Ashland School Committee Minutes
September 11, 2024

Ashland Town Hall
101 Main Street
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

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

James Adams, Superintendent
Chris Mathieu, Director of Finance
Michael Caira, Assistant Superintendent
Abhishek Karthik, student representative, Ashland High School

Agenda Review and adoption
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:
Ms. Culverwell: Present and AYE
Ms. Fitanides: Present and AYE
Mr. Terry: Present and AYE
Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE
Mr. Kendall: Present and AYE

Public Comment
None

Student Presentations - Cross-Country team, Labor Day weekend 2024 follow up
Coach Sharon Ames and the team captains presented. They ran, hiked, swam, made fires, and camped. Students participated in meal preparation and clean up. About 50% of the team was able to participate in the weekend trip. The trip was a success, and the coaches hope it is something they can do annually.

WACA: Ms. Barbara Chisholm
A recent WACA documentary, “Last Day at Mindess School” won an award in a recent media contest. The documentary was hosted by Claudia Bennett, retired principal of David Mindess School. The WACA Board president presented a plaque to James Adams in honor of this award.

Director of Student Services: Ms. Brittany Hawkins
Ms. Hawkins presented the new LAUNCH program for 18-22 year old students. Cassia Ashman, Special Education teacher, and Iaga Lacerda, Education Support Personnel, joined the meeting. These staff members are working on community connections with their students. Three students from the program joined the presentation, and talked about their classroom space at

the Middle School building, the skills they are learning and work they are doing in the community.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. James Adams
Mr. Adams reported a few administrative notes for the School Committee meeting agenda – he's created an updated format of agenda. Links will be available to items in the agenda for more information. Gretchen King will share a link to a shared folder on the Monday prior to the scheduled meeting on Wednesdays.

Mr. Adams addressed the recent safety concern hoaxes that were perpetrated at Ashland Middle School. He noted that he will hold people accountable to assure that our schools are safe. There will be consequences for safety hoaxes. Students will be held accountable for their actions if they are found to be making inappropriate jokes about safety concerns. He reported that not only is it disruptive to students and teachers, but it causes great anxiety, and takes time away from police officers.

On Friday an email will go to the community about safety procedures. Ms. Culverwell suggested that Mr. Adams ask Michael Hebert to include a link to his message, in the next Town Newsletter, as it might reach more parents.

School meetings for each class were held at the Middle School on 9/12/24 to address recent school safety hoax issues.

Mr. Adams demonstrated that there has been an update to the web calendars on Ashland Public School's website. If you go to > Ashland Public Schools > Calendars > the Web Calendar will now show events pulled from all the individual schools' calendars in one place. Thanks go to Paul Carpenter, Jon Leacu and Esmer Casas for helping to get this resolved.

Assistant Superintendent's Report – Dr. Michael Caira.

Curriculum update: ELA, Math, Science teacher meetings will start in October. Fifty curriculum projects were completed by teachers over the summer.

Assessment updates: MCAS data is still embargoed by the state currently. Accountability databases will be released by state by mid-October.

K-8 assessments are being done with students in iReady with ELA and Math diagnostics.

Educator evaluations have started and unannounced observations have begun by principals.

Professional Development: ALICE training occurred in June by admin staff. All staff trained in "ALICE" principals. ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate, and this training helps maintain our compliance with federally recommended guidelines.

New IEP training, and ST Math software was rolled out at Mindess School.

ESP training was done as a part of professional development during the first days of school. Reviewed different disabilities that students might have that ESPs are working with.

November 5 is an upcoming professional development day. Additional ALICE training will be done there, with a planned safety drill to be held by the end of November.

Safety sub-committee has its first scheduled meeting on September 20. Adopted the Raptor System at each building. Visitors should have their IDs ready to be scanned before entering a school. Many other schools in the area have already adopted this technology. The district will be rolling it out, with an official adoption of October 1, 2024. Warren School is pilot testing the program for now, and it will offer consistency across buildings.

The district has adopted a new technology integration tool, Clever. This tool will offer a single sign-on solution for students to access iXL, iReady, Amplify and other applications through Google Classroom. Bill Mingels, in IT, has been instrumental in helping to troubleshoot and resolve technology issues that have arisen.

Procedural Notes
Going forward, move the "Warrant Approvals" out of the "Consent Agenda" items. Consent Agenda items will be for routine items only, and these items will be reviewed and approved on as a group.

The Title grants are reviewed and approved by the school committee annually. For clarification, in the future, it would be helpful to add a brief description of each of the Title grants.

Warrant Approvals
Between July 24, 2024 and September 11, 2024, Paul Kendall, authorized by his signature payables in the amount of $ 1,094,054.35. This includes General Fund expenses of $ 600,866.20, Revolving expenses of $ 476,240.51, and Grants expenses of $ 16,947.64.

Consent Actions
Mr. Terry moved to approve the Consent Agenda items A, B, D, E and F.
Ms. Culverwell seconds the motion.
Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE

Action Items / Discussion
Policies
Due to significant changes in the law, the corresponding policies have been reviewed and updated. The School Committee members will have two opportunities to review and read the policies and make updates to them.

ACAB Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment
Title IX regulations have changed as of August 1, 2024. Our district attorney, Jen King, has reviewed and revised the policies to reflect the changes at the state level. For any Title IX complaints from students, they will be coordinated by Brittany Hawkins, and for any Title IX complaints from faculty or staff, will be coordinated by Christy Arnold. These updated policies

will also be integrated into the Employee Handbook, as negotiated by the Ashland Educators Association.

There was no input or suggested changes on the presented policies during this meeting. A second read is scheduled for the next meeting, September 25.

Wellness Sub-committee policies: Jen Taylor
The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided a Wellness School Assessment tool. Ms. Taylor and the Wellness sub-committee used this tool to review our school wellness policies to determine if they are sufficient. The Director of Nutrition submits the wellness policy to the state for review.

ADF - We hired a consultant to review and rewrite this policy. The person used model districts that had already had policies that have been approved by DESE. Our updated policy has already been approved by DESE, and has met their standards.

JLCED-R: Guidelines for the management of life-threatening allergies: The school nurses and Director of Nutrition have reviewed and updated these policies. Ms. Fitanides commented that the language around the availability of medicines such as Benadryl on field trips could be improved.

ACCEPT Collaborative
School Committee appointed Superintendent Adams to the Board of Directors for the ACCEPT Collaborative.
Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE

Member Updates
Abhishek Karthik, student rep, offered that school was off to a good start so far. Athletics have started, and most students are settling into their routines.

Laurie Tosti reported that she and Paul Kendall both attended a recent policy meeting about the updated sex-based harassment policy updates.

At 7:40pm, Ms. Tosi moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Terry seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen King
Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents used during the meeting
3A - Ashland Cross Country Preseason Camp
3C - LAUNCH presentation
4A - Minutes - June 12, 2024

4B - Minutes - Summer Workshop - July 23, 2024
4D - Titles I, II, III, and IVA Grants
4E - SAA - Bank Reconciliation report _July 2024
4F - Gifts and Donations September 11, 2024
5A 1 - Draft Revised Policy ACAB 7.2024 [Clean] (1)
5A 1 - Draft Revised Policy ACAB 7.2024 [Redline] (1)
5A 2 - Old Policy ADF-Wellness
5A 2 - Revised Policy ADF-Wellness
5A 3 - Clean Copy of JLCED-R Guidelines
5A 3 - Red-Line JLCED-R Guidelines
5B - Appointment of Superintendent to ACCEPT Collaborative
Copy of Warrant Approvals - SEPTEMBER 11, 2024