



Mission Statement: To support and challenge all students to achieve personal and academic excellence in a student-centered environment.

BERLIN-BOYLSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 5:00 pm

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School

Multi Purpose Room

Stream link <https://www.youtube.com/@bbrsdlive2893/streams>

Revised 4/4/2025 at 2:40pm

This meeting may be recorded, and your image or voice may be broadcast.

Due to technical issues this meeting may not always stream live, but we will make every attempt to do so and to record the meeting for future posting.

The items listed on the agenda may be discussed out of order as the Chair decides due to potential scheduling and timing requirements.

Present: School Committee: Mr. Michael Totman, Chair, Mrs. Meagan Grill, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Lori Hart, District Clerk, Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti, Mrs. Lisa Mair, Mrs. Elisabeth Mancini

Administration: Mr. Albert G. Ganem Jr., Interim Superintendent; Ms. Nicole Bilotta, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Mr. John Campbell, Berlin Memorial Principal; Ms. Jannel Fitzpatrick, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Mr. Aaron Osborne, Director of Finance and Operations; Ms. Lisa Sequeira, Tahanto Middle/High School Principal; Ms. Sally Stukuls, Director of Curriculum and Grants 6-12; Ms. Cinthia Sykes, Boylston Elementary Principal;

Also Present: a Matthew Dowd; Ms. Tracy Novick; Members of the public

- I. Call to Order** - Mr. Totman called the meeting to order at 5:02pm
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Public Comment** - Mr. Totman explained how public comment would work.

Ms. Laura Banas - BBRSD Teacher, asked the committee to reconsider eliminating the Special Education Coordinator position due to how important it is to the department and the students.

Ms. Monique Anstine - Shared her concern over the decision to cut the Special Education Coordinator after having worked in a district without one. She felt it is a vital role as the help for special needs continues to grow.

Ms. Elena Speroni - BBRSD teacher, expressed how working in constant turnover has been difficult and the stability that has been there with the Special Education Coordinator position.

Ms. Erin Kane - BBRSD parent, Shared her safety concerns over a trespasser at BES and how parents were not notified other than two individual students' parents.

- IV. **Communications** - Mr. Totman noted that lots of communications have been received. Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti spoke about the topics of the communications.

Mrs. Cindy Sykes made a statement to the group about her decision to leave BBRSD. Mr. Totman thanked Mrs. Sykes.

- V. **Consent Agenda - Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair, all in favor, 6-0 motion passes**

- March 4, 2025 Budget, Facilities, and Safety Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
- March 11, 2025 Budget Hearing Minutes
- March 25, 2025 Open Meeting Minutes
- Warrant

- VI. **Reports**

- **Chair's Report** - *Mr. Michael Totman*
 - DESE Guidance - Mr. Totman spoke about Regional school district budget guidance provided by DESE and what it means
- **Ms. Tracy Novick** - *Interim Superintendent Search Update*
 - Mrs. Tracy Novick spoke to the group from MASC to give an update on the interim superintendent search. The timeline will be laid out in May. There were 11 applicants and 7 are current superintendents. Interviews are to be held Tuesday, April 15th. The decision will be made in a public session. Ms. Novick recommended going through names alphabetically and polling the committee if interested in interviewing.

Votes for each Candidate:

Unanimous decision remove anyone without superintendent experience

Cutler - Ruled out by committee

Dwyer -2

Flaherty -3

Cormier - Ruled out by committee

Ganem -5

Gilson - 6

Kustka-2

Legault-3

Ljungberg- 2

Ricca - 3

The group of 6 voted to eliminate Kustka and Ricca. The group discussed Flaherty for a revote of 4 in favor. The remaining applicants were discussed and re-voted, but did not pass for interview consideration.

Legault - 2

Dwyer - 2

Ljungberg - 1

Motion to invite the following four applicants as read by Ms. Novick to include Ms. Susan Gilson, Mr. Albert Ganem, Mr. David Thimpson and Ms. Donna Flarherty to come interview for interim superintendent positions made by Mrs. Lisa Mair and seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart. Discussion: It was noted that resumes do not speak to ability to do the job. Mrs. Grill wanted to add a fifth interview. Mrs Hart noted focusing on what need is and not a specific number. **Motion amended by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti to add Legault given longevity of service and seconded by Mrs. Elisabeth Mancini, Vote 3-3, amendment does not pass.**
Original motion - Vote 6-0, motion passes.

Ms. Novick would contact applicants to schedule the interview slots.

The committee discussed the questions they would ask in the interviews.

- Why are you interested in this position and this district? - Approved
- How do you build strong relationships with parents, teachers, your admin team, town [board members] **select board, finance committee, capital committee,** and the school committee? - Approved with red edits
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a leader? - Approved
- How will you handle the balance of respecting long-time employees of the district's experience and familiarity with how things have 'always been done' with new ideas, changes and perspectives? - Approved
- How could you create an environment where staff felt safe to approach you with problems? - Approved
- How do you handle conflict situations within the school district? - Approved
- **Speak to your skills and experiences in the budget process. Please address your experience with regional school budgets, if applicable.** - Added and Approved
- ~~[I'm not sure if you've researched our district, but]~~ We are currently in the middle of a big shift. Our current interim superintendent has had to do much more than just his superintendent duties: he is trying to make sense of last year's budget and finding things (like job descriptions and professional practices) that need updating or creating as some don't exist. He typically works well beyond 7 PM on weekdays, attends town meetings in both Berlin and Boylston that often run until 9 or 10, and he often spends weekends at Central office. Do you feel you are equipped to continue his work? Would you be able to dedicate as much time to turning our district around so we could attract a full-time superintendent next year? - Removed strikethrough and Approved

Followup questions are allowed within the bounds of the original question.

Motion to approve 8 questions that were just covered, read by Ms. Tracy Novick made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti. Discussion: Question about principals. Mrs. Deglialberti motioned to amend the motion with addition of and support in forth question, seconded by Mrs. Lori Hart, Vote 6-0, amended motion passes.

Original Motion: Vote 6-0, all in favor for interview questions, motion passes.

Meeting paused at 6:18pm At 6:20pm room reset. Mrs. Meagan Grill had to leave.

- **Business Office Update** - *Mr. Aaron Osborne* - Mr. Aaron Osborne noted they had closed out the month of March and closed out the quarter. He noted he would have a quarterly report for the next meeting and it would be posted online through March 31st of the year.
- **Superintendent of Schools Report** - *Mr. Albert G. Ganem Jr.*
 - Student Council Representative - *Matthew Dowd* - Matthew Dowd gave an update about ongoings at Tahanto to include the MASC conference student council trip. While there they nominated Ms. Sequeira as administrator of the year. He thanked Ms. Sequeira on behalf of the student council. He also noted that spring sports have started, there is an upcoming family feud event and the drama club performed the Beetlejuice Junior show on March 11 and 12.
 - FY26 Calendar and Professional Learning Dates - Mr. Ganem spoke about the April 3rd day and about how many teachers take that day off. They have looked back several years. Mrs Deglialberti expressed concerns for one religion. The principals spoke to significant staff absences. Mrs. Hart explained it sounded like it was brought up because it affects the budget and the students due to staffing. The group discussed starting before labor day. Mr. Ganem spoke about the professional learning days. Mrs. Stukuls explained that UDL (universal decision for learning) is the focus for next year's professional learning. Mr. John Campbell and Ms. Stukuls also spoke about formative and summit assessments. Administration is asking for an additional learning day for staff in negotiations that would not affect students and families for the beginning or end of the year.
 - Principal Search at Boylston Elementary - Mr. Ganem wished Mrs. Sykes the best of luck in her new position. Mr. Ganem reviewed the timeline for the principal search. Monday April 7th the job was posted on School Spring. 11 applications were already in. On Friday Mr. Ganem, Ms. Stukuls, and Ms. Briana Pascoal will be reviewing applications for certifications only. A team will be formed to include teachers, paras, parents, school committee members and specialists. At Central Office resumes will be reviewed and then they will determine who to bring in. Updated will continue to be provided.
 - Tahanto Regional Middle/High School Graduation Information - Mr. Ganem spoke about the June 1st Tahanto graduation ceremony.

May 7th is a full day of school for 2025 due to the half day for the December 6th half day.

- **Administrator Updates -**

- TAH Principal - *Ms. Lisa Sequeira* - Ms. Sequeira thanked Matthew Dowd and the student council for their nomination. She shared that the 6th grade did a model UN simulation in the multi-purpose room and the AP literature students went out to 19 Carter for community engagement. She thanked Mr. Joseph Sposato for his work with the new MCAS platform. She also gave a shout out to Ms. Gardner and the Mind Matters Club.
- BES Principal - *Ms. Cinthia Sykes* - Ms. Sykes spoke about MCAS score improvement and things they did to help prepare the students and pump up the test. She wanted the students to know that they believe in them. She spoke about BEC and doing hands-on science with Heather Symmes. She also spoke about the items that BEC has helped provide with their fundraising for BES and how they have helped the school.
- BMS Principal - *Mr. John Campbell* - Mr. Campbell spoke about BMS MCAS and the help they received from Mr. Sposato. BMS is preparing for the Fun Run at the end of the year. It is typically one of the biggest fundraisers of the year. Nature's classroom planning has been continuing and the Connex challenge is coming up in May. He noted how much he likes to participate in graduation and that this year's seniors are his first graders.
- Interim Director of Technology - *Mr. Joseph Sposato* - Mr. Sposato shared that MCAS is underway and students and staff have done a great job adapting. There is some technology cleanup going on for some of the technology that is no longer serviceable. They will use a company used in the past to donate the items to. There have been updates to the website. The Tahanto website has been piloted and he asked if anyone sees something to reach out to him so he can address it. He also spoke about the calendar to subscribe to and they will get notifications. Mrs. Hart will update the facebook page.

Bark has also been installed to monitor what students are looking up on their Google chromebooks. It does not block websites, just monitors them. The district has additional items that help lock websites. Parents can subscribe to it. Mrs. Sykes commended Mr. Sposato and Mr. Dave McCarthy for the followup with blocking sites

On May 12th there is an event for the community that the STEAM Committee has developed called the EUREKA speaker series. The speaker is 2024 Nobel Peace Prize laureate in physiology and medicine, Victor Ambrose. It will include an Ask me anything question session.

- **Subcommittee Updates**

- Student Success and Technology Subcommittee - *Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti* - Mrs. Jessica Degliaberti spoke about the cell phone free lunch at Refresh Day. There was also a Cyber Security Day at BES with Boylston police. On April 16th the DA parent meeting is at 6:00pm. She has looked into companies to conduct surveys for a holistic district review and was quoted at \$120k. That amount would not fit the BBRSD budget.
- Budget and Facility Subcommittee - *Mrs. Meagan Grill*
- Superintendent Search Subcommittee - *Mrs. Lori Hart* - Mrs. Lori Hart shared that next Tuesday at 5pm they are interviewing interim candidates.
- Policy Subcommittee - *Mr. Michael Totman* - none

- Any business unforeseen by the chair within 48 hours of the meeting

VII. Business Items

- Approval of the Assessment Payment Schedule - **Vote Needed** - Mr. Osborne spoke about the assessment payment schedule in the regional agreement and what Boylston had previously received. Berlin has paid according to the regional agreement. Either way is fine for cash flow. Mr. Osborne noted there may need to be conversations about it. He felt comfortable adjusting for 2026. On the operational side Boylston is paying accordingly. He asked the committee to allow him to afford both towns the option of the alternate assessment model. He has spoken with both town administrators and treasurers and both are amenable to it. **Motion to authorize the Director of Finance and Operations to allow the member towns of Berlin and Boylston the option to utilize the capital assessment payment schedule provided for in the regional agreement or the alternative schedule that has been historically provided to the town of Boylston for the FY26 year made by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair, All in favor.** Discussion: Mr. Osborne would like to revisit it year to year. **Vote 5-0, motion passes**
- Approval of an Electronic Warrant Signature - **Vote Needed** - **Mr. Osborne** asked the committee to consider an electronic signature for the warrants due to the nature of doing lots more of electronic work. This would allow the person responsible for signing to sign electronically. They would be provided the full warrant at their leisure without worrying about coming into the central office. There are multiple checks and balances through multiple people reviewing. He described the process for how money goes out through the PO process. Once completed, the school committee has a single signer. **Motion that the school committee vote to authorize the use of an electronic signature for the purpose of signing warrants by the designated single signer voted made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti.** Discussion: Mrs. Deglialberti thanks Mr. Osborne. **Vote 5-0, motion passes**
- Approval of the FY26 Calendar - **Vote Needed** - **Motion to approve the FY26 calendar as presented made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair.** Discussion: Mrs. Deglialberti asked if the 25th of August is not used for PD she would like to revisit the school start date being moved up. **All in favor, Vote 5-0, motion passes**
- Approval of Tahanto Japan Field Trip and World Explorers Club - *Mr. Bill Whitehead* - **Vote Needed** - Mr. Bill Whitehead presented a proposed new club called Tahanto World Explorers Club that would end with a trip to Japan for FY26. Each year he would plan to do a specific country or region with weekly meetings to learn about it and then go on the trip around April break. He is working with a representative on the cost of the trip and described the items included. There would be group fundraising to reduce the overall cost of the trip. He spoke to the different aspects the trip would entail. There would be an information night for families. The club would tie into the English and history standards. Mrs. Hart noted that she loved the work that was done in the proposal. There was a previous World Studies Club that traveled to different places. Students are able to join the club and not go on the trip. **A motion to approve the Japan field trip and World Explorers Club made by Mrs. Jessica Deglialberti and seconded by Mrs. Beth Mancini. All in favor, Vote 5-0, motion passes**
- Approval of the donation from the Mark Fidrych Foundation for Unified Sports - *Ms. Lisa Sequeira* - **Vote Needed** - Ms. Sequeira spoke to the donation for the \$1600 stipend for Unified Sports strength and training program. **Motion to approve the donation for Unified Sports**

made by Mrs. Lori Hart and seconded by Mrs. Lisa Mair. All in favor, Vote 5-0, motion passes

VIII. Executive Session I and will not return to open session - Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Purpose (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (BBEA CBA) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares do not need to enter into that session either

Executive Session I was not needed as there was nothing for the school committee that needed to be acted upon.

Executive Session II - The Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee is convening in executive session under Purpose 1 to discuss an Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Lindsay Tierney against the Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee new information has come in and complaint rescind no need to enter into the session. Oml does not require a general posting

Executive Session II was not needed since the OML was dropped.

Reminders: May 5th are the town meetings to approve the budgets and April 15th is when the interim superintendent interviews will be held.

The committee discussed having short notes on the agendas on what gets passed since minutes take time and having timestamps on the topics in the minutes going forward to help locate that section in the videos.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Lori Hart and Mrs. Lisa Mair. All in favor, Vote 5-0, meeting adjourned 8:03pm.

IX. Upcoming Meeting

- May 13, 2025 Open Meeting

The listing of items is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

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