

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES
OF
THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP
OF
NOVEMBER 25, 2019
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

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WORKSHOP SESSION
NOVEMBER 25, 2019

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

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

ROLL CALL

Robert F. Vogler (P)
Susan M. Nicholson (P)
Nicholas DiZoglio, Vice Chairperson (P)
Jana DiNatale (P)
Dennis D.J. Deeb, Secretary (P)
Jana Zanni Pesce (P)
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (P)

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert F. Vogler
Susan M. Nicholson
Nicholas DiZoglio, Vice Chairperson
Jana DiNatale
Dennis D.J. Deeb, Secretary
Jana Zanni Pesce
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Brandi L. Kwong, Superintendent of Schools
Eric S. McGee, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments & Grants
Ian Gosselin, Business Administrator
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Jajuga called this Workshop Session to order at 6:30PM with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION: Member Vogler moved to accept the agenda for November 25, 2019
Member DiNatale seconded the motion to accept

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

Flag Salute

Public Participation

Rev. O. Daniel Stanley, Jr.

1. DESE Report Discussion/Presentation

Superintendent Kwong and Dr. McGee presented the DESE Report

Questions on the 11 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Member DiNatale-She is matching this up to page 25 in the report. She expected to see more detail in measurable goals and immediate progress.

Superintendent Kwong-It will take her one year to write her 3-5 year plan. All the action plans will be in this plan.

Member DiNatale-Is there something that can be done now? She feels like it is taking too long. Another concern for her is suspensions. They need to reach those students now.

Superintendent Kwong-There is no strategic plan yet but that does not mean they are not working on many of these issues now.

Member Nicholson-There are many topics in the first recommendation. The data and root analysis does not happen overnight. Before they can put an Improvement plan together, they need to insure the people working together have Professional Development in data analysis. Have the teachers had Professional Development in data analysis?

Dr. McGee-His focus has been the K-6 reading program. Rather than trying to analyze data in the first three months of implementation, they asked teams of teachers on a voluntary basis to set as a professional practice goal, to look at the assessment tools used in this program. The high school department chairs are further along in doing data analysis and are practicing it.

Member Nicholson-She is concerned with the capacity of teachers to analyze the data. The district needs to support them in learning how to do this.

Superintendent Kwong-She went to each building and did data analysis with the administrators. Common planning times in September were used by the administration to start those conversations. They have not provided Professional Development for data analysis as a District. It has been done through common planning with teams and then meeting with educators.

Member Nicholson-Would you consider the writing of the School Improvement plans and the District Improvement plans part of the overall improvement that is being referred to in the recommendation.

Superintendent Kwong-Yes.

Member Nicholson-Can she include the stakeholders in the creation of those documents this year?

Superintendent Kwong-That is the plan. Everyone needs to be involved in that process.

Member Nicholson-Have you thought about the creation of a District Data team.

Superintendent Kwong-There is a great data functioning team at the high school. K-8 schools have a lot going on and she is not sure how much more they can ask them to do. She is being cautious asking people to give more time.

Member Nicholson-She will be coming back with some ideas about these recommendations.

Recommendation 2

No Questions

Recommendation 3

Member Deeb-What do they have in place for Curriculum Maps and what is needed?

Superintendent Kwong-On the top is what is in place. They do not have the K-2 Science and K-5 Social Studies done yet.

Member Deeb-Do they have old maps for those grades?

Superintendent Kwong-Yes

Dr. McGee-When standards change and curriculum change, you will always need to update the Maps. This will always be in need of updating.

Member Vogler-He feels staff needs a lot of Professional Development and they need outreach to students and parents.

Recommendation 4

Member DiNatale-The Budget is on the Governor's desk. Will they be adding staff and what will that look like? Methuen Public Schools is not top heavy with administration; it is lacking administration at many levels.

Superintendent Kwong-That will be addressed in Slide 16.

Recommendation 5

No Questions

Recommendation 6

Member Zanni Pesce-Has anyone considered parental/student feedback?

Superintendent Kwong-Yes, we receive student feedback by how they are doing in school.

Member Zanni Pesce-She would like a teacher evaluation by students and parents.

Superintendent Kwong-That would have to be part of teacher negotiations.

Member DiNatale-Older students should be able to have conversations or surveys about their experience. They would have to bargain that with the teachers.

Superintendent Kwong-If it is going to be used for evaluations, yes.

Member DiNatale-They could use it just for feedback.

Member Vogler-It would be a form of evaluation. He thinks it would be good to check with other systems and see what they do.

Recommendation 7

No Questions

Recommendation 8

Member Deeb-He has a real concern with this. He agrees to increase a diverse staff. He has an issue with setting numbers. The best person should get the job.

Superintendent Kwong-She should have put in the recommendation any new staff by 10%. This is a conversation statewide. There is a real focus on this at the state level. Our student population in the entire State is 40% diverse and 60% white. The teaching staff in the entire State is 90% white and 10% diverse. The idea that they would put quality aside for diversity is not correct.

Member Vogler-It would be a positive thing for the students to have a more diverse staff.

Member Deeb-It is beneficial to have a diverse staff.

Member DiNatale-How do you define diverse staff and what percentage of the staff falls under that definition?

Superintendent Kwong-Students are more successful being taught by someone who looks like him or her. She does not have that staff information. She corrected her earlier comment. This district is 51% diverse students and 49% white.

Member DiNatale-She does think having the numbers is detrimental. It is going to be very hard to judge and you cannot ask. She also feels the number is too low. She would like her to think about if she has a number, how is she going to measure that.

Recommendation 9

Member Deeb-This is a problem in the surrounding area and many districts are dealing with this. He commends the Superintendent for being proactive in this area. Do we suspend students who fall under chronic absences?

Superintendent Kwong-No, they are not being suspended for chronic absences. There is progressive discipline at the high school. It is in the handbook.

Member DiNatale-Kids skip classes because they are behind. She feels after school programs may help this problem.

Recommendation 10

No Questions

Recommendation 11

No Questions

MOTION: Member DiNatale motioned to re-establish the Budget Sub-Committee with School Committee and City Council.

Mayor Jajuga-He feels they should wait for the new School Committee, Mayor and City Council before they form committees.

Member DiNatale-New members will not have the historical perspective and understanding of the previous sub-committee. They will have a lot on their plates and if they do not do it now and get things moving, this will have no action happening. If they come in to a formed sub-committee, there will be action happening already.

Member DiZoglio-This is a Workshop. You cannot take a vote in a Workshop.

Member DiNatale- Member Dinatale Withdrew her Motion and would like it added to the next agenda.

Member Nicholson-These 11 recommendations that they have reviewed are so important. They should be an agenda item at School Committee meetings on a monthly basis. They need to be aware of the progress the District is making.

Slides 16-20
No Questions

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop Session, Mayor Jajuga entertained a motion to adjourn the Workshop Session for the evening at 8:31PMpm.

MOTION:

Member Vogler motioned to adjourn this Workshop Session for the evening at 8:31PM

Member DiZoglio seconded the motion

VOTE:

7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**Respectfully submitted,
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools**