



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES October 15, 2019

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	October 15, 2019
Location:	MERMHS Library
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Ann Cameron Eric Bourke Sarah Wolf Caroline Weld Ken Warnock
Absent:	
Guests:	John Willis, Principal Memorial School, Jennifer Roberts Principal Essex Elementary School
Recorded by:	Gail Hunter

A. Call to Order – Ms. Erdmann called the School Committee Business meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1) Public Comment –

There was no public comment this evening.

2) Chairman's Report –

Ms. Erdmann indicated the Committee was behind in completing the Superintendent's evaluation. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the State's rubric for evaluating Superintendents has been updated with definition of two-year goals that flow to standards and an annual summative

review. In June 2020 the School Committee will review the formative part of the evaluation which is, according to Superintendent Beaudoin a short process. Ms. Erdmann indicated MERSD will participate in the pilot program for new evaluations of Superintendents.

3) Consent Agenda –

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes 10/1
- Approval of Out of State Travel

Ms. Cameron asked if Clear Gov was worth the \$5K the District is paying for it. Superintendent Beaudoin stated there is value to be gained in spite of challenges in the system which are being addressed internally and state-wide. Mr. Urbas stated the DESE big picture is helpful and Clear Gov provides additional transparency in spite of not providing a lot of uniformity.

Clear Gov allows for reviewing how we are doing compared to other Districts. Mr. Urbas indicated the District engages in an annual audit with no problems. Mr. Warnock stated the issue is consistency among Districts. Clear Gov will be a live link for the District in November 2019 with annotations for additional clarity of past entries.

Ms. Weld asked about New York trip. She thought the trip was a great idea but found the agenda very aggressive for a day trip with a start time of 5:30 a.m. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the trip was for an older group of students and several local schools travel to New York for day trips.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the Consent Agenda (holding minutes for 10/1 to be approved at the next meeting); Mr. Bourke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4) 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. First series of bids came in slightly over budget but there was no concern among experienced committee members understanding there is significant flexibility in the process. The next School Building Committee meeting is scheduled for October 22nd. The second series of bids to be awarded totals \$17M.

Ms. Weld stated the monthly aerial view (drone shot) will be uploaded soon. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the team is planning to upload all monthly aerial views which will clearly demonstrate construction progress.

- **Finance Sub-Committee** (Ms. Cameron and Ms. Erdmann) – No Report

There are Collaborative meetings scheduled for October 25th and November 22nd.

- **Policy/Communication Sub-Committee** (Ms. Fitzgibbon and Mr. Bourke) – No Report

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

Ms. Wolf requested final copy of Contract in review. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the review will be completed by the end of the month. There have been no additional steps taken regarding organizing the Teacher Assistant's contract.

5) Continued Business

Memorial SIP Progress Report – Whole Child -- Presentation Principal Willis

FY19 Accomplishments: Whole Child

Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) Curriculum Investigation – Anti-bullying

- Current Anti-bullying curriculum (Second Step) and the MARC curriculum were analyzed to see if MARC would be a more effective approach.

Reaching All Learners

- Social-emotional Learning (SEL)
- RULER – Four Anchor Tools implemented (Charter, Mood Meter, Meta Moment and Blueprint) in grades K-5

Community Services

- G-5 Student Ambassador

RULER

- School-wide Implementation of 4 Anchors: Charter, Blueprint, Mood Meter and Meta Moment

FY19 Accomplishments: Student Achievement

MCAS 2.0

- Continued Successful Administration
- Strong Performance – Accountability
 - 92nd Percentile Accountability Rating
 - Meeting or Exceeding Targets – 83% towards meeting targets

Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) Improvements

- Year-Long analysis of effectiveness and efficiency
- Outcome: The structure was causing frustration among staff that it was taking too long to get students' help. A team was formed to re-design and pilot a new model in FY2020

FY19 Accomplishments: Climate

- Understanding Our Differences
 - Program Sustained in 2019 – very impactful
Grade3: Physical Disabilities, Grade 4: Learning Disabilities, Grade 5: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- RULER
 - School-wide Implementation: “The Charter” – How we want to feel when we come to school each day (adults/kids)
 - “The Blueprint” – The plan to bring “The Charter to life

FY19 Accomplishments: Community Partnerships

- MPD/MERSD SC – Temporary Crossing Guards Advocacy
 - 2 locations – arrival and dismissal
 - MPD Training, Supplies and Substitute
 - MERSD Hiring, Salary (budget) and Scheduling
- Manchester Bike and Pedestrian Committee/Safe Routes to School
 - Collaborative Learning Walk – in spring
 - Improvements to sidewalk safety (DPW)
 - Improvements to Vine St. walking safety (MB&P)
 - Remote Park and Walk Locations/Map (MSRTS)
 - Crossing Guard Advocacy
- Cape Ann Veteran’s Services
 - Veteran’s Day Story Time
- Grade 5 Ambassadors
 - Open Door Food Pantry Food Drive
 - Pathways for Children Toy Drive
 - Sweet Paws Fundraiser -- \$3,000
 - Open Door Food Pantry Food Preparation
 - School Garden Project

FY19 Accomplishment: Resources

- Facilities
 - MSBA Project –
 - Design Completed, Funds Approved – thanks to Towns
 - Temporary play area has been created and paved, PTO Collaboration
 - Arrival and Dismissal Routines/Procedures Revamped
 - New evacuation plans, maps and drills (staff/whole school)
 - Crossing Guards – MPO Collaboration

FY 20 Outlook: Overarching Goals FY20

- Literacy – Literacy Leadership Committee
 - Common K-8 MERSD ELA Curriculum document and maps
 - Writing Instruction: materials and professional development
 - Rt1 Exit Criteria and Special Education Referrals
- Teacher’s Assistance Team (TAT) – Re-design for efficacy
- Building Project
 - Maintain safety and security while adjusting to accommodate the project
 - Balance “holding pattern” with “one shot at grade X”
- Core Values – “Be a bucket filler” theme
- Nutrition – Is there a way to meet all needs and preferences? One step at a time.
- Inclusivity – Continue to make progress in this area as it related to the ever-changing diverse backgrounds of our students.
- Student Achievement – Co-teaching (multi-year initiative) – general education and special education
- Study Island – Gr. 5 Mathematics/ELA: Reintroduction

Areas of Concern

- Traffic Light Repair and crosswalks
- School Bus Monitors and Crossing Guards
- Writing Curriculum
- Math Curriculum Alignment

Essex SIP Progress Report – Whole Child – Presentation Principal Roberts

Summary of Current Status FY 19 (based on the first year in the two-year School Improvement Plan 2018-2020)

Goal 1: Implement RULER school wide:

- All classroom teachers (some SPED/reading teachers) implemented all of the RULER tools.
- Teachers routinely communicated with parents regarding the introduction of new RULER tools.
- Principal provided incremental parent information on RULER tools (Charter, Mood Meter, Meta-moment and Blur Print).
- RULER Team provided professional development on creating a staff Blur Print. (Staff will follow up with this tool, as we feel we need more discussion around it.)

Goal 2: Continue to modify the SEL support model at EES to meet the needs of all students.

- The school psychologist continues to work with specialists to support their work in SEL.

- EES adopted a three-tiered model for SEL. We now use the DESSA twice a year to screen students. Students with identified skill needs are supported by the school psychologist with instruction in the targeted area.
- Teachers determine a focus for Tier One instruction based on the aggregate DESSA scores and in consultation with the school psychologist.
- School psychologist monitors student progress and provides teachers with feedback on their progress.
- The staff has determined that a “pull-out, push-in” model is more effective to help students generalize their skills. We moved this model last year and teachers found it to be effective.

Student Achievement

Goal 1: Strengthen the partnership between Special Education and General Education in order for teachers to better meet the needs of individual students.

- This is an ongoing goal what will continue to be addressed in new plan. Dr. Collins provided professional development for special education teachers in effective strategies for consultation. (This needs to continue and include general education teachers.)
- Teachers are finding ways to collaborate, and numerous special education teachers have tried out the new protocol.
- We are working to create a cohesive approach to continuously meet special education students’ objectives in all settings. Special education teachers are moving toward a more push in model when it is appropriate for students. This co teaching has been very successful.

Goal 2: Develop a cohesive K-5 approach to balanced literacy (derived from the Literacy Audit conducted by reding specialists) in conjunction with District Literacy Task Force.

- Classroom teachers in collaboration with reading teachers began to develop a grade K-3 Scope and Sequence for teaching comprehension strategies. (Waiting to align with work of District ELA Task Force.)
- Reading teachers began to facilitate the vertical alignment of K-3 comprehension scope and sequence with grades 4-5. (Waiting to align with work of District ELA Task Force.)
- Teachers revisited chapters in *Bringing Words to Life* to address “word consciousness”. Reading specialists facilitated discussions around this topic.
- Teachers continued to use best practices in order to implement vocabulary instruction within content areas. (As outlined in the text *Bringing Words to Life*.)
- Teachers selected 5 vocabulary words related to RULER initiative and introduced them using 5-step method once a month.

Climate and Community Partnerships

Goal 1: Develop more inclusive school wide practices.

- Staff continued with the discussion about ways we can help all children feel accepted.
- Changed expectations of ballroom dance.
- Implemented Understanding Our Differences in Grade 5 – Autism Presentation.

Goal 2: Continue to improve school-home communication.

- Staff developed a trajectory of grade level conference expectations for staff and parents and a summary document will be shared at Open House this year.

Resources

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

- Staff provided focused PD in literacy, RUKER, consultation model, effective ways to use technology in the classroom and IEP meeting expectations.
- We often use faculty meetings to provide P.D. for staff and have our building-based experts share their knowledge and skills.

Goal 2: Hire Math Specialist and Math Interventionist to support students at EES.

- We did not accomplish this goal due to budget limitation. I will continue to request this in my budget.

FY 20 Outlook, Overarching Goals FY 20:

- Continue to strengthen the partnership between Special Education and General Education Teachers to better meet the needs of individual students.
- Develop a cohesive K-5 approach to balanced literacy in conjunction with the District Literacy Task Force.
- Continue to support RULER model for emotional intelligence with students.
- Continue to modify the SEL support model at EES to meet the needs of all students.
- Continue to explore and develop more inclusive school-wide practices.

Areas of Concern:

- The need for a Math Specialist and Math Interventionist to support students at EES.
- The continued need for SEL support for students.

School Committee Follow-Up Questions for Principal Willis and Principal Roberts:

Mr. Burke expressed interest in knowing how Principal Roberts identified the speaker on Autism. Principal Roberts stated Dr. Collins found the speaker. The speaker had clearly worked to develop his presentation but was engaging and interacted well with the students. Principal Willis stated speakers on all three disability categories were open and honest about their struggles. Principal Roberts especially like seeing the High School students who come back and speak to the younger students – the elementary kids really engage with the High School students.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked Principal Willis about MCAS and high needs and the work that needs to be done in that area. Principal Willis responded in the high need's category, there are low income and special education students all in one group. Special education students who are pulled out for their services are not hearing information from their peer models in the classroom. This leads to co-teaching in the least restrictive environment and it may be a better way for some students to learn. Memorial School has a consultant coming in to discuss the new model this coming week.

Ms. Fitzgibbon also asked about the ADL initiative which was launched at the High School and if that initiative will move to the elementary schools? Superintendent Beaudoin indicated the ADL initiative will be extended to the Middle School this year and will be discussed in the Administrative Council for consideration in the elementary schools.

Mr. Warnock thank both Principals for their presentations and work on behalf of the communities. The traffic light thank you for bringing that up and if there is any way he could help with Town Hall and getting that addressed he is willing to help.

Mr. Warnock asked Principal Roberts about her request for math specialist and interventionist and is she looking for this through hiring? Principal Roberts indicated ideally these positions would be filled through hiring. Superintendent Beaudoin replied the needs are under review and the District is accessing different models, systems and structures for sharing support services.

Ms. Wolf stated she loved the presentations and enjoyed hearing about co-teaching, but she would like to ask about the School Lunch Program. Principal Willis indicated he has spoken with a parent who was interested in seeing the school provide an organic locally grown option at the cafeteria and another parents who would be happy if macaroni and cheese was available everyday because they would know their child was eating.

Mr. Urbas stated the District provides 100% foods that are approved by DESE. The outstanding question about the District providing additional types or food of a higher standard remains outstanding. Ms. Cameron pointed out students can bring their lunch from home. Ms. Wolf thought the school lunch program would be a topic for the Wellness Committee.

Ms. Cameron asked about co-teaching which she sees as a District issue not a building issue. And asks if the District is addressing or developing a plan for co-teaching? Superintendent Beaudoin stated there is co-teaching going on K-12 with different variations; co-teaching is content specific.

Ms. Cameron also asked about math indicating the District is spending a lot of time on ELA and can we wait to do a vertical deep dive into math. Do we need to do the same kind of work we're doing with literacy in the math department?

Superintendent Beaudoin indicated Principal Willis was talking about pull out for math and the other area is about students who are not meeting standards. We are teaching everything the same for math K-5. The question will become is the program still effective and there is a lot of differing opinion on the process. There is a transition needed between grades 5 and 6. We're an Everyday Math school all the classes are teaching the same thing.

Ms. Cameron went on to state we need math interventionists and coaches and kids in some grade levels need tutors and at some level what's wrong is the student/teacher model is not working, and we need extra help to address the issues. Superintendent Beaudoin stated the District is doing well we're doing better than our peers. Superintendent Beaudoin does not believe the District should be focusing on restructuring math while we are focusing on literacy.

Ms. Weld mentioned the presentations focused on Special Education vs. kids at the other end who were absorbing information. Principal Roberts pointed out in 2010 the strategic plan for the District was addressing the Special Education needs. The new strategic plan will be more about the rest of the students.

Ms. Erdmann thanked both Principals for their presentations and stated the District was lucky to have two elementary schools who are moving forward and recognizes how far we have come in the past few years. She asked the language of differences not disabilities be the focus moving forward.

- FY20 Financial Update – Stabilization

Mr. Urbas stated that with the bonding of \$35M for the Memorial School Building project there was a spike in interest income into the General Fund. An outstanding question is what happens with those funds? Mr. Urbas recommends those funds remain in a stabilization fund targeted for future Capital Projects like Essex Elementary and replacement of District capital assets as needed. Mr. Urbas is working on capital planning with the new Facility Manager and will propose utilizing the funds as needed. He is recommending moving the funds in the amount of \$318,826.00 into the stabilization fund.

Ms. Cameron moved to transfer FY 19 interest income booked to the general fund in the amount of \$318,826.00 into stabilization fund; Mr. Warnock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cameron asked if there were limitations on the use of stabilization funds? Mr. Urbas responded yes, the intention for the stabilization funds is for items for which the District might borrow generally the funds are for capital asset replacement. Minimize what the District would borrow for.

6) Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Beaudoin stated Spencer Meek was not available for this evenings meeting he is playing in a golf tournament.

Superintendent Beaudoin recognized the District's National Merit Scholars and one finalist.

Praised the Girls Soccer Team for their winning season and participation in the play offs.

Dr. Englander's anti bullying presentation for students and parents went well. Was attended by 23 parents. Next year the District will try for a morning presentation to increase attendance.

7) Adjourn

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

School Committee Future Meetings

- November 5, 2019
- November 19, 2019