

APPROVED

October 2, 2019

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

The October 2, 2019 School Committee (SC) meeting was called to order by Brett Argall at 7:00 PM. He reported that the meeting is being broadcast live and recorded for future rebroadcasting.

School Committee Members present: Brett Argall (Chair), Lisa Brown (Secretary-left 7:51 PM), Becky Charniak, Kelli Grady (Vice Chair), Julie Moulder

School Committee Members Absent:

Non-Voting: Business & Operations Manager Cortney Keegan, Superintendent Kevin Maines

Pledge of Allegiance

Student Representative Report

Jeffrey Trychon of DMS joined the meeting and reported on DMS fall sports, new STEM class, Lego Robotics, yearbook, and Gillette Stadium field trip.

Public Comment & Communication

There was no comment.

Old Business/New Business

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: There was no new business.

Superintendent's Report

Policy BEDH (Public Participation at School Committee Meetings)-1st Reading

Superintendent Maines stated that the State has recommended clarifications relating to the fact that only the court system can determine if public comment is libelous or harassment. In reviewing the district's policy against the State's policy, recommendations were made for items #8-#12. Superintendent Maines reviewed the recommended changes.

Superintendent Maines gave examples of things that have been deemed defamatory by the courts. If a speaker is blatantly vulgar and/or abusive, the Chair may ask the speaker to change their language or ask them to stop speaking.

Ms. Charniak suggested adding language to "Formal complaints against faculty, staff or student body" to include student body family members and community members.

DHS-Science Labs

Superintendent Maines stated that the gas is presently shut off to DHS science labs because small leaks have been found in areas that are not readily visible. Gas is not used in 4 of the 6 science classrooms. It was decided to cap the lines to the 4 classrooms that do not use gas and do a pressure test on the lines leading to the remaining 2 classrooms and see if there are leaks. An appropriate resolution will be determined once the results of the pressure test are known.

District Radios

Superintendent Maines stated that radios for the school psychologist, adjustment counselors, and some administrative staff have been distributed. Radios on repeater have been placed at the Police and Fire Depts., as well as in the main offices of each of the four school

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buildings. Testing will be finished soon. Each building principal will be meeting for training with everyone that has radios. Now every nurse, adjustment counselor, psychologist and administrator has a radio.

MCAS Result Overview

Superintendent Maines stated that some modifications have been made on student achievement, student growth, high school completion rates, progress of students becoming English language proficient, chronic absenteeism, and advanced coursework status. Douglas' absenteeism is better, the ELA proficiency is on line, and advanced coursework and completion rate is above State average.

Superintendent Maines stated that the Adams and Koplik Scholars are in a holding pattern because a grade 10 essay question was pulled, however the essay was completed by the students and a new grading scale needs to be developed. Changes have been made to the scoring rubric.

Superintendent Contract Deadline

Mr. Argall stated that the SC's official position will be discussed during tonight's Executive Session. Superintendent Maines read a newspaper article.

School Committee & Sub-Committee Report

Accounts Payable Report

Ms. Brown stated that on 9/12/19 she signed 3 batches totaling \$68,293.26, on 9/19/19 she signed 7 batches totaling \$270,656.06, and on 9/26/19 she signed 8 batches totaling \$73,511.83.

Consent Agenda

Minutes: September 18, 2019

-Ms. Charniak made a motion to approve the September 18, 2019 School Committee meeting minutes as amended. Ms. Grady seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

DHS-Promotion Requirements

Mr. Romano joined the meeting and presented proposed promotion requirements to create an incentive to get students on track to graduate with only DHS credits and to avoid the current situation of seniors not having the necessary credits needed to graduate. Freshmen would be retained as sophomores until the credits were made up. There are currently no promotion requirements in place. These requirements would also provide guidelines for transfer students. These requirements would start with this year's freshman and would be placed in the Student Handbook and Program of Studies.

Mr. Romano explained the promotion from freshman to sophomore. Students who fail two courses in their freshman year will still be allowed to move on to sophomore. However, no further fails will be allowed without being made up. Ms. Charniak feels that a 25 credit minimum for freshman and a 35 credit minimum for sophomore is a big jump. Mr. Romano explained that each student is enrolled for 35 credits. A clarification may be needed. A discussion was held. These changes may need to be held to start for the Class of 2024.

Mr. Romano is not certain that Douglas needs the requirement to earn 5 credits in math and 5 credits in English each year as students are often well prepared for the MCAS. Mr. Argall is in favor of a math and English credit requirement for each grade level.

There is currently no cap on credits that can be earned each year.

Mr. Romano will continue to talk to the rest of the staff for input. This item will be continued to the next agenda.

District Safety Plan-3rd Reading and Approval

Superintendent Maines stated that nothing has changed since the last meeting. He reminded the SC that this would be a fluid document, subject to updates.

Mr. Argall asked for a typo to be corrected on page 25.

Ms. Keegan stated that some State grants require a district to have a document such as this in place in order to apply.

Superintendent Maines described other possible ways to get out to Rte. 16.

-Ms. Grady made a motion to approve the District Safety Plan as presented. Ms. Charniak seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-4, Ms. Brown abstained.

School Business and Operations Manager Report

Transfers and Reclassifications

There were no transfers or reclassifications.

Other Topics

Superintendent Maines asked if the SC would allow a presentation of the initial planning for the 2020 school year at the next meeting. The SC was in agreement.

Ms. Keegan stated that she will be “dumping” MUNIS into Excel manually to determine the bottom line budget.

Mr. Argall stated that the State Senate is taking up the Student Opportunity Act tomorrow to implement some 2015 findings from the Foundation Review Committee. It is a \$1.5 billion increase over 5-7 years, including changes to Circuit Breaker. He encouraged the public to contact State senators and representatives.

Executive Session

-Mr. Argall stated at 8:19 PM that the SC would be entering into executive session because the open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the committee. When the Executive Session is concluded, the public session will be adjourned and there will be no further public business conducted this evening. Roll Call Vote: Brett Argall – Aye, Becky Charniak – Aye, Kelli Grady – Aye, Julie Moulder – Aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary