

Minutes of School Committee Meeting 08/30/2017

A regular meeting of the Barrington School Committee was held on Wednesday, August 30, 2017 in the School Committee Room. School Committee Chair Kate Brody called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Ms. Brody, Vice Chair Ms. Clancy, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas, Ms. Pine, Mr. Sarli, Mr. Messore and Dr. Paula Dillon.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Michael B. Messore III, Superintendent, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Achievement Recognition

Mr. Messore announced the following achievements across the District:

The following Barrington High School Baseball Team members were recognized by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League: Cabot Maher was named to the Division II Central 1st Team, Liam McManus and Matt Zeleznik were named to the Division II Central 2nd Team, and Andrew Conaty was named the Division II Cy Young recipient.

Barrington Middle School is one of three schools in Rhode Island to win the Lighthouse Schools Challenge, including a \$200,000 grant.

Nayatt School Reading Specialist Dawn Carusi received her doctorate in Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership from Northeastern University in May, 2017.

Barrington High School was recognized in Rhode Island Monthly's High School Report Card 2017 with many of the highest grades in the State.

Barrington High School 2016 graduate, Jason Scanlon, was awarded the All-State Outstanding Achievement in Boys Tennis.

Information and Proposals

Dr. Dillon reported on the Rhode Island Office of Innovation's Lighthouse School Grant that was awarded to Barrington Middle School (BMS) to support deeper, personalized learning for students through project based, experiential teaching. A key partnership, developed by Dr. Dillon, with Northeastern University NEXt was instrumental in the application process for this grant, and will continue to be utilized as work funded by the grant is implemented. Other key partnerships include those with the Barrington Education Foundation, Fuse Architect, Highlander Institute, New Tech Network, and Learnzillion

Dr. Dillon gave an overview of plans for professional development during the 2017-2018 school year. Priority areas include literacy at the K-3 level, deeper learning and social/emotional learning across all grade levels, and differentiation of instruction. August professional development days focused on these areas. New this year will be the use of the Frontline system to track all professional learning and to integrate all associated efforts. This system will provide useful data for planning purposes.

Ms. Brody reported on the development of tentative dates and topics for 2017-2018 School Committee meetings. These dates and topics will align with the District's strategic planning work, assessment schedules, BMS Project milestones, and the budget development timeline. Ms. Brody stated that revisions are expected during the course of the school year to best

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address issues that may arise, and to respond to new information. Dr. Douglas suggested that it would be helpful to start discussions regarding next year's budget as early as December. Based on feedback, Ms. Brody requested that the Health and Wellness Committee's annual report be moved from October 5th to May 10th, that the update on the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System be moved from March 15th to October 5th, and that the Athletics and Student Activities action plan update be moved from January 18th to October 5th. Mr. Messoro will verify the feasibility of this last date change with Mr. Hurley and Mr. Finn. Ms. Brody noted that the timeline for development of next year's budget will be looked at again once a new Director of Finance and Administration is in place.

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Old Business

Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Messoro presented enrollment data for all schools as of August 29th. There have been no substantial changes since the August 10th report. This data will be posted on August 31 to the Barrington Public Schools website. Mr. Messoro explained that Administration continues to assess all classrooms, and to identify any need for additional supports. This is being done on an ongoing basis. Dr. Douglas noted that there had been some miscommunication regarding cluster arrangements at the Middle School prior to the start of school. Mr. Messoro will continue to keep the Committee updated regarding enrollment and changing needs across the District.

A member of the audience requested to address the Committee regarding enrollment and Grade 3 class size at Primrose Hill School. Ms. Brody explained the rationale for the sequence of the meeting agenda and requested that, as a matter of process, the comments be withheld until the second opportunity on the agenda for Public Comment.

Mr. Messoro provided a brief update on the FY18 Budget including a staffing report. There has been some movement of staff throughout the District and a number of vacancies that have been filled. In addition, resources have been reallocated to better meet student needs at Hampden Meadows. Filling the two vacant part-time World Language positions at the Middle School continues to be a challenge. The District is exploring all opportunities to fill these positions. The final vacancy that remains unfilled is that of a reading specialist at the High School.

Mr. Messoro reported on the first Strategic Planning Steering Committee meeting held on August 15th. This meeting provided an introduction to the strategic planning process. A communication has been sent to the community regarding focus group meetings scheduled for October 4th and 5th. Employee engagement and parent satisfaction surveys will be open from September 18th to October 4th. The survey results will be discussed at a Steering Committee meeting upon completion of analysis of the raw data. In addition, work was done at the end of August to begin to align the work of the administration as well as school improvement goals with the District's strategic plan. Ms. Brody noted that there will be a statement added to the employee engagement and parent satisfaction surveys regarding the planned timing of the surveys' results. There was discussion regarding the research-based nature of the survey questions.

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Mr. Messore provided an update regarding child care options at the elementary schools. He reiterated that this is not a District-run program, that the District is simply making the space available. He stated that the licensing process is lengthy, and that our potential providers are working through it. Dr. Douglas urged that clear communication be shared with the elementary school community regarding the current status of these efforts. Mr. Messore will provide another update to the School Committee at its next meeting. Ms. Pine expressed some concern regarding the impact these programs may have on other local child care providers, particularly outside of the school year.

Mr. Messore reported on the status of the search process for the Director of Administration and Finance, stating that the Screening Committee concluded its interviews last week and has identified a potential candidate. Mr. Messore will continue his due diligence regarding this candidate and will make a recommendation to the School Committee as soon as possible.

School Committee

No old business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Student Representative

Mr. Sarli reported that things are off to a smooth start at the High School. He provided a synopsis of academic and extracurricular programs and activities, including the Social Studies Department's focus on deeper learning, the newly-formed Young Politicians Club, the Stagemasters' planned production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", Ms. Hearn's display of Hurricane Harvey news in the library, the formation of a Quiz Show Team, changes to the Sunrise Show, and installation of 4 new smart boards in the Math Department. Mr. Sarli stated that he will be providing a brief update to students on the Sunrise Show after each School Committee meeting. Ms. Brody asked if there is an advisor for the Quiz Show Team, and Dr. Dillon clarified that Mr. Marley and Ms. Costa are serving in this capacity.

Superintendent and Staff

Personnel:

Appointments:

Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. Alessandro seconded approval of the recommendation of the Superintendent relative to the appointment of Ms. Kathy Flaherty, Building Intern, Nayatt School. The motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Brody, Ms. Clancy, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas and Ms. Pine voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mr. Messore reported on the opening of the schools for the 2017-2018 academic year noting that students and teachers have transitioned well. He noted that schedule change requests at the High School have been very smooth. There have been some transportation issues that need to be addressed. Ocean State Transit, in partnership with SafeStop, is providing free access to the SafeStop app for all families. He stated that work on the new access road at the High School is underway, but will be delayed by a couple of weeks. The Administration is also working with the Town to make repairs to the Barrington Middle School exit road to ensure safe conditions. Mr. Messore will provide an update on the access road project at the next meeting. Dr. Dillon stated that the administration is working to develop new, creative methods for communicating with parents, including Facebook pages for all schools and the District, and a

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Guidance Department Facebook page. She stated that all websites have been updated and that analytics show that parent engagement has been increased. All communications will be posted to the individual school websites, the District website, and Facebook pages, and will be shared via Twitter accounts and newsletters.

Mr. Messore provided an update on monthly expenditures for July, 2017 in the amount of \$1,158,880.99. He explained and clarified a number of line items.

Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. Alessandro seconded approval of monthly expenditures for July, 2017 in the amount of \$1,158,880.99. The motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Brody, Ms. Clancy, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas and Ms. Pine voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mr. Messore presented a letter he received from Dr. Mark Stamoulis requesting the renaming of the Barrington High School gymnasium after former teacher and Coach, Frank Murgo. He reported that a facilities naming policy has been developed and adopted. Mr. Messore made a recommendation to the Committee to name the Barrington High School Gymnasium after former teacher and Coach, Frank Murgo. Mr. Messore stated that the proposed work will be evaluated by an architect, and that all associated costs will be borne by those who initially made the recommendation.

Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. Alessandro seconded approval of the recommendation of the Superintendent regarding the naming of the Barrington High School gymnasium in honor of Frank Murgo. The motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Brody, Ms. Clancy, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas and Ms. Pine voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mr. Messore will provide a progress report at the next School Committee meeting.

School Committee

Dr. Douglas presented an update regarding the work of the Budget Forecasting Committee. The Town's planned and contemplated capital expenses were discussed at the Committee's August 22nd meeting, as was the Town's pension liability, and possible tax abatement plans being considered by a Council subcommittee. She stated that topics for discussion at the next Budget Forecasting Committee on September 21st will be pension and labor force numbers, and how best to present this data to various Town bodies.

Ms. Brody shared a proposal by the Town Manager for the School Committee to provide quarterly updates to the Town Council, with a focus on challenges faced by the School Department. The Committee confirmed its support of continued use of systems that are currently in place to foster communication between the Town and the School Department.

Ms. Brody proposed, and the Committee agreed, to table the Decision and Discussion Items on the agenda in an effort to expedite the second opportunity for public comment.

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Public Comment

Ms. Meghan Siket of 9 Highview Avenue expressed her concern regarding class size in the 3rd grade at Primrose Hill School, the unfolding of plans for staffing the 3rd grade at PHS, and the performance of PHS students on recent literacy assessments.

Ms. Amanda Brougham of 25 Appian Way shared her concerns regarding enrollment in the 3rd grade at Primrose Hill School. She noted that this class size is larger than optimal for learning, and questioned communication regarding staffing for the Primrose Hill 3rd grade. She asked for School Committee's support in addressing these concerns.

Ms. Kirsten Pearse of 47 Chapel Road expressed her concern regarding the decline in PARCC literacy assessment scores over the period from 2015 to 2017 at Primrose Hill School. She asked the School Committee to form a subcommittee to look at standards for student-teacher ratios. Ms. Pearse also shared her frustration with communication of enrollment data.

Mr. Messore addressed the concerns of parents regarding enrollment. He stated that class sizes across the District and grade levels are essentially in line with projections. He explained that assessment results are addressed at the curriculum and building level. Mr. Messore stated that he is working closely with building administrators to make sure all necessary supports for students are in place.

Ms. Brody requested that Mr. Messore clarify the enrollment update he plans to present at the September 7th School Committee meeting, whether it will be a district-wide or Primrose Hill – specific update. Mr. Messore indicated that it will look at the entire district.

Ms. Amanda Brougham asked about the role of a building intern and Mr. Messore responded that each elementary school is assigned an intern to cover day-to-day needs. These are certified teachers.

Mr. Tom Rimoshytus of 1 Howard Street thanked the Committee for its adoption of the Facility Naming Policy and its recognition of Coach Frank Murgo. He commented on the new websites, asked about resolution of the state budget impasse, about planned roof repairs at the Middle School, scheduling at the Middle School and High School, and the planned timing of a report regarding Athletics and Student Activities.

Decision Items

Consent Agenda

Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. Alessandro seconded approval of the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion passed 4-0 with Ms. Brody, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas and Ms. Pine voting in the affirmative for the motion. Ms. Clancy abstained from the voting regarding the minutes of August 25th.

Discussion Items

Future Agenda Items

Mr. Messore suggested that the following items be included on the Committee's next meeting agenda: a report on district-wide, K-3 class sizes and a brief overview of test scores at this level,

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as well as an update regarding World Language staff at the Middle School and the access road construction project at the High School. Dr. Douglas asked that updates also be provided on transportation and on background check requirements for volunteers. Mr. Alessandro asked that an update on communication with Primrose Hill families regarding enrollment and class size be included.

Ms. Brody requested clarification on the next steps for posting the 2017-2018 Tentative Dates and Topics schedule. Mr. Messore stated that Ms. Miller will make the proposed adjustments and will send an updated schedule to the Committee for review prior to its posting.

Announcements

Mr. Messore announced that we are back in school with great teachers, great students and a great community.

Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. Alessandro seconded adjournment of the meeting at 10:17 p.m. The motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Brody, Ms. Clancy, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas and Ms. Pine voting in the affirmative for the motion.