

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP

OF

JANUARY 25, 2016

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:

DEIDRE RUNGE, PUBLIC RECORDER

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METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WORKSHOP
JANUARY 25, 2016

This workshop of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Media Center at Timony Grammar School and was posted for 6:30 pm

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb - PRESENT (P)
Mr. Robert Vogler - P
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm - P
Ms. Joyce Campagnone – P
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio –P
Ms. Jana DiNatale - P
Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson - P

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson
Ms. Joyce Campagnone
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio (left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.)
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm
Mr. Robert Vogler

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Brandi, Kwong, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Gina Bozek, Director of Student Services
Ms. Danielle Dillman, Special Ed. Administrator for Out of District Students
Mr. Richard Barden, MHS Principal
Ms. Lisa Golobski Twomey, English 7-12 Coordinator
Mr. John Crocker, MHS Guidance Dept. Chair
Mr. Edward Lussier, Director of Instructional Technology
Ms. Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

Call to Order

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

Mayor Zanni – I want to mention that last week we had 2 – 3 incidents in the district. I think the Superintendent, Administration and students did well. The FBI worked very well with the City. Thank you for a job well handled.

1. MHS Program of Studies 2016-2017 English Department - Discussion

Superintendent – This is a perfect venue for a discussion. After tonight we will bring it to the next meeting for a vote.

Dr. Golobski – The information I gave you in your packet answers all the questions you had at the last meeting. The bold titles in grades 11 and 12 represent what will go to grade 10. Each of the full year classes have writing in them.

Mayor – My understanding this is to align our curriculum with MCAS.

Dr. Golobski – Yes it also makes room for more advancement.

Ms. DiNatale – This makes more sense to now with it all in front of me. Can the teachers handle the load?

Dr. Golobski – Yes

Ms. DiNatale – I have some concerns with the language. Why did you pick “The Money” it had a lot of adult language.

Dr. Golobski – Most literature has this language like “Lord of the Flies” which is a classic and read for years. Books like “The Money” we have had great results with it and it is the safest way to go with mature themes.

Mr. DiZoglio – My only concern is with 10th grade and when they take the MCAS test. Will they be prepared?

Dr. Golobski – I think they will be much more prepared. I feel safer with them having this course.

Ms. Kumm – I was concerned with any works that were going to be removed. Will both level 3 and level 4 cover all these texts?

Dr. Golobski – Level 4 would get through it all where level 3 may make choices. Level 3 classes want to read more independently.

Mr. Vogler – I would love to see added “Profiles and Courage” it would tie into the moral compass. I don’t care for the title “Rebel.” What about level 2?

Dr. Golobski – There is no level 1 or 2 they all fall in to level 3.

Mr. Barden – There is no level 2 at Methuen High School.

Mr. Deeb – I don’t like the title “Rebel” like Mr. Vogler. The common core I am adamantly against. I will oppose it. If they are going to mandate this then don’t ask me to vote on it. Also I would be a little concerned that some will not have a lot of time to complete the very ambitious list.

Dr. Golobski – If I omit some from the list I would wonder about the rigor. I feel level 4 will get through this list. Also some books we already purchased and didn’t belong now we have found a place for them. There will be as much literature as composition.

Dr. Kwong – It is clear Dr. Golobski has exquisite skills in this area and we are looking at 7th and 8th grade realignment. The time on learning and the theme will be great in these grades. She will help us with this alignment.

Mr. DiNatale – Are you looking at 7th and 8th grade for next year?

Dr. Kwong – We are trying. We now have it reading and writing as separate classes but we would love to start this process. We don’t want to stop reading when you’re writing.

Mayor – Hi expectations is good. In January of next year please give us an evaluation of the programs.

Mr. Barden – I would just like to say the word rigor is important in the NEASC Accreditation process. That is what we are trying to put forward. College and career readiness is a priority. This gives our students a great chance.

Mayor – We will put this back on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.

2. Teacher Licensure – Discussion

Mr. Deeb – I requested this to be on the agenda because it has been brought to my attention teachers are not teaching what they are licensed for.

Dr. Kwong – 100% of our teachers teach what they are certified in. There are only 12 teachers that don't but 20% can teach out of what they are certified in.

Mr. Deeb – Grade 5 is when I decided to go into Social Studies field. Can we go back and look to see what the license that they have are when teaching to subjects.

Kr. Kwong – Collaborative teaching experiences work. I taught science and social studies and it worked well. A self contained classroom in 6th and 7th grade doesn't work out. Middle school teams should be meeting and working together. NELMS tells us how to do it. My expectation is for a teacher in 8th grade to teach 8th grade.

Superintendent – K-8 schools were built on an educational plan. The parents spoke loudly about 7th and 8th graders not having different teachers for every subject. 9th grade has a little bit meshed like 7th and 8th

Mr. Vogler – What exactly is 8th grade pathway?

Dr. Kwong – We divided Ancient History into 7th and 8th grade and moved U.S. History to 9th grade.

Mr. Vogler – I think team teaching is wonderful. Parents loved it. 9th grade teaming is also great. It helps to reach a maturity level and rigor you have to in grade 9.

Ms. Kumm – I have twins in 9th and I can tell you I never noticed a teacher wasn't certified in their 8th grade classes. They were well prepared entering the 9th grade.

Mayor – My personal experience conversing and working together when preparing weekly/daily lessons brought it to the forefront. It worked out well for us.

Superintendent – I want to mention in your packet was an FYI on the dropout rate.

Mr. Crocker – We have a cohort that interacts with students.

Mr. DiZoglio – To students get held back?

Mr. Barden – If we see a student struggling we put them in the cohort, encourage them to go to summer school... and try to get them back on track.

Mr. Crocker – It's a very low retention rate students usually just need to catch up in some courses.

Mr. Barden – What's hard is some student might register at MHS and be here for 2 days and they count against us in our reports.

Ms. Bozek – The population of students that are not on track and impacts our cohort also include our special education students that are ours until age 22 when they age out.

Mayor – How many special education students do we have?

Ms. Bozek – We have 277 in high school, 818 in grammar schools and 114 in out of district placements totaling 1360 or 17% of the student population.

Mayor – Are we certain the kids that enter into our system live in Methuen?

Superintendent – We do a tremendous job tracking down those that don't.

Mr. Barden – We have a “targeted intervention system” offering kids that enter our system a reading enhancement to ensure they read at grade level, We also have a co-teaching model grant that helps the marriage between special ed. and regular ed. teachers working on how they work together.

Mayor – I see the schools doing a tremendous job. The home doesn't help out.

Ms. Bozek – When students are on IEP's we are mandated to meet with parents and discuss supports at the home.

Mr. Vogler – I did co-teaching and found many parents are overwhelmed. It's a State issue. There are flaws in the system.

Ms. Kumm – Not sure how you get parents involved; like the math night that you offered to inform parents of the new math and 20 people showed up.

Mr. Nick DiZoglio left the meeting at 7:43.

3. Special Education Department – Out of District Placement - Discussion

Superintendent – Ms. Dillman and Ms. Bozek shared with you the current trends with Out-of-District (O-O-D) students. We don't see this changing. This will be a big money piece in the future.

Ms. Dillman – The O-O-D population has changed significantly. These samples we passed out are samples of the type of population we are seeing. We have 137 cases. Only 114 are Methuen funded students. The remaining students are ours programmatically (students another town pays for but we educate them) because they are in group homes, DMH, homeless... It also impacts our in district programming. There are 7 group homes in Methuen and St. Anne's makes 8. We have seen a 400% increase.

Ms. Bozek – There are our kids you are reading about. They have intense needs.

Ms. Dillman – As a School Committee member you need to see and be educated about out placement students.

Ms. DiNatale – Obviously reading these I feel very strongly that these students need to be O-O-D.

Ms. Bozek – They are our students with disabilities and have a right to an education.

Ms. DiNatale – Under no circumstances you can expel a student?

Superintendent – No. Students have rights. Mental health is over the top. Representative, Campbell, and DiZoglio and Senator Ives have agreed to come and hear from us and upcoming needs.

Mayor – This is a cost factor?

Superintendent – Yes it is.

Ms. Kumm – We don't want to see cuts with our regular education students.

Ms. Dillman – We do have 375 students that are in our schools in self contained classrooms but we do not want to have these 137 students in our schools. There are students that we do bring back that have had success in their outside placements and are striving.

Mayor – Do you see it interrupt the regular ed. Classrooms?

Superintendent – It does not impact classes but does impact our staff. Our staff does a great job with this.

Ms. DiNatale – I have so many concerns. I think we have to weigh them. I think it's wrong to allow them in the classroom. I don't think our kids should be around this. School is supposed to be a safe place. I would rather find more funding.

Ms. Dillman – We are at a point where we do have 50 of our students at the collaborative and out of the classroom. Our autistic student population in the next 1-5 years will be reaching adolescence which is a concern. These are the years that impact them.

Ms. Kumm – Again I do not want to see our regular ed. budget affected by these costs.

Ms. DiNatale – Do we need more guidance councilors?

Superintendent – Yes we are looking at that.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss at this workshop, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 pm, and enter into executive session thus concluding this workshop for the evening.

MOTION: Ms. DiNatale moved to adjourn this workshop at 8:24 p.m. and enter into executive session for the purpose to discuss negotiations.
Ms. Campagnone seconded the motion.

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools