

Manchester Essex Regional School District

School Committee Meeting Minutes October 19, 2021

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Members Present: Sarah Wolf, Chair, Theresa Whitman, Matt Harrington, Kate Koch-Sundquist, Chris Reed and Erick Bourke joined the meeting later.

Members Not Present: Ken Warnock

Staff Present: Pam Beaudoin, Superintendent, Avi Urbas, Director of Finance & Operations, Patricia Puglisi, High School Principal, Joanne Maino, Middle School Principal, Gail Hunter, Secretary

A. Call to Order: Ms. Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

B. Business Meeting Open Session

1) Public Comment

Ms. Wolf opened the meeting with a welcome to everyone who is joining us tonight and to 1623 Studios for recording the meeting and posting it for us. We will begin with public comment. She took a moment to remind everyone that this is an opportunity for comment, not debate.

As our policy states: "A School Committee Meeting is a meeting of a government body at which members of the body deliberate over public business. We welcome the attendance of members of the school district community to view your School Committee as it conducts its regular business meeting, but these meetings are not designed to be an opportunity for dialogue."

Please know that while we will not be immediately responding to your comments or answering questions, we are listening and paying attention to your concerns. During the meeting we will be focusing on items that are listed on our posted agenda.

If you would like to make a comment, please put your name and address in the chat. Please do not make other comments in the chat. We allot 20 minutes total for public comment, and we ask each person to limit their comments to 3 minutes. Ms. Wolf will time comments and ring a bell after 2 ½ minutes. After public comment is over, the chat function will be turned off to allow the Board to devote their full attention to the meeting.

There was no public comment this evening.

2) Chair's Report

Thanks for joining us tonight. We have a newly established Student Advisory Board to the School Committee, and I look forward to meeting with that group next week.

Fall is in the air and all the usual back-to-school activities are happening. The evening football games are fun and a great way to get out there and absorb some school spirit while supporting our team. There is one more home game coming up on October 29. We are in the middle of open houses; I attended the high school open house, and it was wonderful to see the teachers in person and hear about everything the students are doing this year. Tonight, we are looking forward to hearing “State of the School” presentations from the middle school and high school administrators. Thanks again for joining us, and for continuing to participate in the conversations with your school committee in a kind a respectful manner.

And now we will move on to the consent agenda, which includes warrants 1012 (Misc.) and 1013 (Manchester Memorial School), and minutes from September 21. *I really enjoyed reading* Ms. Whitman stated the Budget Workshop with Essex has been rescheduled to November 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in Essex Town Hall.

coaches whistles, math manipulatives and sharpie markers.

3) Consent Agenda

- Acceptance of Warrants – 1012 and 1013
- Minutes – September 21, 2021
- Out of State Travel -- Athletics

Ms. Koch-Sundquist moved to approve the consent agenda, Mr. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

4) Sub-Committee Reports

- Elementary Facilities/MSCC (Theresa Whitman/Chris Reed) No Report
- Finance Committee (Matt Harrington/Theresa Whitman)

Ms. Whitman stated the Budget Workshop with Essex has been rescheduled to November 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in Essex Town Hall.

- Policy Committee (Eric Bourke/ Kare Koch-Sundquist) No Report

Naming of Playgrounds Recommendation

- School Committee requests both elementary schools engage in developing name proposals for the new playgrounds.
- Student recommendations will need to be consistent with the parameters of the District policy.
- Each school will send a student delegation to School Committee to present and make their recommendations. Timeline to be established
- School Committee will deliberate at the meeting following presentations and approve or deny the recommendation.
 - Negotiations Team (Sarah Wolf/Ken Warnock) No Report

5) Superintendent’s Report

- Follow up on Dr. Elizabeth Englander Presentation – Superintendent Beaudoin reported that 50 people participated in Dr. Englander’s presentation. Ms. Wolf indicated she had seen her before and Ms. Koch-Sundquist stated she got a lot out of the presentation.

- DEI Work –

Core Value: *We Believe our schools must strive to create a just and equitable environment that respects individual differences and the diversity of our communities, country, and world.*

Strategic Initiative: *Celebrate and nurture an inclusive and diverse school culture that recognized the contributions and uniqueness of each learner.*

- Michael Eatman – Culture 7. Co Planning Underway for January Professional Development Day
SEL/RULER work continues and serves as a foundation for growth
- Teacher Diversification PLC (DESE sponsored) – Kick-Off 10/28
- Open Houses – In Person
October 21, 2021 – Memorial School
October 28, 2021 – Middle School

- COVID Management

- Numbers remain Low
- Reporting
Post Weekly Report – Updated Wednesday Afternoon
Email Communication in cases of outbreak (ex. Class/Team)
Testing Program Available is Needed
DESE masking Mandate Extended to 11/1 – Expected to be Extended

Essex Elementary – 1 student
Memorial School – no cases
Middle School – 1 student
High School – 2 students

6) Continued Business

- SEPAC Update – No report
- Reappointment of Essex Tech School Committee Representative

Ms. Whitman moved to approve the reappointment of Alva Ingaharro as the School Committee representative to Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School, Ms. Koch-Sundquist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

- State of the School Presentations – Assessment Data
 - Patricia Puglisi – High School Principal

Principal Puglisi stated things are back to normal and there is a lot of school spirit. During her presentation she will focus on School Culture, MCAS Score Comparison and AP Score Comparisons. She

noted four MERHS students are National Merit Scholarship students. She commended them on their academic excellence.

Principal Puglisi shared anecdotal information gathered from surveying teachers, thanks to Principal Maino's survey.

- The pandemic has had moderate to not impact on student learning
- The pandemic has had some impact on students' social emotional health, but students are happy to be reconnected to school. – Grade 9 and 10 students are presenting a little less mature
- Teachers unanimously report that students are eager to learn, happy to be in school and have a positive outlook towards each other and the school community – Principal Puglisi stated even students in the past who were school avoiders are recognizing how important school is to them.

MCAS Scores 2019 – 2021	Meeting Exceeding 2019	Meeting Exceeding 2021
ELA	85%	82%
Math	82%	71%
Biology (Proficient or Higher)	94%	90%

The math score is concerning.

Grade 10 English Language Arts Percentage of Students by Achievement Level. Exceeding for 2021 was higher, Meeting a bit lower and Partially meeting and not meeting a bit higher.

ELA Areas of Improvement: Vocabulary withing context, Impact of repetition within a passage, main effect of separate excerpted sentences and purpose of phrases set off by dashes. These specific skills can be more overtly addressed in classroom instructions beginning in grade 9 with a special focus on vocabulary in context whenever possible. Principal Puglisi also noted a deep dive in High School to look at vocabulary in literature.

ELA Areas Performed well above State average: long form/ essay writing, identification of literary devices, comparisons of reading passages identifying main ideas, mood, purpose, and content. Analyzing point of view, structure and specific evidence within a given passage. Students' ELA skills are strong where they need to be, especially in essay writing and reading for purpose, content, and the ability to identify main ideas – all important lifelong language skills.

Grade 10 Mathematics Percentage of Students by Achievement Level. Exceeding in 2019 was higher, meeting is level for 2019 and 2021 and higher for partially meeting and mot meeting in 2021.

Math standards for Improvement: Algebra – sequence and series, this unit is being reviewed for more explicit instruction. Statistics and Probability interpreting line of best fit, due to reduced time of the 2020-2021 school year, some statistics and probability standards were adjusted to be taught in Algebra II this school year such as “interpreting line of best fit.” Geometry – reflecting a point across an access. The math department is going to better identify students transitioning from the Middle School who struggled in math and provide targeted assistance in effort to move all students towards Meeting Expectations.

Math Standards of Strength: Students performed higher than the State average on all Standards. Geometry and Algebra and Functions make up 75% of the test. In Geometry +8% higher, Probability and Statistics +15%, Numbers and Quantity +10% and Algebra and Functions +8%.

AP Score Five Year Average is 80% with 63% of the Class of 2021 scoring a 3 or higher on one or more AP exam. Across all disciplines MERHS students scored higher than the Global %.

Ms. Koch-Sundquist asked how students from the Middle School moving to the High School were identified for extra help. Principal Puglisi stated meeting with Middle School and High School teachers help to identify students needing additional help but believes the process needs to be formalized. Ms. Whitman asked about juniors and seniors not in AP classes and partially meeting or not meeting requirements. Principal Puglisi stated all our students meet the Stated 4-year standards for ELA and also meet the District 4-year standard for math. She stated we graduate students who are college and career ready.

- Joanne Maino – Middle School Principal

Principal Maino’s survey of Middle School teachers, based on previous years, rank students’ in the following areas: 1 = Little to no change and 5= Substantial Change

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| ▪ Gaps in understanding of grade-level content/standards | 3.5 |
| ▪ Readiness for School | 3.3 |
| ▪ Social and Emotional Health | 3.0 |
| ▪ Overall level of maturity | 3.8 |

Areas of Strength: Use of technology, working independently, enthusiasm for school, flexible thinking, open to trying new things, helpful and kind to each other, very social, demonstrating resilience, inquisitive and enthusiastic, resilient, ready, and engaged.

Focus for Improvements: Organization and planning, stamina for “doing school”, impulse control and remembering school rules.

Behavioral Data: during the first 6-weeks of 2019 there were 78 referrals to the office for discipline, in 2020 there were 33 and in 2021 there were 5. In 2019 there were 3 referrals for mental health services, in 2020 there were 5 and in 2021 there have been no referrals for mental health issues. Principal Maino stated the work being done in the area of social emotional learning in the classroom is spot on. The work is being done in the classroom which, according to Principal Maino, is not a trend in other schools.

Framing the MCAS Data Review:

- Middle School Students were fully remote from March 202 through December 2021
- The hybrid/hyflex model started in January (2 days in/3 days out)
- Most students returned to school full-time in April
- 5.4% (18 students) remained fully remote (mostly in 8th grade)
- On-line/hyflex learning continued through June.

MEMS Change in Achievement Levels Meeting & Exceeding (2019 – 2021)

6th grade ELA 2019, 62% 2021 65% -- 6th grade Math 2019, 57% 2021, 46%

7th grade ELA 2019, 70%, 2021 49% -- 7th grade Math 2019, 66% 2021, 46%

8th grade ELA 2019, 65% 2021 55% -- 8th grade Math 2019, 58% 2021, 48%

8th grade Science 2019, 58% 2021 50%

The impact of the pandemic is clear for Middle School where the learning process is setting a foundation for learning. The Stated was looking for evidence that kids need to be in school and the assessment is clear.

ELA Strengths & Focus Areas for Improvement: English

Reading: Context clues & text features, setting & how it impacts characters & plot, making predictions and inferencing, analyzing an important idea, the purpose of a line in a poem.

Writing: (explicit instruction and more practice) increased number of expository writing assignments, comparing/contrasting more than one text, providing evidence to support claims/opinions.

Math Strengths & Focus Areas for Improvement:

Strengths: numbers & operations, statistics 7 probability, ratios & proportions, algebraic thinking, geometry*. Need to Improve: Geometry

What the Middle School is doing to support students and learning:

- Continued focus on SEL: Safe, Respected, Accepted and Happy
- Staff training around mental health and trauma
- Leveraging Strengths: Tech skills and Digital Portfolios
- Math: Revisiting & reteaching key concepts based on data and standards
- Through the SAT process, identifying students who may need tiered interventions & supports (outside of the special education process.)

Relying more heavily on data to inform instruction:

MCAS Data, Benchmark assessment data IXL, Writing Assessments, Piloting new data collection tool, iReady (December), NAEP Grade 8 (Reading & Math), Increased use of formative assessments across all content areas, Vertical data meetings (English & Math) each trimester, Vertical review and analysis of student work (monthly, starting in January), Writing Brainframes training of new staff, Writing: increased writing across most content areas: English all genres with an emphasis on expository writing – daily journals and reflections Social Studies: Argument Essays Opinion Pieces and Project Reflection Pieces Science: Lab Reports, Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)

Ms. Koch-Sundquist stated she loves the quick measure for gathering data and believes in targeted evidenced based interventions and asked what specific work was taking place in the student learning center. Principal Maino stated the teacher in the learning center is a trained Special Ed teacher and uses a variety of tools and would be happy to forward the full list.

Ms. Wolf thanked Principal Puglisi and Principal Maino for their presentations and noted that everyone is exhausted this year.

7) School Committee Comment – There was no additional School Committee Comment this evening.

8) Adjourn

Ms. Whitman moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

WebEx call-In information available at <http://www/mersd.org/domain/818>

MERSD Mission Statement

Education all students, instilling a passion for life-long learning and encouraging local and global citizenship.