



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OPEN SESSION MINUTES SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	September 19, 2017
Location:	MERMHS Library
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent of Schools; Avi Urbas, Director of Finance; Ann Cameron, Chairman; Julie Riordan, Co-Chairman; Shannon Erdmann, Sarah Wolf, Caroline Weld, Ken Warnock, and Rachel Fitzgibbon
Absent:	None
Recorded by:	Adele Ardolino, Secretary

A. Call to Order

Ms. Cameron called the School Committee Business Meeting Open Session to order at 6:08 p.m.

B. Business Meeting Open Session

1) Student Report: Seniors Mikaela Coonley and Isabel del Valle reported on the planned Power Trip to the DECA competition (DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe) mini-international trip to Philadelphia, November 10-12, 2017 (students will be arriving on 10/9). There is no qualifier involved, first-come, first-served basis. Nine (9) Manchester junior and senior high school students will attend with one (1) chaperone. Ms. Wolf raised concerns about the students arriving on 10/9, instead of 10/10 and the cost of the airline tickets. It was decided that these issues will be communicated to Ms. Puglise.

2) Consent Agenda

- Acceptance of Warrants: FY17 Vouchers 1068, 1069, 1070, and FY18 Vouchers 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1010, and 1011.
- Minutes 8/8/2017 (Not included in the Consent Agenda vote).

Ms. Wolf made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, and Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous by Ms. Beaudoin, Mr. Urbas, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Riordan, Ms. Erdmann, Ms. Wolf, Ms. Weld, Mr. Warnock, and Ms. Fitzgibbon.

3) Sub-Committee Reports

- **Elementary Facilities (Caroline Weld/Ann Cameron):** Ms. Cameron stated that there is a public meeting on 10/4 at the Memorial Elementary School to discuss the feasibility study, its process and timeline. There will be a meeting at 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., followed by a tour of the building to demonstrate why this building needs to be reconstructed.

Ms. Cameron made mention of the following:

There is a significant amount of money in this warrant to repair wood in the courtyard of Essex Elementary School, and suggested having a future discussion regarding how it should be noticed on the website to keep the community informed.

The upcoming Collaborative Session will include talking to both towns about the timing of the vote and what would work best for both towns, hoping for November of 2018.

The upcoming one day, two session Educational Visioning Workshops should include the "why" of educational planning and what that means for the building project. Ms. Beaudoin explained that we have to envision where we are in education and where we need to be in 10-15 years from now, so when they design the Memorial School space, the plan will be that it will be flexible and adaptable for what is to come, and Ms. Beaudoin used the example of the necessary changes in the high school/middle school library space.

Ms. Beaudoin suggested the future possibility of running a full Pre-K program available for all students, which could be factored into the Memorial School building plan.

Ms. Cameron explained that the School Building Committee is examining the Memorial School site in regard to setbacks, river front, and flood zones, resulting in the site becoming smaller. The conversations are now about what

can be built on this site. Ms. Erdmann stated that the other issue is where to house the children during construction—in a building off-site or by using modular units on the site.

- **Finance Committee: (Ann Cameron/Shannon Erdmann):** Ms. Erdmann explained that the final decision is to repair, but not raise or improve the bridge, and now waiting for the final decision from the Manchester Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Erdmann stated that the first All Board Summit was about planning, the second about operating, and the third about capital. The point of the Collaborative meeting last week was to decide on having a pre-meeting prior to the second All Board Summit. We plan to meet with the Manchester Financial Committee to address their issues with the MERSD budget. Ms. Erdmann will attend the Manchester Finance Committee meeting tomorrow night, and hopefully going forward there will be a School Committee representative at most of those meetings. Ms. Cameron stated that they will be going to both towns' Finance Committee meetings to see how they build their budgets, their "hot button" issues, and what they want to see in this Collaborative discussion of operating budget. Ms. Erdmann stated that we had this conversation with Essex as well, and Essex does not have any "hot button" issues with our budget.

- **Policy & Communications Committee: (Rachel Fitzgibbon/Ken Warnock):** Ms. Fitzgibbon and Mr. Warnock were not able to attend the meeting today. Ms. Beaudoin has created this school year's calendar. Ms. Cameron suggested that noteworthy events be sent out as a separate communication. Ms. Jennifer Roberts, Principal of Essex Elementary School, stated that she sends a separate e-mail communication out for special events. The plan is to review and possibly revise the district and separate school calendars.
- **Negotiation Team (Sarah Wolf/Julie Riordan):** No report.

4) School Improvement Plan for Essex Elementary School:

Ms. Jennifer Roberts, the Principal of Essex Elementary School gave the following slide presentation based on a two year improvement plan:

Essex SIP Progress Report—Whole Child

Goal 1: In collaboration with school psychologist, Deborah Welling, the specialists will pilot PBIS with one grade level to provide Tier One support for all students.

- Dr. Welling provided training to specialists in the area of Social Thinking, DESSA competencies (social awareness, self-awareness, optimistic thinking, personal responsibility, decision-making, self-management, goal directed behavior, and relationship skills), and Whole Body Listening.
- Dr. Welling reviewed students' goals for social-emotional learning, so specialists could support in their development.

Goal 2: Continue to pilot whole school PBIS model.

- Staff made successful shift to new assessment tool (DESSA) and routinely used the assessment tool and available classroom resources.
- School psychologist, along with classroom teachers, monitored progress of students receiving Tier 2 interventions by using the Full DESSA assessment.
- Classroom teachers focused on one targeted Tier One Social Emotional competency in their classrooms and shared the strategies that they found to be successful with their teams.

Goal 3: Classroom teachers will continue to provide opportunities for movement breaks throughout the school day.

- Teachers embed movement breaks throughout the day based on the needs of their students. They have found a variety of resources to use to make this fun and active for students.

Goal 4: Pilot the recommendations from the district-wide Homework Study Group.

- The principal and members of the district-wide Elementary Homework Study Group shared information regarding this pilot with parents at Open House.
- The pilot was widely supported by students, parents, and staff at EES, and we will continue using this model for the upcoming school year.

Essex SIP Progress Report—Student Achievement

Goal 1: Use student performance data (including MCAS, AIMSWEB, Local Formative/Summative Assessments) to make educational and curriculum decisions throughout the school year.

- MCAS analysis we completed in grades 3-5.
- Strategies for improvement based on assessment data is continuously being reviewed as reflected in common planning minutes.
- Various professional development has been offered on meeting the needs of all learners.

Goal 2: Develop a cohesive K-5 approach to balanced literacy derived from the Literacy Audit that was conducted by reading specialists.

- Grades 4 and 5 completed a scope and sequence for teaching comprehension strategies.
- Teachers had professional development on how to tier and choose vocabulary for more in depth instruction.
- Time was allotted for sharing instructional strategies for explicitly teaching vocabulary.
- K-3 teachers met regularly with reading teachers for discussion on how to continue improving instruction in the area of phonics.

Essex SIP Progress Report—Climate

Goal 1: Continue to refine safety protocols.

- The EES Safety Team met on a monthly basis and continued to practice and refine protocols.
- The School Council has decided that next year this goal should be moved to Community Partnerships rather than Climate.
- The Council would rather include a focus on Understanding Their Differences, Black History Month, and possibly RULER training under this heading.

Essex SIP Progress Report—Community Partnerships

Goal 1: Continue to monitor school improvement efforts.

- A bi-annual survey was conducted, asking parents for feedback on our SIP goals thus far.
- 19 families responded to this survey. The feedback was favorable from this group of parents.

Goal 2: Continue to improve school-home communication.

- EES continues to use the school based and classroom based websites as a key mechanism for parent communication.

Essex SIP Progress Report--Resources

Goal 1: Continue to provide targeted Professional Development for staff on building-based needs.

- EES is on target for meeting their three year literacy plan. The staff has participated in professional development in the area of comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and phonics instruction.
- Reading teachers meet routinely with primary teachers to support them in the differentiation of phonics instruction.
- Reading teachers meet with grade 4-5 teachers and developed a scope and sequence for teacher comprehension strategies.
- An outside consultant from the Stephanie Harvey Consulting Group was brought in to work with grade 4-5 teachers in the area of reading workshops/comprehension.
- Two classroom teachers participated in DESSA trainings in order to train the staff.

Essex SIP Progress Report—FY-17 Outlook

Goals FY-18—Top 3-5

- New goals will be developed this year, but I anticipate a continued focus on our 3 year Literacy Plan, the implementation of RULER, and a continued focus on Social Emotional learning and supports.

Areas of Concern

- EES continues to share concern about the overall social emotional well-being of our students and will continue to provide support to help students develop in this area.

Question and Answer Session

Diversity: Ms. Wolf asked what EES is doing regarding diversity in the political climate, being one of the least diverse districts in the state? Ms. Roberts replied in the course of our meetings the subjects of Black History Month and women in history, religion, so it was decided to talk about diversity in general. Having the conversations and bringing these topics to teachers' minds brought up the fact that the teachers are already working on these topics and sharing books with each other. It was suggested that these efforts be better communicated to the parents and communities. Ms. Wolf suggested that diversity be added to the EES Climate plan as part of the literature choices, projects and poster projects, and suggested

that the PTO bring in multicultural diversity materials. Ms. Fitzgibbon suggested having a Cultural Day, and Ms. Roberts agreed that would be fun for the students. Ms. Beaudoin stated that diversity falls under our OPR requirements. We are supposed to keep records of diversifying the curriculum, and our librarians do a great job with this.

Physical Disabilities: Ms. Roberts explained that she attended a workshop on this subject. The program at EES is a one-day workshop where a person with a disability will come in to tell his/her story, and an MERSD faculty will speak for an hour on a particular disability. This past year the focus was on ADHD and social emotional disabilities. As students progress to each grade, they will be exposed to people with various physical disabilities. The students are enjoying this program and always have interesting questions. Ms. Beaudoin stated that teachers are teaching teachers about the various disabilities

Ms. Cameron asked how is success measured in the PBIS ("Positive Behavioral Intervention & Support")? Ms. Roberts replied that the DESSA assessments are performed three times per year by teachers answering questions online. The first DESSA is a quick mini-DESSA where the teachers answer five questions on each student, and that will determine which students need attention in this area. The next DESSA is a full DESSA, focusing on those students. Ms. Welling begins to meet with these students in small groups once per week, provides outreach to parents to help educate them. Ms. Welling also attends one of our Common Planning Meetings around the 12th or 14th week and ask the teachers what they are seeing in the classroom, and often the teachers are seeing these students improving. All the students are reassessed in January, hoping that the kids that have been provided support are not selected again—sometimes they are, but often times they are not. Ms. Wolf suggested a Community Read for Parents, where informative books are recommended. Ms. Beaudoin stated that Dr. Robert Brooks, (a leading speaker and author on the themes of resilience, motivation, school climate, a positive work environment, and family relationships) will be coming to speak to our faculty as a key noted for the opening of our Regional Learning Day and on January 19th on *Raising Resilient Children & Adolescents*.

Ms. Cameron asked how often the kids are going out to recess? Ms. Roberts replied a monitored 15 minutes before school, 20 minute recess at lunchtime before they eat, and they can earn a 20 minute recess at 2:00 on Fridays. Recesses are not taken away for disciplinary reasons.

Ms. Cameron asked about the homework policy. Ms. Roberts replied that EES does not have a "no homework" policy, but we have changed the expectations around homework. The policy has not changed. Every student is asked to read every single night, they are asked to study for tests, and if a student is falling behind on a project in the classroom, they may work on it at home. The change is there was a math paper that went home with the students every school night for

parents' assistance, and that is no longer done because it caused too much frustration on the part of the students, parents, and teachers. Homework should be done independently by each student. Ms. Beaudoin stated that a committee is working on curriculum standardization within the district schools.

Ms. Cameron asked about the writing component of the SPED review and will this be weaved into your work this year? Ms. Roberts replied Ms. Collins hired a consultant, who came in yesterday to meet with me and every grade level team and will assess where we have to do some work. The consultant identified three key areas and there will be follow-up.

Each Committee member thanked Ms. Roberts.

5) Superintendent's Goals – FY 18 & Report:

Ms. Beaudoin stated that she revised her Goals to include Social Emotional Initiative and RULER rollout.

Ms. Riordan asked about the training for and schedule for Negotiations, and Ms. Beaudoin replied that she will ask Dan for the status of scheduling the organizational meeting and training.

Ms. Beaudoin stated that there is an Executive Session meeting scheduled next week for a legal update and strategic planning.

Mr. Warnock made a motion to approve the Superintendent's Goals with the inclusion of the Communication goal, which was cut off on the paper.

Ms. Erdmann seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous by Ms. Beaudoin, Mr. Urbas, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Riordan, Ms. Erdmann, Ms. Wolf, Ms. Weld, Mr. Warnock, and Ms. Fitzgibbon.

6) Enrollment FY18 – Fall 2017

The Committee reviewed the enrollment chart. Ms. Beaudoin stated that the 9th grade has the highest number of students (133), and we are in range for what we projected and planned for. The enrollment process can be an anxious and difficult process, but we have implemented a system that is working well, with very few exceptions. It is much easier to have the difficult conversation or even a confrontation with someone who hasn't enrolled yet, rather than trying to take someone out of the district.

7) MERSD Parent Education 2017-2018

Ms. Beaudoin's staff has created a page listing the dates of all the events offered to parents through January of 2018. This page will be listed on the website, a poster created, and distributed as flyers around the schools.

8) NASS Retreat

Ms. Beaudoin stated that she attended the NASS retreat this past weekend, and the issue of the math homework is something that we are going to have to address. Part of the discussion the future of education and the skills kids will need in the workplace of the future, and how do we re-tool school to accommodate that. Also, the importance of critical thinking, logic, and computational analysis and how to drive these into our core programming, while including the social emotional aspects.

Ms. Cameron stated the subject of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts (Humanities), and Math) was raised at the last Building Committee meeting. Ms. Beaudoin explained that some skills transcend time and it's about the ability to have an adaptable mind and the ability to learn. STEM feeds the workplace, but we need to put in place something that feeds the mind, so the kids can choose their own pathways.

9) New Commissioner Search Status

Ms. Beaudoin stated that the consensus is that the new Commissioner will have to be someone who not only values traditional public schools, but also charter schools.

10) Continued Business

Solar Panels for MERHS:

Mr. Urbas explained that he has spoken with Power Options again. Contracted with a roofing company who will be involved with the project regarding drilling, etc., and sent a legal e-mail to the Select Power Company regarding protection of the roof. Mr. Urbas displayed a photo of what the solar panels will look like, once installed. The Committee agreed that the solar panels are aesthetically acceptable and this project is a good idea. It was also decided to notice the abutters and the public in general of this proposed project, as well as discuss it at the Collaborative meeting.

11) Chairman's Report

Ms. Cameron stated that Mr. Joseph Sabella, Mr. Eli Boling, Police Chief Conley, and Patricia Puglise did a site visit regarding the parking and traffic issues on Rosedale Avenue. There is a speed issues on Rosedale Ave. Ms. Puglise and I had a conversation after the site visit about the fact that this is a green school and we should have conversations with students, parents, and the community about car emission, etc. and to encourage students to walk or take the bus.

12) New Business: None.

13) Committee Comment: None.

9) Public Comment: None.

Adjourn

Ms. Wolf made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Riordan seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous by Ms. Beaudoin, Mr. Urbas, Ms. Cameron, Ms. Riordan, Ms. Erdmann, Ms. Wolf, Ms. Weld, Mr. Warnock, and Ms. Fitzgibbon.. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adele Ardolino
Secretary to the MERSD School Committee