

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP SESSION

OF

September 23, 2013

SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AND

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”

RECORDED BY:

MARTHA SIROIS, PUBLIC RECORDER

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METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WORKSHOP SESSION
September 23, 2013

This workshop of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Searles Building, Great Hall, and was posted for 6:30 PM.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen Zanni
Mr. Evan Chaisson, Vice Chairperson (Left meeting @ 7:30P.M.)
Ms. Barbara Grondine, Secretary
Ms. Mary Jean Fawcett
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm
Mr. Robert Vogler

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Brandi Kwong, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Zanni called this workshop to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

Other Business:

Department Presentations

Superintendent-Tonight we will have the following presentations of programs to the Committee:
Jane Sigillo, Director of English Language Learners
Ann Piccilomini, Director of Title One
Bob Kfoury, Director MPS Community Programs

After the presentations, Dr. Kwong will be giving her 2013 Accountability and Performance Overview.

Title I Department

Ann Piccilomini gave her Title I presentation (see attached).

Ms. Grondine-How are the students chosen for Title I?
Ms. Piccolomini-They are chosen by teacher referral.
Ms. Hajjar Kumm-When do students at the Marsh Grammar School start services?
Ms. Piccolomino-Second Grade is up and running and the remaining students should start on Monday.
Mr. Vogler-How much funding did you receive this year?
Ms. Piccolomini-Approx. 1.2 Million Dollars

Mr. Vogler-Is that a decrease in funding?

Ms. Piccolomini-We had an increase this year because of our poverty level.

Ms. Fawcett-What are the responsibilities of the Title I tutors?

Ms. Piccolomini-All of the tutors are doing literacy intervention.

Mayor-Are the tutors paid by the hour?

Ms. Piccolomini-Yes

Superintendent-All of the tutors are Reading Certified.

Language Acquisition Department

Jane Sigillo gave her Language Acquisition presentation (see attached).

Mayor-Why does the number of Grade 8 students serviced decrease in Grade 9?

Ms. Sigillo-Students may test out of the program.

Mr. Chaisson-Is there a different test for Middle School Students?

Ms. Sigillo-We are using the W-APT test for all grades 1-12. We always see higher numbers of students that need to be serviced in the lower grades. Usually after 3 years they are no longer in need of services.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-Please explain why the SEI student numbers are higher in grades 4-6 at the CGS School?

Ms. Sigillo-CGS houses the SEI Classrooms for all students. There is 1 classroom in each grade level, K-4 designated for English Beginners. English Beginners and early intermediate students in Grades 5-6 are combined in one classroom. English Beginners and earlier intermediate students in Grades 7-8 are combined in 1 classroom. English Beginner and earlier intermediate students are levels 1 and 2.

Ms. Grondine-Do the numbers reflect existing students or new students?

Ms. Sigillo-New students.

Ms. Fawcett-When students are tested and it is recommended that they attend the CGS do the parents have to send them to the CGS?

Ms. Sigillo-We highly recommend to the parents that they attend the CGS. If the parents decide to send them to their neighborhood school we give them additional ESL services at the school they are attending.

Ms. Sigillo-Core Academic teachers and Special Education teachers that have at least 1 ELL student in their classroom are required to get the SEI Endorsement. There are several ways to get this endorsement but most teachers have chosen to take the course. D.E.S.E is funding these courses and we are hosting courses here in Methuen. We have filled the courses.

Mr. Vogler-Can any teacher enroll in the course?

Ms. Sigillo-Core Academic and Special Education teachers only.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-When do they take the course?

Ms. Sigillo-They all take place after school.

Mayor-How long does it take until the students are proficient in English?

Ms. Sigillo-Our students are a very diverse group so it depends on the experience and education they come with. The average is 3-4 years with no English background.

Ms. Fawcett-How many different languages are you dealing with?

Ms. Sigillo-39 Languages.

Mayor-If you have 2 or 3 students that speak a different language how do you help a small amount of students?

Ms. Sigillo-We hire tutors that speak their language.

Ms. Fawcett-Is the class taught in English?

Ms. Sigillo-All instruction is in English. The tutor will clarify as needed.

MPS Community Programs

Robert Kfoury gave his MPS Community Programs presentation (see attached).

Mr. Vogler-Commended Mr. Kfoury on the great job he is doing. Does your program offer enrichment?

Mr. Kfoury-We do have enrichment but parents would also like to see us concentrate on homework.

Mr. Vogler-I hear from parents that they are very happy with the program.

Ms. Grondine-If possible, she would like to see a financial report several times a year.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-She likes the Code of Conduct. Will the 3 strikes and you are out be enforced?

Mr. Kfoury-I have asked the staff to allow every student in our program to be successful. We want to be proactive to help the children succeed in our program and put out a fire before it happens.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-What will happen to the program on the afternoons that the schools have upper school dances?

Superintendent-We will all work together to move students around to allow for regular school functions.

Mr. Kfoury-I work closely with other programs and we have good communication.

Mr. Chaisson-Are there any plans in the future to have more students in the program?

Mr. Kfoury-No one is turned away. We need time to make accommodations for new students that is why we ask them to wait 1 month before they start the program. We would also like to offer in the future more advanced enrichment.

Mayor-Is there any issues with late student pick-up?

Mr. Kfoury-No issues at all.

Accountability and Performance Data 2013

Dr. Kwong gave her Accountability and Performance Data 2013 presentation (see attached).

Dr. Kwong-We received the Data earlier than usual this year. All the Data became public last Friday. I will be meeting with the individual schools to go over their school's Data. We are a Level 3 District. If 1 school in the district is designated as a level 3 the entire District is Level 3.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-Is the Timony close to the next level?

Dr. Kwong-Yes

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-Why do you think Grade 6 went down?

Dr. Kwong-We are trying to pinpoint why.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-How is the staff balancing the needs of all students?

Dr. Kwong-We are using Test wiz to help identify students that are advances so that we can give those students more advantages to grow. We have given that information to the teachers at the start of school. Teachers can now look at the Test wiz information on their own.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-Will the principals be using this type of information for the teacher evaluations?

Dr. Kwong-Yes

Ms. Fawcett-What kind of support is being put in place for students that are struggling?

Dr. Kwong-We have reading tutors in the elementary grades in all schools. We do not have reading intervention in the upper schools. We have just started a new program at the high school.

Ms. Fawcett-What will the math tutors be using?

Dr. Kwong-We are looking at that now to decide what we will use.

Ms. Grondine-This is a terrific handout.

Mayor-Are we at Level 3 because of the high school?

Dr. Kwong-Yes

Mayor-Research is showing that if you eliminate open concept classrooms the scores will increase. The new teacher evaluation is very important. The Italian teacher did a great job with the exchange students. The football game will be rescheduled because of the West Nile Virus. We had a very nice fundraiser Saturday night for the new stadium turf. Parents are raving about the new high school.

***ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to conclude the Workshop Session for the evening at 7:49PM.

MOTION: Ms. Grondine moved to adjourn the Workshop at 7:49PM.
Ms. Hajjar-Kumm seconded.

VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools