

Manchester Essex Regional School District

School Committee Meeting Minutes October 5, 2021

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Members Present: Sarah Wolf, Chair, Ken Warnock, Eric Bourke, Matt Harrington and Kate Koch-Sundquist

Members Not Present: Theresa Whitman and Chris Reed

Staff Present: Pam Beaudoin, Superintendent, Avi Urbas, Director of Finance & Operations, Jason Waldron, Facilities Manager, and Gail Hunter, Secretary

A. Call to Order: Ms. Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. I just want to take 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. I will be timing the comments tonight and I will ring my bell after 2 ½ minutes. After public comment is over, the chat function will be turned off to allow us all to devote our full attention the meeting.

There was no public comment this evening.

2) Chair's Report

It's nice to have you with us. I hope that you and your families are settling into the new school year. I know that things have been very busy around the schools and that our administrative team has been working hard to continue to manage the schools during a pandemic while also going about business as usual. I'm sure that all the parents listening tonight are looking forward to the open houses coming up this month. It's always great to meet the teachers and see the classrooms.

As we move into the fall, I hope that everyone will continue to exercise patience and respect and to support our Teachers and Administrators and the work they put in every day to make this a great year for the kids.

3) Consent Agenda

- Acceptance of Warrants – 1011, 1058, 1059
- Minutes – September 21, 2021

Mr. Bourke moved to approve the consent agenda; Ms. Koch-Sundquist seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Koch-Sundquist, Mr. Warnock, Mr. Burke, Mr. Harrington, and Ms. Wolf voting affirmatively.

4) Sub-Committee Reports

- Elementary Facilities/MSCC (Theresa Whitman/Chris Reed)

Superintendent Beaudoin stated Memorial School remains on time and on budget and all required certifications have been completed. Ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for mid-November following completion of the final Phase of work. After school programs are up and running and the kids are enjoying the new building.

- Finance Committee (Matt Harrington/Theresa Whitman)

Mr. Harrington reported the Collaborative Group had met and discussed the beginning process of the budget season and the importance of the District informing the Group in advance of budget plans. The Group also considered when an appropriate time would be for starting to plan for a new Essex Elementary School. Superintendent Beaudoin added the September 28, 2021 planned meeting with Essex Finance Committee and BOS members was postponed allowing for new members of both groups to participate in the process. Current members of the Collaboration Group include Mr. Bodmer-Turner, and Mr. Creighton for MBTS and Mr. Butterick and Mr. Bradford for Essex.

- Policy Committee (Eric Bourke/ Kare Koch-Sundquist)

There is a note in Committee members mailboxes for a meeting to respond to Essex Elementary and Memorial School playground naming process.

- Negotiations Team (Sarah Wolf/Ken Warnock)

Ms. Wolf stated the Negotiation Team had not met but had open lines of communication and were looking forward to starting the contract negotiations soon.

5) Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Beaudoin stated schools are settling back into routines with student council, sports activities and more happening normally. The District is living the life of a school with traditional events for families and Open Houses scheduled. October is cyber awareness month and Dr. Englander will host a workshop on Post Pandemic balance. So far 55 people have

registered for the workshop. Superintendent Beaudoin noted having the workshops online allows for more families to participate.

Past the Pandemic: *Helping Kids Reduce Screens and Social Media & Increase Friendships*

- Dr. Elizabeth Englander, October 13, 2021 @ 7:00pm - Virtual via Zoom

DEI Work – Michael Eatman – Culture7.Co

- Leadership Team Coaching – First Session 9/30
- Building Capacity for Change
- Strong foundation in SEL/RULER work

Open Houses In-Person

- October 7th – EES
- October 14th – High School
- October 21st – Memorial School
- October 28th – Middle School

MCAS Data Released

- Student Reports to Families end of week
- School Committee Reports from Principals 10/19 & 11/2

Covid Management

Superintendent Beaudoin stated other than masks and being aware of social distancing it has been a normal year. The District's numbers are low with no new cases in the past week and no in school transmissions. We are staying on top of Covid with current mitigation efforts and plan to continue what we are doing.

- Testing Program Available if Needed
- DESE Masking Mandate Extended to 11/1
- Under Consideration
 - Vaccination Mandate for Staff
 - Waiver for high vaccination rate at Middle High School – if 80% of building occupants must be vaccinated for consideration

The Committee discussed the clerical component of lifting mask mandate and once additional students are eligible to be vaccinated a decision will need to be made on how to navigate with students who are unvaccinated.

Mr. Warnock note that until 6th graders have access, we will need to make sure everyone has an opportunity to be vaccinated before making masks optional. Ms. Koch-Sundquist stated the District is in a good place and would like to remain where we are.

6) Continued Business

- COVID Protocols – Status Report (As noted above)

- Essex Playground Progress Report

Mr. Waldron, Facilities Manager stated the Essex Playground was ready for the opening of school year and has passed all inspections and certifications. He noted a lot of effort from everyone involved has made it possible.

- Phase one Kompan side is complete
- There is work to be done on surrounding areas
- Mr. Waldron plans to work on the back slope in late fall
- Walking paths, trails, grass, crushed stone, and plantings will follow work on the back slope in spring of 2022.

Ms. Koch-Sundquist stated she had been to a birthday party at the playground over the weekend and her children are happy to have the playground. Mr. Waldron stated he too had taken his three children to the playground and they had a great time.

- ESSER III Grant Filing

ESSER III

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, was enacted on March 11, 2021. The ARP Act provides additional funding for school districts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Education portion of ARP is known as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III or ARP ESSER) Fund. The purpose of the ESSER III fund is to support the safe reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Allocation - \$442,000

- MA ESSER III funds based on federal share of total Title I funding
- DESE allocates 90 percent of funds to districts based on FY21 Title I formula
- Grant period runs through 9/30/24
- Districts responsibilities
 - Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction
 - District Plan for of ESSER III Funds
 - Gather Stakeholder Input
- Set aside at least 20% of the award must be spent on mitigating lost instructional time

Covid Spending & CARES Funding

Revenue Sources – Confirmed

ESSER I	\$54,198
RLTE	\$45,250
CVRF	\$303,300
ESSER II	\$206,931

COVID Prevention	\$45,050
ESSER III	<u>\$441,951</u>
Total	\$1,097,320

Possible Revenue Sources

Town of Essex	\$222,172 (CARES)
New FEMA	<u>\$69,510</u>
Total	\$291,682
Grand Total	\$1,389,002

District Covid Spending – Grand Total = \$1,447,084

Facilities	\$319,400
Food Service	\$100,000
Instructional Tech.	\$636,359
Staffing	\$391,325

Mr. Urbas went through line by line for both Funding and Spending. Ms. Koch-Sundquist noted Essex was possibly contributing \$222K of their CARES dollars to the District and asked if Manchester was making a like contribution. Mr. Urbas replied, Manchester had allocated their CARES dollars to projects in Town, however, were planning to support the District with funding for the connection of a fiber line to Essex.

Ms. Koch-Sundquist also asked if funding for learning loss initiatives would be targeted to the schools with the highest loss. Mr. Urbas stated funds were currently allocated to assessing learning loss and Superintendent Beaudoin stated funding will follow the District needs.

Ms. Wolf stated at the beginning of Covid the District was spending money not knowing how we would pay for all the expenses, and it was overwhelming. Mr. Urbas agreed it is a relief to see the District is getting closer to a breakeven point.

- Strategic Plan Development – Strategic Priorities/DIP

Superintendent Beaudoin stated the Strategic Plan mission, vision and core values sections have no substantive changes and are before the Committee for one final review. Superintendent Beaudoin did suggest eliminating numbering of priorities noting no one priority was more important than the next. Ms. Wolf asked for the mission statement to include “the mission is to provide...” There was no objection to the recommendation.

Ms. Whitman had noted that overall, she thought the document was redundant with too many words and also suggested deleting efficiencies and replace with needs. Ms. Wolf agreed stating

we have addressed efficiencies every year I have served on the Board and would like to discuss needs.

Superintendent Beaudoin stated she was glad the Plan had been started in spring and the work could begin now.

7) School Committee Comment –

There were no additional comments this evening.

8) Adjourn

Mr. Warnock moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Koch-Sundquist 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.