

**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**WORKSHOP SESSION**

**OF**

**October 28, 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**  
**October 28, 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  
Ms. Barbara Grondine, Secretary  
Ms. Mary Jean Fawcett  
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm  
Mr. Robert Vogler

**MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Evan Chaisson, Vice Chairperson

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

**CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:**

1. Mayor Zanni called this Workshop to order at 6:26 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

**Other Business:**

**1. School Improvement Plans**

Superintendent-The school principals started this process in August. They have been working with teams of teachers in their buildings.

Dr. Kwong-This is a condensed plan. For level 3 and 4 schools the D.E.S.E is asking for this type of excellerated plan. The MHS plan is a bit different from the other plans. At MHS we are working on "high risk" students.

**Methuen High School**

Mr. Giuca presented his Accelerated Improvement Plan for Methuen High School

Mr. Giuca-The direction MHS is going is to help "at risk" students. The administration got together over the summer to talk about the students and how we can help them stay in school.

Mr. Vogler-He is impressed with the plan. 94% of students that have gone through our K-8 schools graduate from high school. Do we know the graduation percentage rate for non K-8 students?

Mr. Giuca-The Guidance Department has just started to track that information.

Dr. Kwong-We could figure that out from previous years but it would have to be done by hand. We can see it from grades 3-10 it is about 100 students.

Mr. Vogler-Do we track our G.E.D students?

Dr. Kwong-They are tracked by the state.

Mr. Giuca-When one of our students drops out of school we try to keep in-touch with them.

Ms. Fawcett-The packet is put together very well. Are we looking at individual plans for students that are failing?

Mr. Giuca-Yes

Mayor-On page 11 you talk about the graduation rate. Attendance rate helps students succeed. Maybe there could be 2 or 3 assemblies per year for parents about attendance.

Superintendent-We have started a new program twice a month with the students called Connections. This past Friday's Connections was about attendance.

Mr. Giuca-The student/teacher ratio for the Connections groups is 12/1. Mr. Giuca ask the student representative, Devon Heffernan how she liked Connections. Devon stated "it was really good".

Mr. Giuca-We will be sending out letters when grades close in regards to student attendance. The assistant principals will also be making calls to parents. We want to make parents part of the solution.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-She likes what she sees and thinks the district is doing everthing they can. She just hopes the parents get involved.

### **Comprehensive Grammar School**

Mr. Reeve presented his Accelerated Improvement Plan for Comprehensive Grammar School

Mayor-In the table on page 3 the Math rate for grade 8 is above the State Statistics. Do we have last year's scores?

Dr. Kwong-Yes they are in the Accountability and Performance Data Booklet.

Mr. Vogler-Why was there such a dramatic jump in grade 8 scores?

Mr. Reeve-He is not sure but he will look into it.

### **Marsh Grammar School**

Mr. Sierpina presented his Accelerated Improvement Plan for Marsh Grammar School

Mr. Vogler-Are the students using Chrome Books?

Dr. Kwong-Not yet. Probably after the first of the year. We have purchased them just waiting for them to be delivered.

Ms. Grondine-She is glad to see that attention on the lower grade students that need help but she does not want us to forget the students that are on task.

Mr. Sierpina-We have enrichment for those students to keep them moving forward.

### **Tenney Grammar School**

Mr. Gosselin presented his Accelerated Improvement Plan for Tenney Grammar School.

Mr. Vogler-It is interesting that grades 3 and 4 are competitive with the state.

Mr. Gosselin-They are doing well and we would like to expand that success through our other grades.

**Timony Grammar School**

Mr. Miller presented his Accelerated Improvement Plan for Timony Grammar School

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-She asked Mr. Miller to explain the elimination of excess recess time. Superintendent-We have to report to the D.E.S.E how much time is spent in the classroom. After an extensive review we needed to eliminate extra recess. At lunch the students only have 30 minutes and the parents want to make sure their children have enough time to eat. We do have a working snack time. The students do get up and move around the classroom.

Ms. Fawcett-She has mixed feelings about recess. She is very impressed about what is happening at MHS. We need to start identifying potential drop out students at a young age, 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She is impressed with all the data and results. She is anticipating the next data to have a substantial increase. These plans were fantastic.

Mr. Vogler-Looking at potential drop out students in the upper schools is a great idea. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent night was fantastic. He wants to commend the Principals and the Superintendent.

Mayor-With the new evaluation system for the teachers are they evaluated every year?

Dr. Kwong-Everyone gets evaluated every year. Year 1 is a formative evaluation and year 2 is a summative evaluation. It is an intense process for all the right reasons.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-That is why we approved the dean's salaries so that this could be done.

Mayor-I have seen a lot of positive things that the principals have done in the schools. The Superintendent told me she was very happy that so many people attended the MHS Open House. He appreciates everything the principals do.

Superintendent-It is all about accountability. It starts from the top. It is a year of change.

Dr. Kwong-John Crocker from the Guidance Department will be meeting with the upper school deans and identifying the "at risk" students.

Ms. Fawcett-It is exciting that it is being done together and not in pockets.

Superintendent-FYI Senior fieldtrips will be on Saturdays through out the school year.

Mr. Giuca-The end of the year is so busy for seniors so we worked with advisors and they are going to start the senior trips earlier. Mr. Giuca asked the student advisor Devon Heffernan how the seniors felt about this. She said that the students were excited and financially it works out great so that the students don't have to come up with the money all at once.

Ms. Fawcett-Do we have consideration for financial issues with students?

Mr. Giuca-Yes they are handled through the guidance department.

Ms. Hajjar-Kumm-It was great to be at the open house. She was impressed with the classrooms and teachers. Teachers did a great job explaining what they are doing in the classrooms. Great idea to invite the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students/parents as well as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students/parents.

Ms. Grondine-She was impressed with the number of staff that was in attendance.

Student Representative Devon Heffernan commented that a few days before the Open House the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from each school came to MHS for a tour.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – NEGOTIATIONS/LITIGATIONS:** No

**\*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 7:37 PM.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn the Workshop at 7:37 PM.  
Ms. Hajjar-Kumm seconded.

**VOTE:** 5-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools