

WEST BOYLSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY November 13, 2013

LOCATION: West Boylston Middle/High School Media Center

PRESENT: SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Owanisian, Chairman
Jennifer Breen
Richard Shaw
Erin Palumbo
James Pedone, Jr.

ADMINISTRATORS

Elizabeth Schaper, Superintendent
Lawrence Murphy, Principal Middle/High School
Christopher LaBreck, Associate MS Principal
Richard Meagher, Elementary Principal
Roger E. Pontbriand, Jr., Business Administrator
Sherri Traina, Special Education Administrator

COMMUNITY

Faculty & Staff:	7	Guests:	22
Student Advisors:	3	Press:	1

Mr. Owanisian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to November 13, 2013 School Committee Meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee Meeting of October 9, 2013; Ms. Breen seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Student Recognition Awards

Mr. Meagher congratulated Ethan Shibley on his student of the month status. He is a fifth grader at Major Edwards Elementary School.

Mr. Murphy introduced the student of the month for the High School, Ellen Canavan, and congratulated her on her accomplishments.

Mr. LaBreck congratulated Julia O'Connor – an eighth grader in the Middle School.

Student Advisory Council

Abby Colangelo, Amanda Benson and Anthony Himmelberger indicated there were several interesting events taking place this month in the West Boylston School District such as: Freshman/Varsity Math Team meetings, National Art Honor Society, a senior from Fitchburg State University is interning with the school nurse, a new group has been meeting called FISH (Friends Inspiring Student Health), and the Middle School is in the process of electing PBIS ambassadors.

Acknowledgment Of Camera Crew

Mr. Owanisian thanked Mr. Bokankowitz for his work filming the meeting.

Highlight on Schools

Dr. Schaper introduced Mr. David Gustafson, high school English teacher, and several of his students who spoke to the Committee about the School to Career (STC) internship program, which was implemented in the 1996-1997 school year.

Mr. Gustafson, the STC program provides qualified juniors and seniors with a “hands-on” work experience. The STC brochure states...Students are encouraged to locate a site, related to their career interests, where they may have the opportunity to develop job skills and good work attitudes that may lead to future employment.

All of the students in attendance from the STC program spoke to the committee and those in attendance about their experience in the program. They talked about where they were interning, what they were learning and how it has affected their decisions regarding future education.

Community Input

There was no community input this evening.

MCAS Reports – ELA Teachers

Teachers from Major Edwards Elementary, Dawn LaRocco, Denis Levesque and Michelle Gangai, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Major Edwards MCAS Analysis 2013 for English Language Arts.

The teachers stated that the areas in which they focused on skills had the most growth. They also stated that the testing showed growth in all areas in comparison with the state average. All of the teachers are continuing to work on open response writing and building stamina with respect to the open response essays and story reading.

The teachers presented a School Wide ELA Action Plan to include:

- Continuing to implement a balanced literacy program
- Faculty members serving on District Curriculum Leadership Team
- Supporting Inclusion/Co-teaching model to increase Special Education students' exposure to general curriculum
- Optimize the schedules of support staff to target students not meeting benchmarks
- Progress monitor students regularly

Mr. Jason DiSalle, English teacher at the Middle/High School, presented information to the Committee regarding the ELA MCAS scores.

Mr. DiSalle stated that the Middle/High School as a whole received a growth percentage of 45%, and in addition, the MHS was ranked #6 in the state for student growth. He also stated that many of the students in grade 6 and 10 scored in the advanced/proficient range.

Mr. DiSalle indicated one of the teachers' goals at the MHS has been to reach an average score of a 3 on the open response paragraphs for the 10th grade exam, and that they are very nearly there.

Mr. DiSalle presented the action plan to the Committee which included such strategies as – across the middle school, rigorous writing is now becoming a routine activity, grade 8 students will have end of year assessments using HS writing rubric, and to continue freshmen composition course targeting students in need.

Energy Savings Program – ABM Services

Mr. Pontbriand introduced representatives of ABM Building Solutions of Woburn, Massachusetts – David O'Brien – General Manager, Mark Turner – Regional Director, and Bob Reddish. All three gentlemen presented information to the Committee regarding their ideas for an Energy Savings Performance Contracting Project for the school district. Mr. Pontbriand indicated that the company operates under the Mass. General Laws Ch. 25a, sec. 11i, and therefore there would be no cost to the town or schools.

Mr. Reddish stated that both engineers and project managers from ABM have walked through both schools in the district, as well as town buildings. They have been gathering information relative to lighting and control systems, etc.

Mr. O'Brien stated that they do not subcontract the work. They have their own lighting/mechanical contractors. He stated that ABM is a national company performing services across the country, not just in Massachusetts. He indicated that they have been most recently working in Shirley, Massachusetts.

Mr. O'Brien indicated that they would replace all lighting in the town buildings reviewed with updated technology, thereby reducing energy costs across the board. They would upgrade the control systems on all buildings. They would retro-fit the boilers to provide natural gas as well as other energy saving systems throughout the district.

The ABM members indicated that the final approval would be made by the Town of West Boylston as to whether or not ABM would be hired to oversee the Energy Savings Project.

Vote to Accept a Donation of a Piano

Dr. Schaper indicated that a family wanted to donate a piano to Major Edwards Elementary School. She asked the Committee members to accept that donation on the school's behalf. Mr. Pedone made a motion to accept the donation of the piano; Ms. Palumbo seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Budget and Chapter 74 Subcommittees. Members of those committees indicated there was nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Owanisian indicated that with regard to the Communications Subcommittee, he met with Dr. Schaper and they decided to meet at budget time to determine what the School Choice strategy would be and at that time. They would tailor their Communications Marketing Campaign to support that. He stated that Ms. Palumbo was to submit a draft to the Banner. She stated that it was still in draft form.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Negotiations Subcommittee. He indicated that the Committee has been negotiating with Dr. Schaper with regard to her contract. Mr. Owanisian stated that all School Committee members, as well as Dr. Schaper, have had a chance to review the contract. Mr. Owanisian called for a motion to approve the agreement. Mr. Shaw made a motion to approve the contract agreement as presented for Dr. Schaper; Mr. Pedone seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Breen indicated that she and Ms. Palumbo had met with Dr. Schaper regarding the IKB – Homework Policy. She stated Mr. Pedone's suggestion relative to adding a policy with relative to kindergarten would be added. She stated that kindergarten parents should expect 15 minutes a week. A correction should be made to grade 3. It should read 30 minutes 4-5 times per week instead of the 20 minutes on the draft. Also – independent reading time will be added. This will be in addition to what is listed. Ms. Breen said that a note was also needed that projects would be in addition to the regular homework. Ms. Breen stated that feedback was received from both the elementary school and the middle school. She noted that not as much was received from the high school due to the different types of courses offered.

Ms. Breen indicated that language would be added to the policy stating that parents may verify that a child has worked their required time by signing homework; however, she stated that we are going to add that if this is becoming something that is common, parents and teachers will need to have a conversation.

Mr. Shaw stated with regard to the last line of the policy, it should be noted that it is just for elementary and middle schools, not necessarily the high school.

Ms. Breen indicated that they hoped a first reading would be presented for the December School Committee meeting.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the School Building Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone indicated that the remaining windows that needed to be repaired in the Middle High School have been completed. He also said the capital needs list has been reviewed so that the items could be prioritized. A discussion was had relative to ABM and where their proposal fits in with the School District's capital needs.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Technology Subcommittee. Mr. Pedone stated they committee met last month and talked about some of the upcoming needs for the PARCC test including what new devices may be required. He mentioned that a study was being conducted with regard to the bandwidth speed that we have through Charter Business. Mr. Bokankowitz indicated that a study was conducted for a week. He stated that we have a greater demand for speed that what we currently have right now. Mr. Pedone stated that more speed will be needed as we have more devices as well as preparing for the PARCC test.

Dr. Schaper stated that we are aware of some progress that the state is trying to make in helping gain funds for school districts in technology improvements because the PARCC test requires some of the students to use a computer to take the test.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Transportation Subcommittee. Mr. Pontbriand stated that a meeting would be needed in the near future, as the third year of our bussing contract is coming to an end at the end of this school year.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Elementary School. Mr. Meagher explained that the staff at Major Edwards continues to be immersed in the Reader's Workshop in ELA. He stated a PBIS assembly will be coming up, and the first student recognition breakfast took place about two weeks ago for grades four and five.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Middle High School. Mr. LaBreck thanked the teachers who helped with Nature's Classroom. He stated it was his eighth at Nature's Classroom, and it was probably the best trip he's been on. Mr. LaBreck stated that a survey was sent out to STEAM parents. He hoped to put that information from the survey together and present it to the School Committee next month.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the High School. Mr. Murphy wanted to mention that the ELA program at the High School was recognized as one of the top 15 high schools as far as student growth was concerned in the state. Mr. Murphy stated that he and students from the Lions Scholars Academy visited the Mass Academy of Math and Science at WPI. They also toured the WPI campus. He indicated that a highlight of the visit for him and the students was the "robotics department."

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Special Education Director. Ms. Traina stated that Pre-school open house was officially last week. Applications are now being accepted for the 2014-2015 school year and they will continue to take applications up until the deadline of Monday, December 2, 2013 with a lottery scheduled for Friday, December 6, 2013.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Business Administrator. Mr. Pontbriand stated that we are still working on the encumbrances for salaries at this time.

Mr. Owanisian asked Mr. Pontbriand if an opinion with regard to the ABM presentation. He stated that it is a qualifications based selection program, so there is no cost involved, no money involved,

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you pick them solely on their qualifications. He indicated that is why this company is doing their due diligence, as they want to show you they are qualified. You could have other companies coming in to provide their qualifications as well. It all comes down to who you trust to work for you.

Mr. Owanisian called for a report from the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Schaper stated she had a very slim Data Dashboard. She said that the information pertaining to vocational numbers and trends will be forthcoming next month. She stated that work with the math curriculum team has begun - to include contact with new vendors that would bring in information that aligns well with the new curriculum frameworks.

Dr. Schaper indicated that Mr. Meagher connected her administrative team with Bruce McDonald from the District and School Assistance Center. Mr. McDonald provided coaching and support to her team relative to developing a learning walk protocol. She anticipates they will meet two more times with Mr. McDonald and will have a plan for the administration and faculty soon.

Dr. Schaper provided the Committee with available dates for the February School Committee Retreat date. Dr. Schaper stated she would schedule Friday, February 21, 2014 for a School Committee Retreat in the Library/Media Center. Mr. Shaw made a motion to schedule the School Committee Retreat for Friday, February 21, 2014; Ms. Palumbo seconded. Motion approved. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Mr. Owanisian called for any School Committee updates. Mr. Owanisian indicated that he attended the annual Massachusetts Association of School Committees Conference on Friday. He stated there was a lot of discussion with relation to the PARCC test. He indicated that the resolution that was approved by the school committee delegates was essentially to petition Governor Patrick and the Commissioner of Education to delay the implementation of PARCC to especially small school districts, due to the fact that these districts simply don't have the bandwidth as of yet to successfully take this test.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made at 9:46pm by Mr. Shaw; seconded by Mr. Palumbo. **Voted: 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Johnson
Recording Secretary