Ashland School Committee Minutes
July 23, 2024

Warren Conference Center
529 Chestnut Street
Ashland, MA

Present: Laurie Tosti, Chair
Marc Terry, Vice Chair
Tina Fitanides, Secretary
Paul Kendall, Member
Marcy Culverwell, Member

James Adams, Superintendent
Chris Mathieu, Director of Finance
Michael Caira, Assistant Superintendent
Gretchen King, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Agenda Review and adoption
At 8:07am, Ms. Tosti then reviewed the agenda items for the meeting. She took roll call and asked the School Committee members to approve the agenda as presented.
Vote:
Mr. Kendall: Present and AYE
Ms. Fitanides: Present and AYE
Mr. Terry: Present and AYE
Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE

Ms. Culverwell was scheduled to arrive at 8:35am to join the meeting in progress.

Approval of Student Activity Accounts
Christopher Mathieu presented the Student Activity Reconciliation reports for Fiscal Year 2024 and reported that the school accounts are reconciled. Mr. Terry moved to approve the Student Activity Account reconciliation reports as presented. Mr. Kendall seconded the motion. Vote: All AYE.

School Committee Member Roles
Members discussed leadership roles and accepted the following positions:

Subcommittees:
- Wellness Committee – Laurie Tosti
- Safety Committee - Paul Kendall
- Policy - Paul Kendall, Laurie Tosti

Liaisons:
- ASHPAC – Tina Fitanides
- Town Liaison Committee – (open at this time)
- AREA - Marc Terry
- Decisions At Every Turn – Paul Kendall
- Ashland High School Liaison to School Improvement Council – Marc Terry

Ashland Middle School Liaison to School Improvement Council – Marcy Culverwell
David Mindess School Liaison to School Improvement Council – Paul Kendall
Warren/Pittaway School Liaison to School Site Council – Laurie Tosti
Bilingual Parent Advisory Council- Tina Fitanides
Comprehensive Plan Steering – Mike Caira

2024-25 School Committee Meeting Expectations - Dates and Times
The committee members will continue to meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. The Student Advisory Council will present to the School Committee every other month, beginning in October. Ms. Tosti requested that the student representative attend every meeting, and if the student representative has a conflict, that they ask another student to attend in their place.

The committee members would also like to see some additional presentations from students in all grade levels. They suggested that perhaps each meeting be assigned to a Principal to choose a student who can share something that they have recently learned or accomplished.

Athletics Presentation
Kevin Anderson
Girls dropping off from sports in their senior year.
509 student athletes, 59% of all students

Field space and field surfaces
Schedule changes to improve field availability
Middle School sports - Ashland, Bellingham, Hopkinton are offering boys soccer.
Conflict with youth sports and AAU teams

12 towns are in our league, 9 towns are no longer offering middle school boys soccer.

Enrollment numbers are low. Basketball, too. Alternative – intramural tournaments.
Possibly add a MS Cheer team.

Girls basketball coach job - 2 searches. Dover-Sherborn was hiring at the same time, and offering $4K more.

Professional development for coaches - what do we offer?
Fitness Center – Strength and conditioning intern from college to supervise the students.

Uniform and Equipment – helmets
Football – provided
Softball, baseball and lacrosse, hockey - not provided.

School committee members asked that Kevin Anderson create a request list for new uniforms/helmets in case new funds become available.

Posting athletic games schedules to social media was helpful.
We only charge fees for football games.
Website improvements – finding schedules, times, locations.
Moving Ultimate Frisbee to Varsity Status. Currently have 24 students who are regular players.

Girls Hockey Co-op - Ashland will be taking over the ownership of the Co-o[p. New coach to be hired.

Boys Hockey may move to a Co-op model with Holliston and Medway.

Girls Wrestling Club – Needs to show consistent growth in order to make it a Varsity sport.

Economic, Financial, and Facilities Update / Future Capital Needs and Long-Term Financial /Budget Concerns
Christ Mathieu and Jon Murray presented an overview of facilities projects from the past year and upcoming planned projects.

Pittaway - roof
Warren - Improved traffic flow to alleviate traffic on Eliot Street.

Middle School - Locker replacement
HVAC

High School funding needs – Fire alarm, roof replacement.

Communication Goals
Mr. Adams asked the committee members – Where do we need to head? Communications, guidelines, standards.

Admin Retreat is scheduled for Aug 19-20.

Annual Report 2023-2024 completed.

Communication templates exist now for principals to use.

We haven't highlighted successes of the district enough. Need to pitch more stories about Ashland Public Schools.

Guilfoil – the Town of Ashland uses this vendor for public relations.
What do we want this position to look like? Should this position exist in the future? Attend community events
Communications are much more consistent now, much improved from the past. Logo redesign was successful, we have implemented a consistent Principal's Newsletter template using Smore.

What would you like to see better communicated from APS?
More press releases. Social media posts highlighted individual student accomplishments. Looking for examples that we are delivering on our mission.

State of World Languages
Students are not choosing to take French at Ashland Middle School. Based on low enrollment, we cannot continue to offer French at AMS. At AHS we have a teacher who is certified to teach both Spanish and French.

Difficult to hire new teachers.
Keep French as an option at the high school level.
At AMS – offer Spanish only, eliminate French.

Are there other districts that do not offer a world language at the middle school level? Need data about what other districts are offering and at what level.

Survey needs to go out to students, teachers and parents to see what other languages they would like to see offered at the high school level. ASL? Portuguese? Phase in a new alternative language. Is that practical?

Virtual High School - option for upper-level French.
For school year 2024-2025 we will be working on schedule change at the middle school.

For school year 2025-2026 the schedule will change for AMS.

School Committee Student Presentation Protocols
All grades students to present to School Committee. Teachers can nominate someone to the principal to invite a student to present to the School Committee. Assign a principal for every month. A poem, musical performance, read and essay, demonstrate core values.

Assistant Superintendent's Update on Literacy, Math, and Professional Development
Michael Ciara
Assessment, Instruction and Curriculum Update
K-5 ELA Assessments
Heggerty, Fundations
iReady - K-8 Math and ELA.

Math - Envisions curriculum
ST Math at Warren – new curriculum that doesn't focus so much on language, meets a need for many of our English language learners.

K-5 focus has been on literacy, more so than on Math.

CO Biology not available for 9th graders currently. They currently take Environmental Science.

Community Service opportunities for all students – goal for next year.

Hopes and Dreams - Instructional Technology Leader, position or a stipend position.

Superintendent's Goals
Did not get to these two topics. Mr. Adams will draft his own goals. If school committee members have an idea for a goal, send it to him and/or to Laurie Tosti. Mr. Adams will resend his goals from last year to the committee members for their review.

School Committee Initiatives/Goals
What are we not doing? Review agenda from other towns. Mr. Terry suggested splitting up a geographic area of MA and looking at agendas from other districts.

Policy - Should they be reviewing policies at every meeting?

Put on an agenda for the first regular meeting of the year as a part of the School Committee's goals.

Meeting adjourned at 3:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen King
Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents used during the meeting
Item 2 - Ashland School Committee Meeting Schedule 2024-2025
Item 9 - Athletics: School Committee Presentation
2024-25 School Committee Leadership Roles
APS Annual Report SY2324 - DRAFT 72224.pdf
APS Annual Report SY2324 - DRAFT71924
CIA School Committee presentation 7.23.24
10. SC Meeting 7.22.24