



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING OPEN SESSION MINUTES October 1, 2019

Meeting:	School Committee
Date:	October 1, 2019
Location:	MERMHS Library
Attendees:	Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent Shannon Erdmann, Chairperson Rachel Fitzgibbon, Vice Chairperson Ann Cameron Eric Bourke Sarah Wolf
Absent:	Avi Urbas, Director of Finance Caroline Weld Ken Warnock
Guests:	Spencer Meek, Student Representative, Joanne Maino, MS Principal, Patricia Puglisi, HS Principal, Julie Riley, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Technology
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 –

Joseph Rindos, 23 Vine Street – Mr. Rindos referred to *Boston Magazine's* ranking of State high schools indicating MEHS had fallen from 5th to 23rd in the state and he was concerned the HS had taken a nosedive in the ranking.

Ms. Erdmann indicated the parameters of *Boston Magazine* rankings differ year to year. Ms. Cameron asked how many measurables were in the ranking and Principal Puglisi pointed out

there were errors in some of the statistics used by *Boston Magazine* for instance MEHS's post-secondary graduation rate is 97% and *Boston Magazine* used a figure of 84%. Ms. Erdmann also indicated that statistically when working with small numbers the percentage variable is higher and 1 or 2 students makes a significant difference.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the District focuses on how we are helping kids and the District is doing the same work it did last year. She went on to state the District is not where we want to be in the rankings, but it is not a reason to panic. Superintendent Beaudoin invited Mr. Rindos to call her and she would review the article in detail with him.

Lonna Brunner, 30 Vine Street – Asked about the decision to end the 5th and 8th grade trips stating the trips were the highlight of the year for many children. She wondered if parents had dropped the ball, failed in fundraising goals or volunteering to chaperone. Ms. Erdmann stated the conversation about the overnight trips started last year with formation of a Task Force to review the Merrowvista trip because among other concerns out-of-state overnight trips were progressively getting more difficult to staff.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated staffing, accessibility for all students and sustainability were the primary reasons for the decision to end out-of-state overnight trips for the District. She also stated for every child who looked forward to the trips there were children who had significant anxiety about the trips.

Ms. Erdmann suggested Ms. Brunner watch Studio 1623's video of the last School Committee meeting where all of the questions she was asking had been answered. Principal Maino invited Ms. Brunner to call her and she would be happy to answer her questions.

2) Chairman's Report –

Ms. Erdmann stated everything had been very quiet and would report on the meeting with the Collaboration Team in the sub-committee reports.

3) Student Report –

Spencer Meek, Senior MHS – Reported seniors were focused on completing their college applications and looking forward to Spirit Week & Homecoming. Seniors ordered their t-shirts and was not sure if Freshmen had placed their order.

Spencer stated the sports teams were awesome this year and in general everything was going well. He mentioned the transition back to school was tough, but everyone he spoke to felt good and are stoked about their classes.

Spencer had a comment about the *Boston Magazine* ranking specifically regarding the number of students in AP classes. As a peer mentor he recommended not overloading on AP classes. Recognizing some students can handle the challenge and for some it is too stressful.

4) Consent Agenda –

- Acceptance of Warrants
- Minutes 9/17
- Approval of Out of State Travel (No Out of State Travel to Approve)

Ms. Cameron requested a summary of the District's legal expenses this year compared to budget. Superintendent Beaudoin will follow up.

Ms. Cameron moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Ms. Wolf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5) Sub-Committee Reports

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

Ms. Cameron stated the sub-committees had not met. Superintendent Beaudoin stated construction is cruising. This is bid week which means all bids for contracts will be open at a public meeting held in the HS gym on Thursday at 1:00 p.m. This process will provide definitive information as to where the project is compared to budget. The Project Team is confident the project will be on budget. Superintendent Beaudoin and a team went to the furniture show last week and will be working with a collaborative group to save up to 30% on furniture for the new Memorial School.

Ms. Brunner asked about crossing guards and indicated there was no crossing guard this week for a few days. She is concerned and stated she would not allow her 3rd grader to walk by herself if she knew there was no crossing guard. Superintendent Beaudoin indicated crossing guards are under the jurisdiction of the Police Department and will follow up with the Police Department to see if there is a way to notify parents if the crossing guards are out on duty on a specific day.

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

Ms. Erdmann reported the Collaboration Team met and agreed on the full time SRO position which is hoped to be in place by November 1, 2019. Parent Safety Night is October 24th and hopefully the new SRO will be available to meet parents that evening. The Team touched on the construction project all looks good and discussed the Brook Street score board which will likely be demolished.

The Collaboration Team discussed the MA Education Funding bill, the District will likely not receive an increase in Chapter 70 funding. However, there will be an increase in out-of-district transportation reimbursement to 100% over four years. There are additional increases to be realized in tuition circuit breaker reimbursement; the formula is complicated and still under consideration. The District will have greater certainty once the Special Education Reform Package passes in November.

Ms. Erdmann stated it was a positive first meeting and anticipates a straightforward budget season. Ms. Cameron stated Essex had unexpected OSCA issues last year the Town Administrator feels better about this year's budget cycle.

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

6) Continued Business

- HS Improvement Plan – Patricia Puglisi, Principal

High School SIP Progress Report – FY 2019 Accomplishments

Whole Child

- Career Day
- Expansion of Bridger Program
- Teacher training for RULER implementation and Student involvement continued during U block
- Expanded opportunities in music – five new elective music courses and the addition of a musical at the end of the year
- Meditation and other relaxation strategies implemented in classrooms

Student Achievement

- 11 students awarded the Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction and 15 were awarded Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish and English
- Profession development focused on implementation of student-centered learning
- Continued curricular review in all departments
- Strong post-secondary outcomes
- National Merit Scholar Winner/Jefferson Scholarship recipient

Climate

- NEASC Collaborative Visit (11/2018)
- RULER Implementation
- Re-organization of High School Administration
- U block reflection
- Safety Committee Work
- A World of Difference
- Peer Mentors – Work with Freshmen

Community Partnerships

- International week speakers
- Career Day 2019
- ASR Internships (10 internships)
- Gardner Project – Habitat for Humanity
- Green Scholar Projects and Grants – National Green School 2019
- Cape Ann Chamber Business/Education Collaboration
- MERHS Chorus partnered with Cape All Symphony and Cape Ann Chorus
- Credit for Life for the entire Grade 11 Class

Resources

- Use of Spaulding Funds for Science Classes – Laser Cutters, Coral Aquarium and DNA Illuminators
- Additional Staffing – Art/Physical Education

FY 20 Outlook – Overarching Goals

- Student Centered Learning
- Social Emotional Learning – RULER
- Restorative Justice
- Vision of a Graduate
- Freshman Academy
- Development of Student Leaders in Athletics
- A World of Difference Continuation

Areas of Concern

- Social emotional health of students
- Cell Phones
- Structure that cause student anxiety

Ms. Wolf thanked Principal Puglisi for her presentation and stated she was not thinking of questions just absorbing all that was happening. Her son, a freshman, is excited to be taking computer science courses and studying what he wants to study.

Ms. Cameron asked how was the District measuring post-secondary success? Principal Puglisi stated college sophomores are surveyed about their experience in college and asked what was helpful. Ms. Cameron stated she would like to see the data.

Principal Puglisi said it is important to help students make the right choices and get into the right school. Ms. Cameron was interested in retention and how it is measured she is aware some schools have that data. Principal Puglisi stated if students are enrolled in state schools that data is part of SIMS data and available.

Ms. Cameron also indicated if the HS is reviewing structures that cause anxiety the Honor Society is one of those areas that bothered her indicating honor goes beyond grades. Additionally, she is aware of the person who created the financial literacy content and would put Principal Puglisi in touch with that resource.

Ms. Fitzgibbon asked about restructuring the valedictorian and salutatorian process. Principal Puglisi stated she did not know how the process would be changed it is to be reviewed by School Council this year. Ms. Fitzgibbon also asked how many peer mentors there were? There are 30 peer mentors. The peer mentors participated in a training during the summer and lead the freshmen orientation this year.

Ms. Erdmann said she was happy to hear the peer mentors went into the classrooms this year. Principal Puglisi said that was new this year and very well received by students and teachers. U block continues to be awesome and her jaded junior is glad to have U block time. Ms. Erdmann is blown away by the quality of projects students are producing.

Ms. Erdmann also asked for information on Credit for Life Program. Principal Puglisi stated it is a program run by Institute for Savings. Representatives of Institute for Savings come to the school twice to prepare students for the full day off site program at the end of May. Credit for Life is a requirement for the Junior class.

Ms. Erdmann also asked about Restorative Justice and how it was different from Progressive Discipline. Principal Puglisi stated it is a combination of the two. Progressive Discipline helps the student understand their action and not move directly to suspension. Restorative Justice helps students understand the perspective of the other person.

- MS Improvement Plan – Joanne Maino, Principal

Middle School SIP Progress Report

Whole Child 2018-2019 Accomplishments

- RULER: Student roll out (year 1)
- ME Block: Year 2 debrief
- Clubs: In school, after school and student lead
- School Spirit Days and March Madness Week
- Lip Dub
- Field Trips
- School Dances
- Fundraisers and Philanthropy

Student Achievement

- Science: STEM scopes Curriculum Year 1 Implementation
- Math: IXL Student learning and data collection
- English: Literacy Taskforce

- Social Studies: Initial work for Grade 8 Civics implementation
- Learning Walks (170 classroom visits over 4 months)
 - Teacher as facilitator
 - Students actively engaged
 - Clear Mastery learning objectives
 - Authenticity

Climate

- Social Emotional Supports & Anti-bullying Training (specifically addresses areas of concern in 2018-19 SIP)
 - Josh Gunderson student assembly
 - J-Line Dane Crew student assembly
 - Grades 6-8 student anti-bullying training (delivered in individual classrooms)
 - Signs of Suicide education in Grade 7: Co-taught by School Adjustment Counselor
- ME Block
 - Homework
 - Studying
 - Community Building
 - RULER work
- A Day in the Life Blog
- Clubs: Homework Club, Journalism Club, Robotics Club, Green Team, STEM Club, Art Club, ADL/Peer Leadership, Math Meets, Student Council, Ski Club, Investment Club, Baking Club and more
- School Spirit: Spirit days and March Madness week
- School Dances
- Philanthropy, Fundraising and Kindness units in MSA
- RULER Project Adventure

Community Partnerships

- School Council – RULER: META Moment
- PTO
- Coffee with the Principal
- Continue to work with YMCA and Manchester Parks & Recreation
- Manchester Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Committee
- Spaulding
- Middle School Academy: Letters to Authors, Veterans' Unit, UN Global Goals
- Sona Schreiber Weitz Upstander Award
- International Week
- Winter & Spring Concerts, A Capella & Jr. Districts

Resources

- Virtual reality goggles

- Expanding instruction through Chromebooks
- IXL
- STEM scoped
 - SC 2019-2020 Goals – Finalization – Approved at September 17, 2019 School Committee Meeting

FY 20 Outlook Overarching Goals:

- NELMS: Continue to incorporate recommendations with a focus on:
 - Special Education Service Delivery Model
 - Best practices for student-centered learning
 - Instructional Practices – Learning Walks
 - Middle School Schedule – Scheduling Committee
- RULER
 - Teacher Professional Development: META Moment & Blueprint
 - Project Adventure
 - ADL Peer Leadership Club
- Curriculum:
 - Math – Pilot – Research
 - English – Alignment to Standards, Writing, Leveraging ELA Taskforce Work
 - Science – STEM scopes, continued implementation and vertical alignment
 - Civics – Continued work and preparation for launching new curriculum
- Community Outreach
 - Community book read: *iGEN, Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy – and completely unprepared for adulthood – and what that means for the rest of us.*
 - Future Focused Day: April – “formerly known as career day”

Area of Concern: Student Learning – MCAS

- Understanding and internalizing the new measurement system
- Focusing on areas of weakness against the standards
- Identifying main areas for student achievement
- Determining and delivering appropriate interventions as necessary
- Leveraging department chairs and department meeting for above work

Ms. Cameron STEM scopes and IXL how is vertical alignment happening and how are we addressing that to improve outcomes. Principal Maino stated IXL is starting to address the issues it is still a pilot program and focus of the Math Department. The goal is to integrate the systems with technology which is how students are learning today.

Principal Puglisi said 9th grade biology is looking into adding Stem scopes into the curriculum. Our student scores are above average in math. Changes have been made in the math department and it is interesting our students do not feel they are strong (in spite of testing above average) and we need to understand their feelings.

Ms. Cameron stated civics education is a new standard and was there any tie in with the HS? Principal Maino stated we have not fully launched the new civics program we are working with the HS to make that happen cohesively.

Ms. Cameron also asked about peer leaders and selecting students with the highest academic performance as peer leaders. She stated leadership is an intrinsic quality and not necessarily part of academic achievement; she wonders how students with leadership skills or could develop leadership skills are identified. Principal Maino stated prior to selecting students for the ADL Conference interested students complete a questionnaire. It is understood that not all students will be invited but students have an opportunity to state why they would like to participate, and she believes the MS has a diverse group of students participating.

Ms. Fitzgibbon stated great presentation and thanked Principal Maino. Ms. Fitzgibbon understands the HS and MS have special presentations by Veterans and that is important; she wondered about other presentations mentioning Black History Month, Women, Cultural and Social Diversity presentations indicating our students live in a bubble here and are not as prepared as they could be when they move into the more diverse communities. Principal Maino indicated these area are folded into the curriculum but good feedback she will bring it back to the teachers.

Ms. Wolf expressed her thanks for a wonderful presentation. It's been great watching the MS change and evolve under your leadership. She hopes middle schoolers are still being taught study skills.

Mr. Bourke thinks the number of clubs available for the students is great and he asked how kids are recruited for the clubs? Principal Maino stated clubs are promoted through morning announcements and through parent newsletters all clubs are open to all students.

Mr. Bourke wondered if there could be ambassadors to the clubs, club members speaking to the other kids. He specifically mentioned a student in the Baking Club might not consider the Robotics Club but if another student shared the club information it may encourage additional participation. Principal Maino thought it was a great idea and will bring it up with the club leaders.

Ms. Erdmann recalled when Principal Maino was first appointed MS Principal she stated she wanted the MS to be a MS with its own identity and not be a Junior HS. Ms. Erdmann believes Principal Maino has made that happen.

Ms. Erdmann has a question about revamping of Special Education how communication with the parent is addressed when there are three teachers working with a student. Principal Maino stated there is a Case Manager for each student who remains with that student for all three years.

7) Superintendent's Report

Education Funding Bill and the Memorial School Project were on her agenda to discuss, those subjects have been addressed.

Superintendent Beaudoin relayed the message about ending practices at 6:00 p.m. due to the EEE threat extra bug spray has been made available to all coaches. Working with the Manchester Board of Health has been fantastic, and they have helped about getting information out to us regarding fields and vulnerability to mosquitos.

Agreed to allow students to walk to Brook Field at 3:15 p.m. which is a change from the 3:30 p.m. time construction traffic is completed by that time.

On schedule to have plans prepared for new trips for 5th and 8th grade students at the beginning of December. If parents have questions Principals are the best point of contact. There is disappointment and we are all sad to turn the page. But there is excitement about the new opportunities.

DESE initial accountability numbers came out and no longer will DESE be looking at only MCAS scores the process will look at the Districts areas of strengths and weakness. When 80% of our students did well that carried us but now the assessments will look at the 20% of the students who are not succeeding and at the progress they are making to improve. Dr. Riley will be at the first School Committee meeting in November to walk the Committee through the new process.

Ms. Fitzgibbon suggested a change in the approach to the School Committee's Student Representative presentation. She suggests the Committee revamp how this is presented with a visiting student speaking to AP, athletics and their areas of interest.

8) Adjourn

Ms. Cameron moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Fitzgibbon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

School Committee Future Meetings

- October 15, 2019
- November 5, 2019