

Minutes of School Committee Meeting 01/07/2016

A regular meeting of the Barrington School Committee was held on Thursday, January 7, 2016 in the Barrington Middle School Library. As it was the Annual Organizational Meeting, Mr. Messore called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mrs. Clancy, Mr. Guida, Ms. Odjakjian, Mr. Messore, Mrs. Dillon, and Mr. Tarro

Mr. Messore requested nominations for School Committee Chair.

Dr. Shea moved and Mrs. Clancy seconded to nominate Mrs. Kate Brody as School Committee Chair. The motion passed 4-1 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mrs. Clancy, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion. Mr. Alessandro opposed.

The gavel was turned over to Mrs. Brody.

Mrs. Brody requested nominations for School Committee Vice-Chair.

Mrs. Clancy moved and Mr. Guida seconded to nominate Dr. Robert Shea as School Committee Vice-Chair. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mrs. Clancy, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mrs. Brody welcomed Mrs. Anna Clancy to her first meeting as a School Committee member. Mrs. Brody introduced the other members of the School Committee present at the meeting: Mr. Patrick Guida, Dr. Robert Shea, Mr. John Alessandro, and Student Representative Katharine Odjakjian. Mrs. Brody also introduced the Administration and Central Office Staff present: Superintendent Michael Messore, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Paula Dillon, Director of Administration and Finance Ronald Tarro, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Elizabeth Levesque, and Computer/Network Technician Michael Fallgren.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Clancy led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Achievement Recognition

No achievement recognitions were presented at this time.

BPS Spotlight on Teaching and Learning

Mr. Messore introduced Mr. Brian Fernandes, Hampden Meadows School (HMS) Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach, who shared information on the HMS Lego writing program that uses Lego kits and technology including Google docs. The Lego kits were funded by a Barrington Education Foundation grant. Mr. Fernandes also shared a video featuring students on the Lego writing process.

Information and Proposals

Mr. Tarro provided the framework used in guiding the fiscal year 2016-2017 proposed budget including an overview of the return on investment, influences, internal and external factors including enrollment projections, and the steps taken to accomplish a realistic budget for all stakeholders. The presentation highlighted the student centered decision making process including zero based budgeting used by building

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administrators. Mr. Guida noted that an important consideration with the budget is contract negotiations.

Mrs. Dillon provided an update on the curriculum for Guidance Grades 4-12 and World Languages Grades 7-12. The presentation included the revision timeline, organizational review process and articulation across the district, curriculum structure, and technology integration for each subject area. Mrs. Dillon also shared data on student visits to Guidance and long range strategic goals for World Languages. Questions from the Committee related to Guidance included measurement of data, clarification on Guidance for students in Grades 4 and 5, individual learning plans, and software for college and career planning. Discussion ensued on consideration of implementation of a World Languages curriculum at the elementary level in the future; Mr. Messore identified the need to strengthen the World Languages curriculum at the Barrington Middle School level and to explore the costs associated with World Languages curriculum expansion.

General Public Discussion and Information

Mrs. Sarah O'Brien, of 88 Boyce Avenue, parent, expressed concern for the lack of opportunity for World Languages courses that are more cultural rather than academic, for those students who are not highly academic in World Languages. Mr. Messore explained that some language courses were cancelled due to low enrollment and the consideration of the opportunity for other course offerings or reallocation of teachers to meet course enrollment needs.

Ms. Maria Wah-Fitta, of 8 Indigo Road, parent, offered her firsthand experience in support of the importance of growing up in a bilingual home and encouraged the district to offer World Languages curriculum to the earlier grades.

Mrs. Kathleen Gantz, of 19 Half Mile Road, parent, urged the district to start the World Languages curriculum in Kindergarten in the near future, noted the development of neurological connections with bilingual education at the elementary level, and suggested consideration of the practice in public school districts of the addition of five minutes of bilingual instruction in homeroom at the elementary level. Ms. Gantz added that some parents are torn on a change in school start times but they are not torn on the importance of World Languages for all students.

Mrs. Kathleen Crain, of 11 Briarfield Road, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. and encouraged the Committee to vote based on the scientific data for the best interest of the personal, academic and social emotional wellbeing of students and not on personal opinion.

Mrs. Pamela Lauria, of 56 Martin Avenue, parent and Nurse Practitioner, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. and hopes that the community will support the change.

Ms. Kim Jacobs, of 5 Massachusetts Avenue, parent, agreed that children need sleep but questioned the data that children in our district need more sleep, and asked that the Committee not get swept up in trends and spend time to define the need before trying to solve a problem.

Mrs. Tracey Tisler, of 25 Woodland Road, parent, noted the need to consider other factors besides sleep, such as the issue of homework, for the overall wellbeing of students.

Mr. Chad Mollica, of 4 River Oak Road, Vice-Chair of the Town of Barrington Committee on Appropriations, encouraged members of the community not to wait for the Financial Town Meeting but to attend the Town Council meeting on February 1, 2016 where a discussion is scheduled on funding for town projects with a fee in lieu of taxes structure that could possibly deprive schools of funds.

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Mr. Thomas Rimoshytus, of 1 Howard Street, parent, asked the Committee to consider tabling any change to school start times for at least another year and to focus now instead on the issue of student stress.

Mr. Jason Leigh, of 8 Roberta Drive, parent, echoed the previous comment on the failure to present the need for a change in school start times, that the studies conducted for a change are not specific to our town and if the Committee votes in favor for a change, hopes that the Committee on Appropriations does a better job.

Mrs. Patricia Adams, of 17 Wildflower Road, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. and urged the Committee to vote in favor for the change.

Mrs. Michelle Weber, of 273 Maple Avenue, parent, disagreed strongly with Mr. Leigh's previous comments and added that Barrington students do need the school start time change.

Ms. Erika Sevetson, of 408 New Meadow Road, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. noting that it will help prepare students for the real world.

Dr. Megan Douglas, of 25 Rumstick Road, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. and noted that a district survey was conducted five years ago with more than 1,300 responses and that Barrington students were included in a Brown University sleep study.

Mrs. Anne Merlino, of 15 Mallard Cove Way, parent and lifelong Barrington resident, stated that a change in school start times would impede the school system, that kids will just go to bed later and that a change in school start times is not in the best interests of Barrington High School students.

Dr. Michael Johnson, of 28 Old Chimney Road, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. and noted that the challenge for implementation will be to see past the emotion and focus on what is best for students' health and education.

Mr. Jared Jageler, Barrington High School sophomore and member of The Sunrise Show, does not support a change in school start times, adding that he has not spoken to one student who is in favor of a change. Mr. Jageler urged that the focus be on student stress and homework.

Mr. Andrew Winner, of 14 Laurel Lane, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. noting that the science is clear and that the health priority for students should outweigh other concerns.

Ms. Kim Jacobs provided a follow up comment to stress the need to research what our district needs and address those needs for our community.

Dr. Scott Douglas, of 25 Rumstick Road, parent, urged the Committee to consider the change to the 8:30 a.m. start time, noting that perhaps the same discipline used for the budget process, including identification of the return on investment, could be applied to the process for school start times.

Mrs. Martha Ellicott, of 37 Riverside Drive, parent, stressed the need to look at all the issues including sleep, homework policy, sports policy, for what is best for the students.

Mrs. Mary Roberts, of 11 Adams Avenue, Barrington Middle School Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher, and National Education Association Barrington (NEAB) President, responded to a recent letter written by Dr. Scott Douglas in favor of later school start times and stated that there will be hardship for those

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districts wildly out of sync with other districts in the state. Mrs. Roberts urged the Committee to not make a change to school start times as it does not guarantee more sleep for students.

Mr. Nahum Mitnik, of 187 New Meadow Road, parent, Barrington High School Music Teacher, and also representing the NEAB, asked if no change was an option for the Committee vote. Mrs. Brody responded that it would depend on the motion. Mr. Mitnik stressed that the 8:30 a.m. start time option does not benefit all students in the district and urged the Committee to conduct further research before spending the substantial amount of money proposed that could instead be spent on educational purposes.

Mrs. Maraidh Thomson, of 3 Ridgeland Road, parent, stated that a change in school start times would benefit all students and that the evidence in school districts that have already made a change to a later start time has proven beneficial.

Mr. Christopher Wohlever, of 5 Massachusetts Avenue, stated that it would not be best to move forward with a change to school start times without a comprehensive plan or buy in from students and teachers; he suggested that district work be focused on the issue of homework.

Mr. Thomas Rimoshytus provided a follow up comment to urge the Committee to not vote for a change in school start times until the entire state is involved.

Mrs. Kristen Kreuzkamp, of 10 Agawam Road, parent, noted that parents and students can choose sports or extra activities but cannot choose school start times.

Mrs. Kristyn Whitney, of 1 Prospect Street, parent, supports the school start time change to 8:30 a.m. noting the need for more sleep for high school students and the importance to lead the charge on this national trend and not follow it.

Mrs. Cassandra Thayer, of 5 Indigo Road, parent, supports the later school start times as it is an important decision for student social emotional health.

Mrs. Anne Merlino provided a follow up comment to ask if the Health and Wellness Committee looked into the possibility that going to bed later and waking up later could hinder student health.

Mrs. Brody asked for Committee consideration to move the School Start Times Discussion and Vote agenda item under Old Business from School Committee to this portion of the meeting. The Committee agreed.

Each member of the Committee stated their position on a change to school start times. Mr. Alessandro stated that all the issues have already been addressed and had no further comment. Mrs. Clancy was torn on a change in school start times noting that not all factors have been looked at sufficiently to impose a start time change now. Ms. Odjakjian restated the overwhelming response from students and teachers for no change in school start times and encouraged focus on student stress due to factors like homework and to look at the cost benefit analysis. Mr. Guida remains a strong supporter for extracurricular activities and athletics and continuing to make the district better, and stressed the need to be a leader for later start times and reduced travel time on buses. Dr. Shea is supportive of the 8:30 a.m. later school start time and urged his colleagues to make a data driven decision and act on this strategic plan item that is right for students. Mrs. Brody acknowledged the work of the Health and Wellness Committee on school start times and stated that the School Committee has the opportunity to make an educationally sound decision on school start times with an effort to address other issues simultaneously. Mrs. Brody called for a motion.

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Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to approve the implementation of a school start time change beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year to 8:30 a.m. for Barrington High School, 8:36 a.m. for Barrington Middle School, 9:05 a.m. for Hampden Meadows School, and 8:00 a.m. for Nayatt, Primrose Hill, and Sowams schools. The motion passed 3-2 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion. Mr. Alessandro and Mrs. Clancy opposed.

Old Business from Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Guida and Mr. Tarro provided an update on the work of the Barrington Middle School Building Committee that included information on recent presentations by Kaestle Boos Associates Inc. (KBA) and plans to present cost options to the School Committee and Building Committee on January 20, 2016 as well request approval from the School Committee for the two building options and bid for owner project management services on January 25, 2016. The Committee agreed to invite the Town Council to the upcoming joint School Committee Building Committee meetings.

Mr. Messore and Mr. Tarro have engaged Mr. Christopher Horan, of Horan Communications, to assist in developing a strategic communication plan to support the Barrington Middle School building project. The fee for engagement of services was below the minimum requirement for submission of a Request for Proposals.

Mr. Messore reported that the open position for a full time Mathematics Specialist at Barrington Middle School (BMS) will be advertised next week and noted that the anticipated timeline for an appointment recommendation is late January. Mrs. Dillon added information relative to ongoing communication with parents on the plan for remapping of the grade level Mathematics curriculum at BMS.

Mr. Messore reported that the district's participation in the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) Program initiative for 2016 is not an option as it has already been awarded to school districts in Newport, Providence, and Westerly.

New Business from Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Tarro requested Committee acknowledgement of the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. A memo and copy of the Audited Financial Report were provided to the Committee prior to the meeting. The Committee acknowledged the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and commended Mr. Tarro for his strong leadership and management and for the successful audit.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent with respect to the appointment of Jennifer Carlson, Primrose Hill School Nurse. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mrs. Clancy, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mr. Messore announced the resignation of Mrs. Tracey Orchard, Primrose Hill School Kindergarten Intern.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent with respect to the requests for home schooling for the named individuals. The student names were not identified publicly. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mrs. Clancy, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

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New Business from School Committee

Mrs. Brody led the discussion on Committee communication with the Funding Formula Working Group in support of the school funding formula. Following a brief discussion,

Mrs. Clancy moved and Mr. Guida seconded to authorize School Committee Chair Mrs. Kate Brody, on behalf of the School Committee, to write a letter in support of the continued implementation of the school funding formula as enacted in the original legislation in 2011. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mrs. Clancy, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mrs. Brody reported that the National School Board Association 2016 Annual Conference will be held on April 9-11, 2016 in Boston and asked Committee members to email the Superintendent's Office with their interest and availability.

Decision Items

No decision items were presented for approval at this time.

Discussion Future Agenda Items

Mrs. Brody requested an update from the Health and Wellness Committee at the next meeting.

Mrs. Brody requested that the next regular meeting agenda include the adoption of the School Committee/Superintendent Operating Protocols, which are adopted annually after the organizational meeting.

Mrs. Brody requested that a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) workshop be scheduled for later this month.

Mr. Alessandro requested a future agenda item to include discussion on homework. Mr. Messore reported that Barrington High School Principal Mr. Joseph Hurley will attend the Health and Wellness Committee meeting in March on the topic of student stress and the goal is to have a homework policy developed by the principals.

Mr. Messore reported that the next regular School Committee meeting scheduled for January 21, 2016 will feature budget input from the Principals, School Committee, and the Public.

Announcements

Mrs. Brody announced that the School Committee will hold joint meetings with the Barrington Middle School Building Committee on January 11, 2016, January 20, 2016, and January 25, 2016.

General Public Discussion and Information

Dr. Megan Douglas provided a follow up comment to thank the Committee for voting in favor of the later school start times and offered to share additional links for research to the Committee and Administration on districts that have recently changed their school start times. Dr. Douglas added that she would like to see a task force on the topic of student stress for Grades K-12.

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Mrs. Martha Ellicott provided a follow up comment to encourage the same strategy for World Languages as is being done with Mathematics, to assess students on their proficiency level for placement, especially upon the return of students to BMS after having been enrolled in private school.

Mr. Jason Leigh provided a follow up comment to encourage the Committee to take the time to assess what worked and what did not relative to the school start times discussion to better engage the community as many felt there was not enough of a compelling argument to make the change for the district.

Dr. Scott Douglas provided a follow up comment to encourage that communication be a part of the school start time change implementation plan.

Mrs. Kathleen Gantz provided a follow up comment to ask for the protocol on the loss of instructional time when teachers are on leave relative to the Barrington Middle School Mathematics curriculum, to suggest that principals address the topic of student stress with parents at Open House, and to provide a system of support for students who struggle with World Languages at the middle school level.

Mrs. Michelle Weber provided a follow up comment to thank the Committee for making the change to later school start times.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:55 p.m. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mrs. Clancy, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.