

**Ashland School Committee Minutes
January 22, 2025**

Ashland Town Hall
101 Main Street
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

Present: Laurie Tosti, Chair
Marc Terry, Vice Chair
Paul Kendall, Member
Marcy Culverwell, Member
James Adams, Superintendent
Michael Caira, Assistant Superintendent
Chris Mathieu, Director of Finance

Absent: Tina Fitandides, Secretary
Abhishek Karthik, student representative, Ashland High School

Agenda Review and adoption

Ms. Tosti 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

Mr. Kendall: Present and AYE

Mr. Terry: Present and AYE

Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE

Public Comment

None

Student Presentations: PBIS at Pittaway Preschool

Social Emotional Learning Team presented PBIS- Bee Days. Sara Davidson, Preschool Director introduced some of her staff: Jackie Poole, teacher, Tiffany Barry, Speech Therapist, Anna Ginzburg, teacher and Robin Wurtzel School Psychologist.

The core values of the Pittaway Preschool are “Be Safe, Be Kind”. As this may be the first time in a school setting for our youngest learners, it is important to set behavioral expectations in a positive way. Teachers set routines and expectations at the beginning of school, and again in January to do a “reboot” to reinforce routines and reteach as needed.

The Pittaway school has a mascot – Bumbles the Bee, who greets children upon arrival on special occasions.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) helps set up a framework for language to be used that shows students what is expected of them, instead of what is *not* expected of them. For example, “use walking feet”, instead of “no running in the hall”.

Competency Determination Regulations

Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment and Accountability, presented from state on December 14, 2024. Mr. Adams shared the presentation from DESE to the school committee members.

Competency Determination (CD), which used to be the passing of the MCAS assessment. Coursework that demonstrates mastery of the common core of skills. Due to a the passing of Ballot Question 2, MCAS is no longer the Competency Determination.

The School Committee and Superintendent need to review this in terms of the short term – the current students of the Class of 2025. Kelley St. Coeur, Ashland High School Principal, is reviewing which Gr 12 students, in particular, do not already have their competency determination through earlier passage of the MCAS, and what they now need in order to complete it to graduate with their class. Ms. St. Coeur has identified 5 impacted students from the Class of 2025.

The next priorities will be to evaluate the medium term, (current high school students), and the longer term (students not yet in Grade 9).

Ashland High School graduation requirements are currently listed in policy IKF. Next steps for committee members are to:

- Review the current graduation policy
- Make recommended changes to the competency determination in the Program of Studies and the Student Handbook
- Update the Student Handbook for 2024-2025.

Superintendent Adams is also looking at other local school districts for guidance with their language around the competency determination. The town of Newton, for example.

Ms. St. Coeur noted that historically, students who have not received a diploma are those that have failed a class, not because they have not passed the MCAS.

Mr. Terry asked Dr. Caira if students will still take the MCAS seriously. Dr. Caira reiterated that students will still be required to take the MCAS each spring. MCAS results are an important assessment tool, and are important for accountability.

Warrant Approvals

Between January 12, 2025 and January 22, 2025, Paul Kendall, authorized by his signature payables in the amount of \$ 486,534.47. This includes General Fund expenses of \$ 216,634.01, Revolving expenses of \$ 265,240.51, and Grants expenses of \$ 4,659.95.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent James Adams

Mr. Adams and Dr. Caira met today with two members of Senator Spilka's staff to discuss "hot topics" – the removal of MCAS as a graduation requirement and the intent to submit a Statement of Interest for Pittaway and Warren Schools to the MSBA. First, Mr. Adams has to go before the Select Board to get approval to submit an SOI to the state. The SOI is due in April. Other topics that were discussed were Chapter 70 funding and immigration.

Next Budget Workshop meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 25 at 8am at Mindess. They will focus on Special Education, Pittaway and changes made to the budget at Mindess School.

Assistant Superintendent's Update: Dr. Michael Caira, Jr.

The ELA Curriculum team met recently to focus on writing improvements with students. Writing rubrics grades K-5 and grades 6-12. Suzanne Roddy, our new literacy specialist, introduced a tool of a "two column notes" as a writing strategy. Dr. Caira was pleased to see the two-column notes technique being used in a classroom observation.

High School mid-term exams start Thursday through Tuesday of next week. DIEBELS assessments for grades K-3 have also begun.

Dr. Caira is planning for the next professional learning day for staff on March 14. The safety sub-committee met recently and reviewed ALICE protocols and will be reviewing the evacuation and reunification plans in the future.

Dr. Caira gave a shout out to the AMS Theatre group who has been rehearsing for their production of The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet, opening this weekend. Tickets are \$10 at the door at Ashland Middle School.

Policies - First Read

Copy of Redline Version BDB - SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Redline Version BDFA - SCHOOL COUNCILS

Copy of Redline Version EFD-School Nutrition Program Charge Policy

Copy of Redline Version GBEE - Personnel Use of Technology

Copy of Redline - IJND Access to Digital Resources

Copy of Redline Version IJNDB- Use of Technology Instruction

Copy of Redline Version IJNDC- Acceptable Use of Digital Resources

Consent Agenda

Mr. Kendall moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, Mr. Terry seconded the motion. Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE

Mr. Kendall: AYE

Mr. Terry: AYE

Ms. Tosti: AYE

Reports of School Committee Members

Ms. Culverwell reported that the Middle School Site Council meeting was cancelled today. The Principal of Ashland Middle School, Ms. Lachapelle will have the School Improvement Plan available to review for members during the next site council meeting.

Mr. Kendall reported that the Executive Order reimbursement may be on hold.

Ms. Tosti reported that she attended a recent Warren School Site Council meeting, where they reviewed the current format of the student report card.

At 7:26pm, Ms. Tosti made a motion to move into Executive Session to conduct strategy in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (Superintendent Jim Adams) with the intent of not returning to Public Session. Mr. Terry seconded the motion.

Vote:

Ms. Culverwell: AYE

Mr. Kendall: AYE

Mr. Terry: AYE

Ms. Tosti: AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen King

Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents used during the meeting

School Committee Agenda January 22, 2025

PBIS/SEL school committee Jan 2025

Competency Determination Presentation

Copy of L-S CD Language January 2025

Copy of (DRAFT) New Competency Determination for NPS

CD Winthrop Public Schools

CD Hampden-Wilbraham

Warrant Approvals - JANUARY 22, 2025

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01/22/25 G&D SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPTANCE LOG

Minutes - January 8, 2025