

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2012

Approved 10.24.12

PRESENT:

Mr. Luis DeLoureiro, Secretary
Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. Jim Frey
Mr. John Giger, Vice-chair
Ms Leslie Lathrop
Ms Alison Manugian, Chair

ABSENT:

Mr. Jon Sjoberg

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Anthony Bent, Superintendent
Ms Beth Baker, Assistant Business Manager
Ms Kerry Clery, Director of Teaching, Learning and Accountability
Ms Jeanne Mitchell, Human Resources Manager

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: R. Stewart, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark; M. Battles,
T. Battles, C. O'Neill, Helen Killian, B. Killian, M. Viera

I. Call to Order:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by the chair, A. Manugian.

II. Pledge of Allegiance - Students from the Middle School (Grades 7-8)

Spanish teacher Maria Viera introduced Maxwell Battles and Helen Killian, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following the pledge, Maxwell and Helen did two small skits in Spanish.

III. Announcements

L. Lathrop announced Chris Harren, a former professional basketball player who grew up in Fall River, will be coming to speak about his struggles with addiction on October 30th at 6:00 p.m. at the PAC.

L. Lathrop announced Nashoba Associated Boards of Health will be holding a flu clinic at the high school on Tuesday from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes

L. LATHROP MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 3, 2012 AS AMENDED. SECONDED BY J. GIGER

In Favor: L. Lathrop, A. Manugian, J. Giger, L. DeLoureiro, B. Erickson

Abstention: J. Frey

V. Vote to Accept Warrant Articles

J. FREY MOVED TO ACCEPT ONE PAYROLL WARRANT TOTALING \$836,221.45 AND THREE VENDOR WARRANTS TOTALING \$272,406.25. SECONDED BY J. GIGER

In Favor: J. Frey, L. Lathrop, A. Manugian, J. Giger, B. Erickson

Abstention: L. DeLoureiro

VI. Questions and Comments from the Public

None

J. FREY MOVED TO TABLE THE PRESENTATIONS UNTIL THE CAMERA EQUIPMENT ARRIVES.

SECONDED BY J. GIGER

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VII. Reports**A. Subcommittees**

Curriculum and Instruction - J. Frey reported they met this evening. They will change their status to an ad-hoc committee and meet as needed. Their primary focus will be on evaluating potential additions to the curriculum.

Policy Subcommittee - L. Lathrop reported they met and they would like to revise the Composition of Screening Committee for Superintendent Candidates - Policy BDFB-E-1 by changing "one teacher from Pre-K to grade 4 and one from grade 5 to grade 12" to "two teachers". Members had a first reading of the policy at their workshop and it is ready for the second reading this evening. The policy was reviewed and it was agreed the two references to "Administrative Council" will be changed to "School Leadership Team".

L. LATHROP MOVED THEY ACCEPT POLICY BDFB-E-1 AS A SECOND READING WITH 1-2 TO READ TWO MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM AND TO REPLACE "ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL" IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM. SECONDED BY A. MANUGIAN

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Their next meeting will be in the middle school conference room at 8:00 a.m. on October 31st.

Budget & Finance Subcommittee - No report

Personnel and Negotiations - No report

B. Superintendent

1. Comments on Finland (Information) - Dr. Bent reported he was in Sweden and Finland last week as part of an educational delegation. They visited schools, the University of Helsinki, the University of Stockholm and the Ministry of Education in Helsinki, speaking with teachers and students in each place.

The purpose of the trip was to learn about teacher preparation and instructional practices. Finnish students place in the very top in international testing of 15 year olds in reading, science and math. Education is a high priority and the leaders recognized that education in their small country was crucial to their economic success. Just about all education in Finland is tuition free, from daycare to graduate school, and there are no private schools as we know them. Most children are in daycare and kindergarten, with formal education beginning at age 7 in first grade. Special education services are provided for many students at a much younger age to resolve learning problems before they become serious. Students do not pay for lunches at any level, the school year is 190 days and teachers are educated, committed to working in teams and are highly respected. There is no accountability system through state testing.

Government leaders, school administrators, union leaders and parents trust teachers to work in the best interest of the children.

Dr. Bent said the highest leverage factor for successful schools anywhere is the quality of the teachers and a reminder for him is that they must always view their personnel practices as "Job 1". By fully committing themselves to careful, thorough hiring, supporting professional development of staff and evaluating educators with an emphasis on growth, he said they can promote the kind of trust that exists in Finland and improve the working conditions for American teachers, the culture of schools and the success of the students. He stated it was inspirational to see the level of respect and trust accorded to the teachers.

J. Frey asked if the primary funding for schools is from the national government and Dr. Bent said yes. Teachers earn the same across the country and there is no local collective bargaining. J. Giger asked if athletics are part of the academic program and Dr. Bent said no. L. Lathrop asked about class size and Dr. Bent said it is comparable to what is here. Finland does have a shorter day. B. Erickson asked if they have any enrichment programs. Dr. Bent said it is very academic. All Finns are at least trilingual and study Swedish and Finnish and begin learning English in grade 3. She asked if there are fewer special needs children since they start school at a later age. Dr. Bent said daycare and kindergarten classes are oriented around social rather than academic skills.

C. Director of Business and Finance - On behalf of Mr. Martin, B. Baker reported they are very busy with rolling out the new payroll system. Two test payrolls will happen in December.

D. Advisory Committees - No report

E. Chair

1. Workshop - A. Manugian reported they had a workshop last Saturday. Last year's goals were reviewed and she distributed a draft of the ideas members discussed for goals for this year.

NESDEC joined them and the superintendent search process was reviewed. Jim Frey was chosen as the committee's spokesperson and Leslie Lathrop was chosen chair of the Screening Committee. They are looking for members for the Screening Committee and letters will be going out. Focus groups will run in the next month or so and NESDEC will attend a Groton and a Dunstable selectmen's meeting.

J. Frey distributed a draft copy of the new brochure for review and it will be finalized in a day or two. B. Erickson pointed out the logo needs to be updated. He reported the outreach letters to the Screening Committee have been prepared and a workshop will be held on Saturday, December 8th. Screening interviews will be December 14th and December 17th through December 19th. Deliberation on the results will be on December 20th and 21st. It is expected the Screening Committee should have a recommendation to the school committee by January 9, 2013.

VIII. Presentations

A. Common Core State Standards - K. Clery

K. Clery said in 2010, Massachusetts motioned to adopt these new standards for math and ELA and many districts began implementing them last year. She highlighted DESE's Strategic Goals which include improving pre-K to grade 3 literacy performance, improving grades 5 to 8 mathematics performance, increasing college and career readiness and making effective use of data to improve instruction.

In the ELA/Literacy standard there is a set of broad College and Career Ready Standards (CCR Standards) for each of the areas of reading, writing, speaking/listening and language. They anchor grade specific standards in each of those areas.

With respect to math, the specific standards are listed under domains. Standards without a + sign indicate the minimum students need to know in math to be college or career ready. Mastering high school standards marked with a + sign means a student is ready for more advanced math course work.

In terms of ELA, the emphasis is on college and career readiness from birth. Among other key ideas, there is intentional coherence between standards for reading literature and reading informational text, a strong linkage of reading and writing and detailed standards on writing arguments, explanations and narratives. Developing literate students is a shared responsibility and not just the work of the English teacher. The ability to read progressively more complex text is key to college and career readiness.

In terms of math, the focus is teaching students how to think and make sense of problems, reason abstractly and quantitatively, use appropriate tools strategically, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others and attend to precision.

The eleven domains, previously called strands, were reviewed and K. Clery said there is a lot of continuity. She noted 45 states adopted the Common Core Standards and Massachusetts added additional standards.

J. Giger asked if report cards will reflect the competency in each of the identified domains. K. Clery said they are shifting to the standards-based report card at the elementary level and it will show whether a student is struggling, meeting the standard or progressing toward the standard. A letter will be going out to parents on Monday.

A specific example of a math standard, compared to the old standard, was shown.

DESE's timeline and MCAS assessments for each school year were reviewed. The new standards will be assessed this year with the exception of grade 10 math which will assess the new standards that overlap with the old standards. Individuals from each school were trained on September 18th and a full professional development day for the entire district was held on October 9th to give an in-depth overview of the Common Core Standards. Future early release days will be opportunities to continue the work of aligning curriculum and will be facilitated by the trainers. Principals will be providing additional time for CCSS work.

A. Manugian said policy currently references AEL's which are out of date. She asked if at this point, they should approve the Common Core Standards and take the time to see what else should be added. K. Clery said she would find it hard to believe there would be things to add since there were so many stakeholders. She recommends they approve the standards. Science is looking to release their standards at the end of this year for the initial review and social studies will be after that.

B. MCAS Presentation - K. Clery

K. Clery explained the old NCLB (No Child Left Behind) legislation was that 100% of students had to score Proficient or Advanced on MCAS by the year 2014. The new NCLB legislation is to cut our state's proficiency gaps in half by 2017, thus reducing by half the proportion of students who are not college and career ready.

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) is now PPI (Progress and Performance Index). With AYP, each MCAS score was given a value of 0, 25, 50, 75 and 100 (CPI -Composite Performance Index) and mean scores of ELA and math were used to determine progress and status.

With the new PPI accountability, each MCAS score is given the same CPI but mean scores in science have been added to determine progress and status. The growth of scores from one year to the next in ELA and math (SGP - Student Growth Percentile), high school graduation/drop-out rate and bonus points for increasing Advanced and/or decreasing Warning are part of the accountability.

Slides showing the percentage of scores and CPI points district-wide in ELA and math were reviewed and K. Clery noted they are significantly higher than the state scores since 2009. A slide showing the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced was also reviewed and again, the district's scores are significantly higher across all areas than the state scores.

Each year there are set increments each school needs to make in order to cut their proficiency gap in half by 2017. If you do that, you are a Level 1 school. With respect to the 2012 Accountability Ratings, each school, with the exception of the middle school, is a Level 1. The middle school is a Level 2 and while they are in the top 80% of schools throughout the state, but they did not make the increment this year. They got an 83 PPI for all students but the high needs sub-group (low income, ELL, former ELL and special needs students) did not get the required 75 PPI. A 75 PPI in both groups is necessary to be a Level 1 school.

B. Baker asked if a new student is immediately put into the data pool. K. Clery said they are in this count if they moved in prior to October 1st and after that, they can be separated out from students who were in the district prior to October 1st. If someone comes in from another state, there is no growth data.

IX. Discussions

A. Manugian will have the MASC Resolutions for the next meeting and delegates will be chosen at that time.

Dr. Bent suggested K. Clery be a regular presenter at the school committee meetings. She will do a presentation on the standards-based report card in the future.

X. New Business

None

XI. Adjournment

J. FREY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:37 P.M. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary