



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES November 5, 2019

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	November 5, 2019
Location:	MERMHS Library
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Ann Cameron Eric Bourke Sarah Wolf Caroline Weld Ken Warnock
Absent:	Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson
Guests:	Julie Riley, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology
Recorded by:	Gail Hunter

AGENDA

A. Call to Order – Ms. Fitzgibbon called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and thanked Studio 1623 for filming the meeting.

B. Business Meeting Open Session

1) Public Comment

There was no public comment this evening.

2) Student Report

There was no student report this evening.

3) Chairman's Report –

Ms. Erdmann was not at the meeting this evening, however, she asked the Committee be informed she and Ms. Fitzgibbon were working on the Superintendent's evaluation.

4) Consent Agenda

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes 10/1 and 10/15
- Approval of Out of State Travel (No out of State Travel to approve.)

Ms. Wolf moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Ms. Cameron seconded the motion (Ms. Weld and Mr. Warnock abstained from approving the Minutes of 10/1/19). The motion passed with noted abstentions.

5) Sub-Committee Reports

- **Elementary Facilities/MSBC Sub-Committee** (Ms. Weld and Ms. Cameron)

Ms. Cameron stated the Memorial School Building project is on time and on budget. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the School Building Committee had toured the building site following delivery of steel and were impressed with what has been accomplished at the site in a week. She also recognized the efforts of the Town of Manchester Police Department who managed road closings, parking and traffic throughout the steel delivery process. The building project is a collaborative effort and moving smoothly with no complaints or problems.

Ms. Cameron wanted Committee members and residents to be aware of WT Rich's role in negotiating with bidders to maintain estimated costs of construction. Mr. Urbas stated WT Rich is extremely professional and experienced. He further stated you can see the outline of the building and the process is moving more quickly than anticipated.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked if there was an opportunity for the School Committee to view the site. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the best time for a site visit is 3:00 p.m. when workers are finishing for the day. Superintendent Beaudoin also informed the Committee on November 20th at the K-5 School Town Meeting the Memorial Project Team will be making a presentation with a video and posters for students. She will forward an invitation to Committee members.

- **Finance Sub-Committee** (Ms. Cameron and Ms. Erdmann)

On October 25th the Collaborative Group held a budget preview. Mr. Urbas stated it was a good kick off. Mr. Waldron, MERSD new Facilities Manager participated in the meeting. According to Mr. Urbas Mr. Waldron is working with the Town of Essex; structuring a partnership around the Green Grant and energy improvements at Essex Elementary. Mr. Waldron also has experience with managing athletic facilities and is developing a plan for turf fields. He is in the process of getting fresh assessments of field conditions and working with Mr. Edgett, the new Athletic Director.

Mr. Urbas stated the Collaborative Group also discussed refinancing the High School small bond to generate savings. Superintendent Beaudoin mentioned the Brook Street Field Score Board which was taken down to allow for the construction access road. The Score Board is Town property, it is broken and not used by any of the teams who play on the field. The Town will likely declare the Score Board surplus, and have it destroyed.

School Committee Meeting scheduled for November 19, 2019 conflicts with Manchester Fall Town Meeting. The School Committee will reschedule for November 26, 2019. Ms. Wolf indicated she would not be available. Superintendent Beaudoin forwarded an invitation to the Committee for 11/26/2019.

- **Policy/Communication Sub-Committee** (Ms. Fitzgibbon and Mr. Bourke)

Mr. Warnock reported the Task Forces for both 5th and 8th grades were moving forward with proposals. Superintendent Beaudoin stated there has been little discussion about the proposals, but she will confirm with the Principals and report to the Committee.

- **Negotiation Team** (Ms. Wolf and Mr. Warnock) – No Report

6) Continued Business

Annual Assessment Review – Dr. Riley, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

Dr. Riley started the Annual Assessment Review with a discussion of MCAS Legacy Language and Next Generation Language. In legacy language students are ranked at one of four levels: advanced, proficient, needs improvement and warning. In next generation language students are ranked at one of four levels: exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, partially meeting expectations and not meeting expectations. Grades 3 to 8 are receiving summary reports in next generation language and High School students are evaluated in legacy language.

Parents will receive a parent's guide and detail explanation of the changes in reporting scores. In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are more rigorous than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS. Parents will have the ability to go online to review questions and expectations at given levels. Parents are encouraged to look closely at where their child's score falls within the Partially Meeting Expectations category. If it the score is not close to Meeting Expectations, parents are encouraged to talk with their child's teacher about how you can work together to help the child catch up.

The accountability data provides a review of how students do and grow overtime. Individual students' assessments play into school reports and into Statewide analysis. The State accesses the District on progress against expectations set by the state by reviewing growth overtime.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the major takeaway is the old test focused of high achieving students while the new system focuses more on lower performing students and how the District helps these students move forward at the expected rate defined by the State.

Ms. Cameron asked what was at stake if the District does not meet goals? Dr. Riley replied 15% of Districts do not meet goals and need intervention. MERSD is among the 85% of Districts who do not need assistance or intervention. There are no funding resources tied to poor performance by a District. However, a District in need of intervention may target funding to the students requiring the most assistance.

Ms. Cameron asked about students who need assistance and did all students receive the help they needed. Dr. Riley stated part of being in a small District is all students requiring assistance are identified and receive assistance.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated part of the District's accountability is attendance. Chronic absenteeism is an area the District needs to address. Is the District helping students grow are they coming to school on time? This is a challenge for the District and is consistent of the broadening of the scope of work for Districts. The District is accountable for moving all students forward.

Elementary School Data Summary Strengths and Weaknesses: Strengths include Vocabulary, Main Idea (in Reading), Figurative Language, Inference and Identifying Evidence to Support Inference from text, Nonfiction & Text Structures, Poetry, Identifying Character Traits (in Reading). ELA Areas of Need: Writing-Idea Development, Writing-Conventions, Explain how the author describes a topic citing evidence, Writing narrative about the feelings of a character based on events in the passage, Identify comparisons from passages in writing.

The new focus is more on Literary Analysis and putting that into writing. It is different from the essay's students were writing. The Literary Analysis pieces are done with more complex text. The conversation in the District is what does complex text look like, how are we reading and writing about the complex text.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understanding mastered in preceding grades. The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collections of annotated student writing samples in Appendix C of the Common Core State Standards and the Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action Project.

Elementary Math Data Summary: Strengths include Beginning fractions, Measurement, Beginning Geometry, Multi-step problems with whole numbers. Needs: Multiplication facts and patterns, Equations/multi-step problems (multiplication and division) Fractions (subtracting and multiplying) Volume and Mixed numbers and decimals. Dr. Riley stated we need to align curriculum with needs.

Elementary Science Data Summary: Strengths include Design solutions, Biology, Earth and Space-erosion, landforms, Science and Engineering- earth space and science/simple machines, Identifying design problem reflecting solutions to needs and wants. Needs: Earth's rotation – day/night/ axis rotation, Energy, Renewable Resources, Nonrenewable Resources, Physical Science-gravity, Science and Technology product parts, Analysis of data.

Ms. Cameron asked about 8th graders and algebra. She wondered if the expectation was realistic; are 8th graders brains developed to the point where they can understand the concepts in algebra and are the new standards too challenging? Dr. Riley replied the new standards are very challenging. Teachers are doing a lot of work to engage with students she does not believe the curriculum comes naturally but the District is doing well and has performed better than many Districts in math and science.

Middle School is now pushed into the 3rd to 8th grade band. The District has asked the State to consider how it is using data in this band.

Middle School Data Summary: ELA 6th Grade: Strengths include: Narrative text structures, Central and main idea of passages, Figurative language, Character development and plot, character traits, Creative Writing. ELA 7th and 8th Grade: Language develops in text structure in order to develop characterization and central ideas/plot, Greek and Latin roots, Inferencing

ELA Needs: Writing-Idea Development, Writing Grammar and Conventions, Write an essay that explains character traits of heroism and use evidence from the text to support the explanation, Write an essay that explains how a theme is developed, Analyze how a character responds to events in a story, Distinguish and determine specific evidence in an article compare two points of view, Read two texts, compare how the authors use details from the text to support the explanation.

Math Strengths: Statistics and Probability, Ration and Proportion, The number System (rational, irrational and square roots) Math Needs: Rations and Proportions, Two-Step Equations, Distributive Property, Property of Operations, Operations with Fractions, Functions.

High School Data Summary CPI score is 98 goal is to get to 100, HS completion rate of 100% it's impossible to show growth. ELA Strengths: Writing, Analysis of literature, Understanding claims, evidence and research, Analysis meaning, context, language, syntax, tone and mood. ELA needs Inference (complex text), close reading/inference from text details.

Math Strengths: Geometry-all. Needs: Functions, Extending Properties of Exponents to Rational Numbers

Science Strengths: Cell biology, Genetics. Needs: Evolution and Biodiversity, Biochemistry, Inference in scientific statements and Twostep process in problems.

Dr. Riley indicated students took 351 AP exams. Ms. Cameron asked if AP scores were part of the District accountability? They are not. Ms. Weld asked how many students were enrolled in AP classes and how many of the students enrolled took the exams. More students are taking AP classes but the number of students selecting to take the test remains approximately the same. Ms. Fitzgibbon asked if there was a record of students starting in AP classes and withdrawing. Superintendent Beaudoin stated she was sure that information was available and would follow up.

SAT: 137 students took the SAT: Evidence Based Reading and Writing average score was 598, Math average score was 590 for a combined 1,188.

What are we learning from the data? Baseline and longitudinal Data, Trends, Rigor and Academics, Curriculum Alignment and Coherence and Critical Thinking and Rigor.

2019 Next Steps:

- Align K-12 curriculum and content alignment wo the MA ELA, mathematics and science standard expectations.
- Create K-12 vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment.
- Determine next steps for curriculum review and adoption cycles.
- Determine data needs K-10
- Research assessments and interventions for students.
- Research instructional strategies to support the implementation of best practices in ELA, math and science curricula.

School Committee Questions and Comments:

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked about High School Accountability slide that appeared to have no data. Dr. Riley replied the indicators did not have enough movement to see growth. Dr. Riley stated the District does have issues with chronic absenteeism; students who are out 10+ times. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the low performing students had gains in the area of absenteeism it was the general population who had a greater rate of absenteeism.

Superintendent Beaudoin identified two tracks for absenteeism: family vacations and school avoidance. There's not much that can be done about families taking vacations but students who are not coming to school due to home issues and for other reasons can receive intervention and assistance to resolve the problem. She proposed a profile to see what the situation really looks like.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked about the number of students engaged in advance course work. Dr. Riley stated advance course work relates to college classes and dual enrollments. The Districts AP course work includes a range of students, but the advance course work requires additional clarification.

Ms. Wolf asked about project-based learning. Dr. Riley indicated project-based learning is important curriculum work across content. The District is working project-based learning into the honors program. Ms. Wolf also mentioned tardiness and how much of what takes place first in the classroom is the most important part of the day. Coming to school late is a part of the problem for some families.

Ms. Weld noted Geometry was a High School strength. She is aware of many families who pay for extra tutoring and believes that is contributing to the strength.

Ms. Cameron is concerned there is an expectation for kids to do things before they're ready and we push too hard. Dr. Riley indicated there has been a transition in standards from K through High School and we need students to function and work well.

Mr. Weld indicated students are learning how to learn. Superintendent Beaudoin added the District is still developing programs. We are encouraging students to stretch and learn.

Mr. Warnock thanked Dr. Riley for her presentation. He would like to see information and data on the number of students who participate in sports and other activities. Additionally, he believes it would be useful to survey parents about tutoring.

Ms. Fitzgibbon is interested in curriculum and the correlation between strong teachers and good data and teachers with some challenges. Is the District looking at how the curriculum is being delivered? Dr. Riley stated the District is reviewing all aspects of curriculum and delivery.

7) Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Beaudoin stated District athletic teams are doing really well this year. All fall teams have made it into post season play offs. The football team has a semi-final game on Saturday, November 9th at 2:00 p.m. against Boston Latin. The girls' and boys' soccer teams are both in the finals. Mr. Edgett, new Athletic Director has done a fantastic job.

Samantha Silag, Librarian published an article in Library Journal regarding multi-cultural literature and expanding student's knowledge base. The District is proud of her initiative and integrating RULER into the reading program.

The Superintendent's Round Table is working to build tools around bias recognizing the North Shore is isolated culturally but will not remain isolated. The Round Table believes it is time to lay foundation work.

The District's law firm is Stoneman, Chandler & Miller and the District's lawyer has been Andrea Bell. Andrea is leaving the firm to work for the Boston Courts. Our new lawyer will be Colby Brunt. Superintendent Beaudoin has worked with Ms. Brunt and feels the District will be well represented moving forward.

PD Day and Parent Conferencing went well.

The District is moving quickly on the Vision of the Graduate and will work with Creative Education Foundation to assist in the development of the Vision and implementation of a strategic plan. The Creative Education Foundation is a good fit for the District and a 3rd party will help to keep the District open and honest in the process. It is the District's goal to have the Vision of the Graduate defined by January 2020 and have Creative Education Foundation shape a strategic plan for presentation in September 2020.

8) School Committee Comment

Ms. Cameron stated Minding Your Mind Community Presentation is scheduled for Thursday, November 21, 2019, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the MERMHS Auditorium. Ms. Cameron stated it would be great if there were a significant group of parents and community members present. This is the launch of meHUB with the event sponsored by meHUB and The Spaulding Education Foundation.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated she would be in touch with Erika Brown at the *Cricket* and Mike Cronin at the *Gloucester Times* to help with publicity.

9) Adjourn

Mr. Warnock moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Weld seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

School Committee Future Meetings

- November 26, 2019
- December 3, 2019
- December 11, 2019