auditorium doors. Voters will receive a card signifying they are voters. Area in the auditorium will be sectioned off for non voters, voters and town officials. The school committee will be set up on the floor. The moderator will be on the stage, went through logistical pieces. This is a one warrant meeting. Mike Henault: Adams and Cheshire are very different in how meetings are run. Are you using strict time limits? Tom: we will be more on the structured side, talked about a 2 minute question limit. Aaron thanked Tom for helping us out. Aaron stated that we will have an overflow place if needed. The belief is that we will have enough space in the auditorium. Question was asked if additional space outside of the auditorium was legal. Erin Milne: looked up Massachusetts Selectboard handbook: that state law allows town meeting to be held in more than one location at the same time, as long as the places are connected by a public address system with loudspeakers to allow all Town Meeting attendees to hear and be heard. Aaron stated that was the opinion he received from District Counsel.

D. School Committee Position Paper - Erin Milne presented the committee with a condensed version of the position paper and the more comprehensive version created in the A & E subcommittee. The bigger version is something we want to approve tonight. Wrote this to be very comprehensive. This is to put on our website and use our communication channels. Would recommend to officially adopt the position paper and allow for excerpts from it to be used for communications to the public. Mike Henault asked if Aaron checked with District Counsel regarding our ability to communicate this document? Aaron, yes, once approved it is a public document, can be posted on the website and social media, the only thing we cannot do with this is print it out using district resources. Our PTO can make copies and deliver and any other support groups, the teacher union can distribute. We cannot send it directly to parents. We cannot hand it out at the actual meeting. Mike suggests when it is posted, as PDF or google docs that it is linked with a table of contents bar, the long version is lengthy. Andy: any reason we cannot approve both papers? Having that flexibility with reader's preferences makes sense. Erin stated we could.

MOTION: On Motion of Andy Przystanski and second by John Duval:

Fred Lora commented that we don't reference in the position paper how many students or employees this budget supports. Fred questioned some content in the position papers changes/additions: One page position paper: Replace budget and timeline section with quantitative information about community impact: Number of students; number of employees; per pupil expenditures with comparison data; net spending about minimum with ties to student achievement data. Comprehensive: Add quantitative information about community impact. Changes to both papers: Fix spelling committee names (Duval & Henault) quantify Cheshire/Adams enrollment splits - strike second sentence; Strike last bullet under Rationale - fiscally responsible; Add numbers to Q: What is the driving increase in this year's budget?

Amended Motion:

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Milne and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: To approve comprehensive position paper and the one page summary with the edits discussed. The vote was unanimous.

Erin asked if it would be worth it to set up a facebook account. Aaron: We do have a school facebook account. The committee thanked Erin for all her work on this.

104236 Chairman's Report - None

104237 Unfinished Business -

A. Superintendent's Evaluation - Mike Henault - Aaron getting ready to share his evidence. Mike Henault was having technical issues accessing his email. Does have updated rubric that would give time to get feedback and hopefully next meeting will have evidence that we can use. Will evidence at the next meeting.

104238 New Business - Erin Milne: make a facebook page for the school committee that we would all be administrators of. A way to communicate better. A good place to post agendas, link to articles, only things that are either talked about in public meetings or things that are fact based, such as MCAS results. Just a way to communicate what happens at our meeting. Mike Henault: another school committee, from another district, has been tasked with writing an executive summary that is separate from the official notes, posted through the School Committee purview separate from the public agenda. Can look into the technicalities of that and how it's voted on and agree upon. Would give the public another way for information, not many people go to our site to look at our minutes. Will add this to the next agenda for further discussion.

Fred Lora: are we making a statement at the meeting? Discussions around that. Moderator will open the meeting then hand off to Aaron to report on the budget. Fred: we can advocate, we have the right, it's our meeting, set the tone. Aaron will discuss if there is any legal jeopardy with district counsel.

104239 Action Items - None

104240 For the Good of the Order -

Andy Przystanski: thanked Erin for all her work on the position paper. A lot of planning and work for next week's meeting, thanked the committee

John Duval: thanked Erin Milne for all her work

Mike Henault: Applaud Aaron and the building administration. Team that is driving change.

Erin Milne: thanked Aaron and Erika for their work. This is a great budget.

Adam Emerson: happy to open up iberkshires article for the second week in a row, to see Hoosac athlete of the week, Dylan Rohlf (soccer) and Will Hakes (football)

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by Andy Przystanski:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary