

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP/BUSINESS SESSION

OF

MARCH 22, 2021

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  
WORKSHOP/BUSINESS SESSION  
MARCH 22, 2021

This Workshop/Business 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:

Mayor Perry called this Workshop/Business Session to order at 6:30PM, with a quorum of Members in attendance, and listed below.

ROLL CALL

Ryan DiZoglio (P)  
Karen Hallbauer (P)  
Jessica MacLeod (P)  
Susan Nicholson (P)  
Louann Santos (P)  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (P)  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (P)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Brandi L. Kwong, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools  
Ronald Noble Jr, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Grants  
Ian Gosselin, Business Administrator  
Edward Lussier, Director of Technology and Operations  
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION: Member Nicholson moved to accept the Agenda for March 22, 2021  
Member Zanni Pesce seconded the Motion

Discussion: None

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Flag Salute

Moment of Silence-Mayor Perry requested a Moment of Silence for the Rayno Family. Mr. Rayno was a retired Methuen Police Officer. Mrs. Rayno retired after many years as the librarian at a local school.

## Public Participation

The Mayor read Individuals that would like to participate at this meeting may do so in writing (see below for \*Policy #BEDH #7 referring to remote meetings) before 3:00PM Monday, March 22, 2021 via email to [derunge@methuen.k12.a.us](mailto:derunge@methuen.k12.a.us) which will be printed and given to the Chairperson of the meeting to read to the public.

OR Those that would like to attend, we will allow 12 (twelve) additional people into the meeting. You must follow health and safety guidelines including wearing a mask throughout the meeting and follow the 6' of social distancing.

## Public Participation:

Jonathan Becker-MEA President  
Rob Buco-128 Druid Hill Ave.

Mayor Perry-If you would like us to read a comment at the next meeting please send to [derunge@methuen.k12.ma.us](mailto:derunge@methuen.k12.ma.us) by April 12, 2021 before 3:00PM

1. Return to Full Time in Person Plan-Approval (needed for 9-12 phase in return only)

Superintendent Kwong gave her presentation

Superintendent Kwong-The return date for grades 9-12 has not been set yet by the State but Mr. Barden does have a phase in plan that needs approval of the School Committee to set that date. The K-4 and the middle school are State mandates and the authority has been removed from the School Committees and the Superintendents. She will be applying for a waiver to include grade 5 with middle school. The State currently has elementary grades as K-5.

MOTION: Member MacLeod moved to approve the 9-12 phase in portion of the Return to Full time in person plan  
Member Nicholson seconded the Motion

Discussion:

Member Zanni Pesce-Do they have the number of in-person learners versus remote learners? Originally, it was 38%.

Mr. Noble-Currently it is 26 ½ %.

Member Zanni Pesce-Have they heard from the families that did not respond to the survey.

Mr. Noble-We made hundreds of calls last week. We have gotten the number down to 16 families. We are still waiting to hear from them.

Member DiZoglio-Parents are concerned that the survey was done before the plan. Can parents change their choice on the survey?

Mr. Noble-They could not create a plan until they knew how many students would be returning.

Superintendent Kwong-Parents had a good amount of information in the letter that she sent to them along with the survey. There was a letter specific to grammar schools and one specific to the high school. The Commissioner stated that this mandate is in place regardless of the incident rates of the virus in the cities and towns.

Member Hallbauer-At the last meeting they saw a Plexiglas's prototype that would be used in the elementary school cafeteria. Will they be using those?

Superintendent Kwong-DESE did not support the use of Plexiglas during unmasked time so they have decided not to go any further with that. During lunch and snack times, the students will be 6ft apart.

Mayor Perry-The remote number is 26%. Is that up or down?

Superintendent Kwong-That is down from 38%.

Mayor Perry-What is the deadline for parents to change their mind about remote or fulltime in person learning? Who should the parents contact?

Superintendent Kwong-They need to do it now. The building principals should be contacted. They need the numbers so they can make sure they have the staff.

Mayor Perry-He would like the final numbers at the next meeting of remote learners and hybrid learners.

Member Zanni Pesce-Is the staff changing? What about high-risk staff who were remote for the year?

Superintendent Kwong-They are working with staff now as to who will return to teach in person and who will stay remote teaching.

Member Zanni Pesce-The remote classes are full. How does it work if remote teachers will be going back to in-person teaching?

Superintendent Kwong-We will not have any remote classes that will be at capacity or as large as they are now.

Member Zanni Pesce-She would like to see the in-person and remote learning classroom sizes when the lists are completed.

Superintendent Kwong-They will have the numbers at the next meeting.

Member Santos-Do you anticipate staffing issues.

Superintendent Kwong-There have been staffing issues all year due to the fact we do not have enough BBEs to cover classrooms.

Member MacLeod-How heavily does the plan rely on educators providing concurrent instruction?

Superintendent Kwong-Grades 7-12 teachers will remain having their cameras on. K-6 the principals are doing everything in their power to not have cameras on.

Member MacLeod-She will continue to voice her concern of the importance of the separation between in-person learning and remote learning. It is very difficult for the teacher to be doing both at the same time.

Superintendent Kwong-Any student that is home due to quarantine or COVID related, the teacher will be required to turn their camera on.

Member DiZoglio-What about students that get a ride from their parents a few days a week but need to take a bus the other days.

Superintendent Kwong-They would need to reach out to Mr. Gosselin. Some students may not be accommodated if they don't have the space on the buses.

Member MacLeod-She is concerned about the number of students on the bus. How long are students on the bus?

Mr. Gosselin-Most of the students are on the bus for less than 20 minutes. The longest stop is 26 minutes.

Member Zanni Pesce-How will they do lunches and snacks?

Superintendent Kwong-Cafeterias and media centers will be used as classrooms.

Auditoriums will be used for lunches. They have also installed 40x100 tents and chairs at every building to use for lunches.

Member Zanni Pesce-What about the cleaning of the bathrooms during the day.

Superintendent Kwong-Teams are working on bathroom schedules.

Mr. Noble gave his presentation on the Learning Model changes

Mayor Perry-Is there an alternate plan?

Mr. Noble-The students will not all be coming back into school at the same time. They will be able to see how this works with those students before all students are back in school.

Superintendent Kwong-If there are any issues she would contact the Commissioner immediately.

Member Hallbauer-She thinks this is a good plan. They will have feedback from the staff and will be able to make small adjustments if necessary.

#### ROLL CALL

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)

Karen Hallbauer (Y)

Jessica MacLeod (Y)

Susan Nicholson (Y)

Louann Santos (Y)

Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)

Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Y)

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

2. Travel Policies

a. EBC-A Travel Policy Staff COVID 19-Rescind-Approval

MOTION: Member Hallbauer moved to Approve to Rescind EBC-A Travel Policy Staff COVID 19

Member MacLeod seconded the Motion

Discussion:

Member Zanni Pesce-She feels it is premature to eliminate this policy.

Mayor Perry-He is concerned that people may think it gives students and staff the green light to travel.

Mr. Noble-The reason for this request is the majority of the staff will be fully vaccinated in April and that most students and staff will be returning to in-person learning and they need staff in the buildings.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION: Member Hallbauer withdrew her motion to Approve to Rescind EBC-A Travel Policy Staff COVID 19

Member MacLeod withdrew her second

MOTION: Member Zanni Pesce moved to Approve to Table EBC-A Travel Policy Staff COVID 19-Rescind-Approval

Member DiZoglio seconded the Motion

ROLL CALL

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)

Karen Hallbauer (Y)

Jessica MacLeod (Y)

Susan Nicholson (N)

Louann Santos (Y)

Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)

Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Y)

VOTE: 6-1-0 APPROVED TO TABLE

b. EBC-B Travel Policy Students COVID 19-Rescind-Approval

MOTION: Member Hallbauer moved to Approve to Rescind EBC-B Travel Policy Students COVID 19

Member DiZoglio seconded the Motion

Discussion: None

ROLL CALL

Ryan DiZoglio (N)

Karen Hallbauer (Y)

Jessica MacLeod (Y)  
Susan Nicholson (Y)  
Louann Santos (N)  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (N)  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (N)  
VOTE: 3-4-0 MOTION FAILS

3. Revise & Readopt EBC-C Student Absences and Excuses COVID 19-First Read

MOTION: Member Santos moved to approve to revise and readopt EBC-C Student Absences and Excuses COVID 19-First Read  
Member MacLeod seconded the Motion

Discussion:  
Mr. Noble read the changes

ROLL CALL

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)  
Karen Hallbauer (Y)  
Jessica MacLeod (Y)  
Susan Nicholson (Y)  
Louann Santos (Y)  
Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)  
Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (N)  
VOTE: 6-1-0 APPROVED

4. MCAS Update

Mr. Noble-Gave the update from DESE  
Member MacLeod-How are the schools doing with the ACCESS Testing?  
Mr. Noble-The Language Acquisition Department put together a very robust and complicated testing plan for each school in cooperation with the administration teams. They also had to coordinate the remote students coming in and taking the ACCESS Test.

5. Air Quality Test Results

Mr. Lussier gave his presentation on the second round of testing.

6. Other Business of the Committee: NONE

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- With no further business to discuss at this Workshop/Business Session, Mayor Perry entertained a motion @ 8:46PM to go into Executive Session Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A,

Section 21 (a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares-All Units.

- Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
- Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(7) “To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements”- Executive Session Minutes Review, M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 22 (f)
- We will NOT reconvene into an open session at the conclusion of the executive session.

MOTION: Member Zanni Pesce moved to adjourn this Workshop/Business Session @ 8:46PM and go into Executive Session  
Member MacLeod seconded the Motion

DISCUSSION: None

ROLL CALL

Ryan DiZoglio (Y)

Karen Hallbauer (Y)

Jessica MacLeod (Y)

Susan Nicholson (Y)

Louann Santos (Y)

Jana Zanni Pesce, Vice Chairperson (Y)

Mayor Neil Perry, Chairperson (Y)

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools