



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, December 10, 2024, 5:00 pm

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School

Multi Purpose Room

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

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Due to technical issues this meeting may not always stream live, but we will make every attempt to do so and to record the meeting for future posting.

The items listed on the agenda may be discussed out of order as the Chair decides due to potential scheduling and timing requirements.

Present: School Committee: Mr. Michael Totman, Chair, Mrs. Meagan Grill, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Lori Hart, District Clerk, Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti, Mrs. Lisa Mair, Mrs. Elisabeth Mancini

Administration: Mr. Albert G. Ganem Jr., Interim Superintendent; Ms. Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Mr. John Campbell, Berlin Memorial Principal; Ms. Jannel Fitzpatrick, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Mr. Aaron Osborne, Director of Finance and Operations; Ms. Lisa Sequeira, Tahanto Middle/High School Principal; Ms. Sally Stukuls, Director of Curriculum and Grants 6-12; Ms. Cinthia Sykes, Boylston Elementary Principal;

Also present: Matthew Dowd, Student Council Representative and members of the public

I. Call to Order - Mr. Michael Totman called the meeting to order at 5:00pm

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Executive Session 5:00pm-5:30pm and will return to open session - Motion to enter executive session to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair, Roll Call: Mrs. Lisa Mair, Mrs. Lori Hart, Mrs. Meagan Grill, Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti, Mrs. Beth Mancini, Mr. Michael Totman - All Aye, Executive Session entered at 5:02pm.

At 5:31pm the committee returned to open session. Mr. Totman noted it was the last meeting before the former Superintendent, Ms. Carol Costello officially retires and he also congratulated the football team on their Super Bowl Championship.

IV. **Superintendent Search Presentation -**

- *MASC - Ms. Tracy Novik (5:30pm-6:00pm)*

Ms. Novick introduced herself to the group. She explained reasons for why BBRSD would want to choose MASC for their superintendent search and the services they provide. MASC is already BBRSD's association and responds to phone calls and questions to school committees across the state. All members of MASC are current or former school committee members. The field director consults for the search. They would make sure to always keep the committee informed of what is going on and the next steps during the phases.

The search is tailored to the district. If the search starts in January it would probably end around the April time frame and would allow for time before school ends. MASC makes the phone calls to applicants and checks the references for the search committee. Surveys would go out in phase one and Ms. Novik would meet with people from the district and in the community to get insight on the search. She would also share information from what she hears from the community back with the committee. The search committee members would receive training once selected. Ms. Novik would also host an input session in person that would ask questions of what does the district do well, what do they need to work on and what does the district need in terms of leadership.

- *NESDEC - Mr. David DeRuosi and Ms. Judy Paolucci (6:00-6:30 pm)* Dr. Paolucci and Dr. DeRuosi introduced themselves. Dr. Paulucci would be the lead on the search for BBRSD. They start the process with a meeting to develop how the search will proceed. NESDEC has regional and national reach with their applications and does the advertising for the district. They work with the school committee on developing the application letter. NESDEC does a guided search, but can also expand to focus groups, as well. An online anonymous survey would go out for input and would be given to the committee for review. Communication is ongoing during the process between them and the district. They recommend the screening committee have between 9-12 members, who will receive training once selected.

The search committee will have access to see all the applicants and will have a tool to have the ability to rank them that goes directly to NESDEC. They call the applicants. The profile of the ideal candidate will help drive the search. The candidate in part is also interviewing the district. They would not typically be at the interviews themselves, but would be there if the committee wanted. There is a warranty if the appointment does not last through the first year and NESDEC would come back for another search. The average search is about 120 days. Without focus groups it would be closer to 90 days. The application letter helps the candidate understand what it's like to be in the district. Mrs. Hart would be the liaison and work with Dr. Paolucci. A majority of candidates tend to come from the area and some from nearby states. They also receive calls from candidates looking to get back into the state.

The School Committee will make a decision at the next school committee meeting.

- V. **Public Comments** - Mr. Jason Paquette - Berlin parent. Mr. Paquette let the group know he was attending the meeting in favor of changing the routes in Berlin. He would like to reconsider route efficiency, as well. He thanked Mr. Bob Holmes for all his work on the bus routes. He noted he looked at how many kids are positively affected and how many are negatively affected. He requested for implementation after the holiday break.
- VI. **Communications** - The committee shared they received emails regarding bussing.
- VII. **Consent Agenda** - Approval of minutes - Motion to approve the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes made by Mrs. Meagan Grill and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart. Discussion: Need to adjust attendees. A motion to amend the motion was made to include Mrs. Elisabeth Mancini and strike Mrs. Julie Lee, made by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart, vote- all in favor, 6-0, amendment passes. Approval of original motion - All in favor, 6-0, motion passes.
- November 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes
 - Warrant
- VIII. **Reports**
- **Chair's Report** - Mr. Michael Totman
 - **Superintendent of Schools Report** - Mr. Albert Ganem - Mr. Albert Ganem congratulated the football team and cheerleaders and noted there is a parade on Saturday at 10am at West Boylston town hall.
 - o Matthew Dowd, School Council Representative - Matthew Dowd informed the group that the Thanksgiving food drive was held and this year they combined winter spirit week with both the middle and high school. The football team won the Super Bowl for the 3rd year in a row and the girls soccer team made it to the Final Four competition for a 2nd year in row. Mr. Totman noted the accomplishments of the girl soccer team.
 - o Bus Route Changes for the Town of Berlin - Mr. Bob Holmes - Mr. Bob Holmes is a Berlin parent who has worked on the Berlin bus routes. He noted he is appreciative of how they have safely gotten the kids to the school over the years. Currently the routes are run backwards from how they are in the morning. The idea is to run it the same as the morning which would create equity for time kids spend on the bus. The students all live within 3 miles of the school for bus 3. 60 minutes for all students a day. Bus 2 would be 45 minutes level loaded and bus one would be a 55 minutes route. Mr. Holmes went over a timeline of the bus conversation over the years. In 2022 there was a bus driver shortage. He requested not to ask families to wait longer for this change.
- Mr. Totman expressed he was in favor of the change, but wanted to note that there were comments from parents about how they will be negatively impacted. Mrs. Elisabeth Mancini noted for more than 4 years there have been issues with the bus routes. Mr. Campbell noted the comments made in the survey that was sent out and how childcare and work will be negatively impacted. He explained it's not so much the school district as it is NRT. He noted it has been the same bus routes being published. He explained that the

district needs to be more on the company to get the routes out early. 70 parents responded and Tahanto has similar issues. Mrs. Meagan Grill noted in the previous year they talked about needing another Berlin bus. Ms. Cinthia Sykes noted BES has had unsafe stops, as well.

This summer the bus plans were not submitted in a timely manner. BBRSD is up for bid with the bus company this year. Mr. Ganem asked the school committee for their input on how to proceed with the routes and whether or not something should be done now or next year. Mrs. Deglialberti requested for a start after February break to allow for parents to adjust schedules. Mrs. Hart commended Mr. Holmes on his work on the bus efforts and sees both sides. Mrs. Mair noted she used to drive her children due to long bus times but worries about families about adjusting schedules. She liked the February start idea. Mr. Totman supported the January switch even though he would be negatively impacted. Mrs. Grill agreed with the change and wanted to see if there was a little more time. Mr. Totman noted the school committee supported the change and Mr. Ganem will work out a February break switch or the earliest date that works for families and NRT. Mr. Ganem thanked Mr. Campbell for his work on the survey. Mrs. Hart expressed that after Martin Luther King day would be ideal.

Mr. Ganem explained how Assabet was formed and that Boylston backed out of the plan. Before there were more spots open for outside students, but now they get almost 500 applications for 300 in-district spots. His next steps are to get together with the Berlin representative and the Assabet Superintendent and see what could be available to BBRSD students.

- o Academic Rigor/Accountability next steps - Mr. Ganem asked the committee what they thought it meant to do better, what is academic excellence and what are the expectations. It is hard for the administration to act on without knowing which direction to go in. Mr. Totman noted there is lots of focus on special needs and maybe not so much discussion on the other students. Mrs. Grill noted looking at the kids who need more of a challenge and looking into more resources or coaches on how to push kids. Massachusetts doesn't have a gifted students IEP. Someone was just hired to spearhead it for the state. Mrs. Hart noted having someone come in and teach enrichment in her classes in the past and how it would help all students. Mr. Ganem explained they need a strategic plan to know what the focus is for the next few years.

Ms. Sequeira explained that they are always reviewing their programming. Accelerated math in grade seven has been introduced and been hugely successful. It will allow reintroduction of algebra 1 in grade eight. She has also received proposals and would be able to provide AP courses to sophomores. Ms. Sequeira is working with her mentor at looking at potential pathways within current structure and developing a life skills program. Tahanto was 33 out of all Massachusetts high schools and number 4 in Worcester schools, which is reflective of AP courses and scores.

Mr. Campbell explained the goal is around independence with students in learning and personal behavior. This year there is a focus in mathematics. He is comfortable with BMS' enrichment piece. The idea for BMS is to get the students Tahanto ready.

Ms. Sykes noted that this year is going for gold and the gold mindset and her staff. They are working to identify where they do well and the gaps where they need to adjust. BES does a WINN (What I Need Now) enrichment block working on fraction and decimals. She also noted attendance overall has improved compared to this time last year.

Mr. Ganem noted they have a new website design for Tahanto they hope to launch soon. Mrs Deglialberti shared that the Portrait of a Graduate speaks to the direction of the district, as well.

- o “What does academic excellence look like?” - See above
- **Business Office Update** - *Mr. Aaron Osborne*
 - o 2025 Budget - Vote (If Needed) Mr. Osborne believes revenues can support the budget and requested that the school committee vote on that and they can share it with DESE. DESE is asking for a confirmed number. **A motion that the Berlin Boylston Regional School District School Committee votes to affirm the fiscal 2025 budget totalling \$24,793,688, made by Mrs. Meagan Grill and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart.** Discussion- both towns have committed to these assessments. **All in favor, 6-0, motion passes.**
 - o Department Updates - They met with Boylston on Monday and will meet with Berlin on Wednesday. Mr. Osborne shared that all of FY24 payroll was all posted and all of FY24 accounts payable is complete. They will begin work on the end of year report and will submit January 3. E&D calculations will begin following that. FY25 bills are current with the exception of Amazon. FY25 payroll to date posted by next week in the system. Grant accounts have been entered, as well and the FY25 general fund report is expected in January. Mr. Osborne is working on several pending items. He felt good about where they are. Mr. Totman thanks Mr. Osborne for the work he has done with the budget.
- **Technology Update** - Postponed until January
 - o Agenda Posting - new page to include rss feeds
 - o Website: update on broken links/calendar updates/formatting issues
- **Subcommittee Appointments**
 - o Policy - No new appointments
 - o Negotiations - A third alternate member for negotiations will be Mrs. Deglialberti.
 - o Budget, Safety and Facilities - Mrs. Mair to join the subcommittee with Mrs. Grill
 - o Student Success and Technology - Mr. Ganem asked to keep the committee as he is working on a five year technology plan. Mrs. Mancini to join the subcommittee as chair. They intend to develop a bit more of a plan for the subcommittee.
 - o Superintendent Search Subcommittee - Mrs. Hart, Mrs. Grill and Mrs. Deglialberti will serve on the committee.
 - o A municipal representative will be needed. Mr. Ganem intends to get in touch with Ms. April Steward.

- **BBRSD Attorney Consideration** - The committee has looked into signing on an additional attorney for the district. The hourly rates are a good savings. They are a small firm that both Mr. Ganem and Mr. Osborne have worked with.
- **Subcommittee Updates**
 - Student Success and Technology Subcommittee - *Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti* - Mrs. Deglialberti is on the Boylston Masterplan Implementation Committee and has included details for the committee to review. She went to the MASC conference in November and learned of things the committee could/should be doing.
 - Budget and Facility Subcommittee - *Mrs. Meagan Grill* - No meeting yet and plan to meet next week.
 - Superintendent Search Subcommittee - *Mrs. Lori Hart* - They are going to set up a meeting to discuss the two options and then plan to vote at the next open meeting.
 - Policy Subcommittee - *Mr. Michael Totman* - *Discussed in Business Items*
- Any business unforeseen by the chair within 48 hours of the meeting

IX. **Business Items**

- Approval of change in BBRSD attorney (If Needed) - **Vote - A motion to approve the change in Berlin Boylston Regional School District attorney to go with the Law Offices Sean Sweeney made by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti and seconded by Mrs Lisa Mair, Vote - 5-1, motion passes.**
- Policies -
 - JH - Student Absences and Excuses - **First Read** - originally tabled in September
 - JE - Attendance - **First Read**- Mrs. Deglialberti expressed concern with some of the language around doctors notes and excuses. Policy to go back to the subcommittee.
 - JICA - Student Dress Code - **First Read** - Mrs. Mancini suggested spelling out what areas are covered in the dress code. Mrs. Novick noted the policy should not get super specific because it can cause issues and needs to be gender neutral. MASC has seen dress codes that are more basic.
 - IMGA - Service Animals in School - **Vote**- Mr. Ganem met with the policy subcommittee and the Chief of Police about the comfort dog. The comfort dog is often used if a situation takes place and works with students and faculty. New language entered into the policy to include the comfort dog in the schools. **Motion to approve policy IMGA as presented made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair. All in favor, Vote 6-0, motion passes.**

Motion to entered es

- X. **Executive Session and will not return to open session** - Motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Purpose (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation (Konisky vs. BBRSD) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares made by Mrs. Meagan Grill and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart, Roll Call - Mrs. Elisabeth Mancini, Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti, Mrs. Meagan Grill, Mrs. Lisa Mair, Mr. Michael Totman, - All Aye, 6-0 vote, entered into executive session at 8:29pm

XI. Upcoming Meeting

- January, 14, 2024 Regular Meeting

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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