

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP MEETING

OF

OCTOBER 23, 2017

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 MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2017

This Workshop Meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held at Methuen High School, Media Center, and was posted for 6:30PM

ROLL CALL

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb (P)
Mr. Robert F. Vogler, Secretary (P)
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson (P)
Ms. Joyce C. Campagnone (P)
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio (NP)
Ms. Jana DiNatale (P)
Mayor Stephen Zanni, Chairperson (P)

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb (P)
Mr. Robert F. Vogler, Secretary (P)
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson (P)
Ms. Joyce C. Campagnone (P)
Ms. Jana DiNatale (P)
Mayor Stephen Zanni, Chairperson (P)

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Brandi L. Kwong, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Richard Barden, Supervising Principal Methuen High School
Christopher Reeve, Supervising Principal Comprehensive Grammar School
Mary Jean Fawcett, Interim Supervising Principal Marsh Grammar School
Mary Beth Donovan Grassi, Supervising Principal Tenney Grammar School
Timothy Miller, Supervising Principal Donald P. Timony Grammar School
Ms. Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni called this Workshop Session to order at 6:30PM with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above. He requested to amend the Agenda and remove the Executive Session.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to amend the Agenda to remove the Executive Session and

accept the Agenda as amended
Ms. Campagnone seconded the motion

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Superintendent-The Principals from each building will walk you through their School Improvement Plans. The Assistant Superintendent will walk you through the District Goals. She read the Methuen Public Schools Vision Statement. They build our Initiatives around this Vision Statement.

Dr. Kwong gave the District Improvement Plan presentation.

Dr. Kwong-This evening they are focused on Priority Improvement Initiatives. These District and School Improvement Plans are not all of the things they do in this District. They are focused on their improvement efforts. This is how the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has structured the Improvement Plans. They want them to dive deeper and narrow their focus on the academic, support, family and social/emotional improvement efforts and focus on those each year so there is not a wide variety of initiatives to tackle.

Dr. Kwong gave her District Improvement Plan presentation

Mr. Deeb-These goals and action plan are very ambitious and very well put together. He appreciated the work that has gone into these plans. The goals that are established by the (DESE) are these used by schools Statewide?

Dr. Kwong-Yes. They are focused on the same topics.

Mr. Deeb-The School Councils in the past were involved in putting these plans together. What is the role of the School Council now when it comes to these plans?

Superintendent-She sits with each School Council during their first meeting of the year and they discuss the plan. She does ask them what they would like to see in the plans. The School Councils meet 4 times a year and the information from those meetings is shared with her. The School Councils consist of teacher, parents and Community members.

Mr. Deeb-Are the School Council members elected?

Superintendent-Some buildings have elections if they have a large number of people that want to be on the Council. Some buildings do not have enough people so they do not hold elections.

Ms. Hajjar Kumm-She want to thank them for what they accomplish with a District this size and the diversity they have in the Community. To see them continue to push to do the best for our students, families and staff is great. She is happy they have recognized that the families and parents are the key. They can do a lot of things but without the parent/guardian support they would not have the results that they could. The portal will also be a big part of that. It is nice to see that you are already seeing some positive results with this program and that they are going in the right direction. We have amazing staff and administrators that keep us going forward.

Mayor-The social aspect and what they do with our kids is tremendous. The effectiveness between the homes and the schools has been outstanding over the last few years. He is concerned about Curriculum. He is looking at two things on the District Goals. First on page 7 you talk about implementation of science in grades 3-4 which is a partial. What do you mean by the word partial?

Dr. Kwong-Partial means that they have science in their schedule every single day for a set number of minutes in grades 3-8. They increased the minutes in those grades this year with some schedule changes. The partial implementation is that there are 3-5 units that have been aligned and the expectation this year is that they have to complete 2 units of the 3-5 units as they get familiar with the new Curriculum. Those were identified by the upper school teachers as things that are typically missed on the Grade 5 MCAS. Next year they will be expected to use 100% of the Curriculum.

Mayor-How much time do they get each day?

Dr. Kwong-35-40 minutes for grades 3 and 4. Grades 5-8 receive 50-60 minutes every day.

Mayor-Implement the use of Data Driven. In most of the schools they are almost there. We are now talking about the computer base test. There is no level associated with grades 3-8 this year correct?

Dr. Kwong-Correct

Mayor-Have you seen or are you having a change from what you currently have in place to what you need to have in place?

Dr. Kwong-In regards to the MCAS Data?

Mayor-Yes

Dr. Kwong-You will be seeing a change in how they look at the data. They just received new data on Friday so they will see how they have to realign to look at that data. They can still see how the students do by standard, which is really important for them. That will not change.

Principal Barden gave his presentation on the Methuen High School Improvement Plan

Ms. DiNatale-Are we at 100% use for the student portal?

Principal Barden-We are at 99%. Students are going in and checking their attendance and grades. He has also been informing parents through the website and Connect Ed calls to contact the Guidance Dept. and update their email addresses.

Ms. DiNatale-What percentage are we at with the parents using the portal?

Principal Barden-The last report he received there were over 1400 families.

Ms. DiNatale-Are all the teachers using the grade book

Principal Barden-Yes

Ms. DiNatale-She is thrilled with the Community Service and the students reaching out to the Community. She has see them out in the Community and she thinks that it not only exposes them to a huge variety of jobs, it also gives them the opportunity to enrich their applications to colleges and possibly giving them the opportunity for more scholarships.

Mayor-He looked at the Proficient and Advanced. In the Proficiency category we outscored the State. In the Advanced category we are just a little bit behind. We are currently assessing the sub groups and he feels the new School Committee will have to focus on this. He feels they need to bring in teachers to help those students. Almost all of our students at the high school

did well. That is attributed to things that are being done within the sub groups. We are in good shape with the amount of students in the AP courses and both Proficient and Advanced with the proficient outscoring the State. We are meeting the needs of 80% of our students. We have 20% that are having some difficulty that we are going to continue to focus on.

Superintendent-The Family Resource Center is very important. All students are registered and tested there which will help in making the right placements. We get 30-40 new students monthly and the same amount that withdraw monthly. That constant movement impacts our scores.

Principal Reeve gave his presentation on the Objectives for all four grammar schools. (Each Principal will then speak about what is unique in their buildings)

Ms. DiNatale-Students in grades K-4 will receive ELA and math support. Are they still doing enrichment for the students that are remaining in the class?

Principal Reeve-The classroom teacher is able to differentiate the students that are in their classrooms and students that need ELL support or Special Education support will have that. Students are not always pulled from the classroom the teachers also come into the classroom to provide the support needed.

Ms. DiNatale-If students need extra help, they are either being taken out of the classroom or someone is coming into the classroom to help them or, is it the regular classroom teacher?

Principal Reeve-The regular classroom teacher will provide support or enrichment activities for their class. If there are students that have services, such as an Individual Education Plan (IEP), then the Special Education teacher would work with that student during that 30 minutes.

Ms. DiNatale-If the classroom teacher is providing support for the students who need extra help, what are the other students doing during that time period?

Principal Reeve-Enrichment activities on the same topic.

Ms. DiNatale-Is it independent?

Principal Reeve- No. The classroom teacher differentiates the activities for all students. Those that are above and those that are below. They provide the activity and circulate amongst the students.

Principal Reeve highlighted what is unique to the Comprehensive Grammar School.
(highlighted in the handout)

Principal Donovan-Grassi highlighted what is unique to the Tenney Grammar School.
(highlighted in handout)

Ms. Hajjar Kumm-She appreciates what they are doing about students that are chronically absent. In Methuen we do not sit back and accept the challenges. We say "what can we do"? At the end of the day it is a team effort. We need the families to partner with the schools to help the students succeed.

Principal Fawcett highlighted what is unique to the Marsh Grammar School. (highlighted in handout)

Principal Miller highlighted what is unique to the Donald P. Timony Grammar School.
(highlighted in handout)

Mr. Miller also wanted to thank Mr. Brouder, Drug and Alcohol Coordinator. Mr. Brouder always has a quick response when contacted about a student.

Mr. Voger-The plans are very good. The words are great but the deeds are more important. The School Committee and the Community is very appreciative of the staff in each one of your schools with addressing the K-8 diversity. In the past you have all reached level 2. The staff, administration and guidance have made that happen and he hopes the support will continue with the new School Committee with the funding you will need for new positions. Don't be shy about making requests to the budget to make improvements. If you don't request something the School Committee will never know you need it. Some of our K-8 schools have almost made level 1. The high school is a challenge. He has never felt that 1 test gives you a picture as to what is happening. We are now changing the MCAS test again next year and it will be more difficult than before. He feels the high school staff has done a great job and we are getting closer. You have plans for the high risk students. They are the students they need to concentrate on. He commends all of the principals and encourages them to ask for the support they need.

Ms. Hajjar Kumm-They see the challenges with the budgets. Money doesn't change everything. In our district we prove that we can get good results without a lot of funding. We do not have bloated budgets. There is always a purpose to the funding. Mr. Miller mentioned that 44% of students are repeat offenders in his building. How do you bring in the family on that? She is a firm believer that you need family support to get results quicker.

Mr. Miller-Before students go to SOAR Camp, parents are invited in to meet with administration. It is unfortunate that out of that 44%, there are some that will not respond to them. That is usually a good indicator why that student is in the 44%. We don't place the students in the program to sit in the corner. They are taught appropriate ways to handle things.

Ms. Hajjar Kumm-You are giving students an opportunity to be a better person and she appreciates that. If they don't have a role model at home, she is grateful that they can have a good role model at school.

Ms. DiNatale-The health teachers that are coming in for grades K-4, is their curriculum online for parents to look at?

Superintendent-We are still working on the curriculum. Our goal is to bring it to School Committee and then put it online. We will also have a Parent Night. She has met with the Tenney Grammar School Council and they had a lot of suggestions. It was very informative and she enjoyed meeting with them.

Ms. DiNatale-When parents are not responding to all of the outreach that you are doing she hopes they are utilizing the outside resources available to the schools. She also wanted to thank everyone. She looks at this and is so confident that we are addressing the needs of the students as a whole. Their emotional needs as well as their educational needs. They are receiving every possible service and we are providing services to families. When she looks at the activities that are happening, she gets so excited as a parent to hear about all of the innovation and all the things they are doing to help our parents feel like partners in our schools and to have all the information. It is exciting for her to see this.

Mayor-What you all have done for this Community has afforded our students the chance to succeed. We have no fees for transportation, kindergarten and athletics. Some families could

not afford these fees. We are affording the best education possible under some of the restraints they have, along with some of the issues they have. We are meeting the students needs. Breakfast and before school, the school day and after school. At some point someone else has to take over. It can't all be put on the schools. The School Committee is very pleased and he thanked Superintendent Scannell and Assistant Superintendent Kwong for bringing this forth. They had a good presentation at a previous meeting about PBIS and we all understand that concept which has been good for the School District.

***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 7:25 pm.

MOTION: Ms. DiNatale moved to adjourn the Workshop Session at 7:25 pm.
Ms. Hajjar Kumm seconded the motion

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

Methuen Public Schools