

Minutes of School Committee Meeting 11/19/2015

A regular meeting of the Barrington School Committee was held on Thursday, November 19, 2015 in the Barrington Middle School Library. School Committee Chair Kate Brody called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. Present were Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, Mr. Guida, Ms. Odjakjian, Mr. Messore, Mrs. Dillon, and Mr. Tarro.

Mrs. Brody introduced School Committee members present at the meeting: Mr. John Alessandro, Dr. Robert Shea, Mr. Patrick Guida, 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

Ms. Tracey Whitehead led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Achievement Recognition

Mr. Messore announced the following achievements across the district:

Ms. Jennifer Hines, Primrose Hill School Enrichment Specialist and Instructional Coach, has been selected to participate in the Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teaching and Teachers (ECET²) Conference in Coronado, California in January, through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Dr. Suzanne Costa, Barrington High School Library Media Specialist and K-12 Library Department Head, has been chosen to serve as a member of the Rhode Island PBS Foundation Board.

On November 14, 2015 the Barrington Education Foundation held the STEAM Connections 2015 event at Barrington High School, a comprehensive, fun-filled event of exploration in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts and math, designed to connect classroom learning to the real world.

On October 28, 2015, Barrington High School Coaches Mr. Robert Gourley and Ms. Holly Morris, and former Coach Mr. Frank Murgo, were inducted into the Rhode Island Interscholastic League High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Information and Proposals

Mrs. Dillon led the presentation on the student achievement data report and provided information on the Curriculum Point grant that supports districtwide collaboration. Mrs. Dillon introduced building administrators present: Barrington High School Principal Joseph Hurley, Barrington Middle School Principal Dr. Andrew Anderson, Hampden Meadows School Principal Tracey McGee, Sowams School Principal James Callahan, Primrose Hill School Principal Patricia Tolento, and Nayatt School Principal Tracey Whitehead. Each building administrator highlighted goals for each grade level relative to literacy, numeracy, and social emotional goals. Questions from the Committee included curriculum based measurement, collaboration between schools resulting in districtwide strategies, attendance and assessment data, use of interventions, and what may be needed to improve the current process. Dr. Shea invited Dr. Anderson to attend a future Health and Wellness Committee meeting to further discuss social emotional goals and the topic of mindfulness.

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Mrs. Dillon reported on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) district assessment results in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The presentation, available on the district website, included the district's overall scores, information on the district's highest participation rate in Rhode Island, state level results, and statewide comparison charts. The extensive reports received by PARCC will continue to be analyzed in the coming weeks. Discussion ensued on the difficulty in comparisons between districts as data is not aligned, student performance in Mathematics, and strategies for future assessments. When asked by Mr. Guida, Mr. Robert Marley, Barrington High School Math Teacher and Department Chair, a member of the audience, commented on the Math scores and the number of Middle School students enrolled in Math courses at Barrington High School.

Mr. Messore provided an overview on the Administration's ongoing work related to school start time options and consideration for student health and wellbeing. With each modified option presented from previous discussions, Mr. Messore and Mr. Tarro included estimated costs associated with increases in bus transportation. Mr. Messore also presented an 8:30 a.m. start time option for Barrington High School (BHS) in response to Committee discussion at the November 5, 2015 meeting. Discussion ensued on estimated costs for each option, bus ride efficiencies, and ridership. Mr. Guida, Dr. Shea, and Mrs. Brody favored a school start time at the secondary level no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Dr. Shea noted the Health and Wellness Committee's unanimous support for a start time no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Mr. Alessandro favored no change or the smallest change with the lowest cost. Mr. Messore offered an additional option for consideration, with a start time at BHS at 8:15 a.m. and 8:21 a.m. at Barrington Middle School. The Committee agreed to review the 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. options for further evaluation and discussion at the next meeting.

General Public Discussion and Information

Mr. Joel Hellmann, of 13 Richmond Avenue, parent and candidate for School Committee, asked about the effectiveness of assessments given in November and then at the end of the year, and stated that student stress is an important issue that needs to be addressed. Mr. Hellmann also made a suggestion to split the shifts of bus monitors as a possible solution to the high cost of offering benefits to those employees.

Dr. Scott Douglas, of 25 Rumstick Road, parent, stated that addressing the issue of student stress should be done in parallel with a change in start time and encouraged the continued creative process for deeper evaluation of all school start time options.

Mr. Tarro responded to the suggestion to split shifts for bus monitors by reporting that the district has had difficulty in filling two vacant bus monitor positions since June and the possibility of splitting shifts could prove more difficult to fill the vacant bus monitor positions. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to explore all options to fill vacant bus monitors positions including contacting the current bus transportation provider, Ocean State Transit, for possible outsourcing for these positions.

Mr. Jason Leigh, of 8 Roberta Drive, parent, stated that he did not think that there is a fully crafted compelling case for non-high school parents to change school start times and that the complete list of cost variables have not yet been identified, including a change in bus ridership.

Mrs. Mary Roberts, of 11 Adams Avenue, Barrington Middle School Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher, and National Education Association Barrington (NEAB) President, stressed the importance of collaboration and listening to all involved, noting that the NEAB was not included in the school start time discussion. Mrs. Roberts added that the start time option of 8:15 a.m. represents a good compromise.

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Ms. Pamela Lewis, of 3 Ridgewood Road, parent, read a statement that included points to keep academics and athletics together as they make a whole rounded student, support for efficient bus schedules, and doing what is right for the students to reduce stress Ms. Lewis provided the Committee with a hard copy of her statement.

Mrs. Adi Goldstein, of 3 Devonshire Drive, parent, expressed her surprise for the lack of public comment regarding the recently released PARCC assessment scores and would like to see more information provided to parents on tangible steps to improve student performance in the future. Mrs. Brody stated that Math curriculum will be an agenda item on the next School Committee meeting and that a Math and Science Night for parents will be held on December 8, 2015. Mrs. Dillon added that the data will continue to be analyzed in depth and welcomes the opportunity to meet one-one-one with Mrs. Goldstein or any interested parent.

Mrs. Heather Crosby, of 293 Rumstick Road, parent and candidate for School Committee, implored the Committee to talk strategically in the important discussions on academics and school start time.

Dr. Megan Douglas, of 25 Rumstick Road, parent, stressed as a pediatrician that Barrington students are not biologically different or adverse to the American Academy of Pediatrics' extensive research, and that more sleep for athletes reduces the risk for injury. Dr. Douglas added that while an 11:00 a.m. start is more appropriate, the 9:05 a.m. option should continue to be considered.

Mrs. Tracey Tisler, of 25 Woodland Road, parent, asked for clarification on the start times at the secondary level for the 8:15/8:21 option as to which school, Barrington High School or Barrington Middle School, would begin at which time.

Old Business from Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Tarro reported that Kaestle Boos Associates (KBA) held a meeting for the Barrington Middle School (BMS) abutters on November 18, 2015 where discussion included concerns for the location of the new BMS building and traffic flow. A follow up meeting will be held on December 8, 2015 with residents notified by mail. KBA continues to meet with stakeholders, including a recent meeting with the Barrington Police Chief and Fire Chief. The Committee briefly discussed the topic of moving the school administration office to the new BMS building which was mentioned at the recent Joint Legislative Breakfast; Mr. Guida stated that the Building Committee had not entertained a discussion relative to that topic since it would impact the collaboration between the Administration and the municipal government with the current configuration of housing in the same building.

Mr. Messore provided an update relative to the District Strategic Communication Plan, including the status of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for review and redesign of the district website, as well as ongoing communication initiatives in the district. Mr. Tarro added information relative to the RFPs for the Barrington Middle School building project owner project manager and a commissioning agent. In response to parent concern raised at the last meeting relating to students sitting in bus aisles, Mr. Messore provided information from Ocean State Transit as well as his direct contact with bus drivers that there have been no reports of overcrowding on any district bus.

Old Business from School Committee

No old business from the School Committee was presented at this time.

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New Business from Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Messore announced the retirement of Ms. Donna Cerio, SO, Physical Education/Health effective at the end of the 2015-2016 academic year. Mr. Messore thanked Ms. Cerio for her energetic and caring teaching throughout her many years in Barrington.

Mr. Messore announced the resignation of Mrs. Katie Miller, Director of Technology effective January 26, 2016. Mr. Messore expressed his appreciation for Mrs. Miller's many years of leadership in technology and for moving the district forward, and described her as the most respected education resource in the field of technology in the state. The Committee thanked Mrs. Miller for her service and for filling an important role so well.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to approve the monthly expenditures for October in the amount of \$3,816,686.77.

Mr. Tarro reported that there are currently 10 students attending charter schools, representing approximately double the cost of the budgeted five students based on district historical data.

The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

New Business from School Committee

Mrs. Brody reported that the School Committee and Town Council held a joint legislative breakfast on November 16, 2015 with Representative Joy Hearn, District 66, Representative Jan Malik, District 67, Senator Cynthia Armour Coyne, District 32, along with Mr. Messore, Mr. Tarro, Town Manager Peter DeAngelis, and Town Finance Director Kathy Raposa. Discussions included 2016 advocacy priorities of the school spending formula and housing aid for the Barrington Middle School building project, and the introduction of a Senate Commissions to study a statewide teacher contract. Representative Malik suggested a follow up breakfast be held in March, 2016.

The Committee held a brief discussion on the revision of the date of the Annual Organizational Meeting. The Committee agreed to move that agenda item to January 7, 2016 following the swearing in of the new School Committee member-elect on January 4, 2016.

Decision Items

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Discussion Future Agenda Items

Mr. Messore reported that the next regular School Committee meeting scheduled for December 3, 2015 will feature presentations on Math curriculum, blended learning and learning spaces, a bullying policy update, and continued discussion and update on school start time.

Announcements

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Mr. Messoro announced that a K-12 Math and Science Night for parents will be held on December 8, 2015 at Barrington High School.

Mrs. Brody announced that on November 21, 2015 the Rhode Island Association of School Committees will hold a professional development session on the PARCC results and that on November 23, 2015 the Rhode Island Department of Education will hold a meeting on the regulations governing the school calendar and length of the school day.

General Public Discussion and Information

Ms. Pamela Lewis, of 3 Ridgewood Road, parent, asked if switching the Hampden Meadows School and K-3 schools start times would help decrease the number of buses. Mr. Tarro explained that the number of buses would remain the same. Ms. Lewis expressed confusion for the lack of inclusion of teachers in the school start time discussion. Dr. Shea noted that there are educators on the Health and Wellness Committee. Mr. Messoro noted that the Task Force includes building administrators as representatives for their buildings and that educators are aware that they may share feedback on any issue with the building administrators.

Dr. Scott Douglas, of 25 Rumstick Road, parent, applauded the district's dramatic increase in strategic communication, and expressed appreciation for Mrs. Katie Miller's achievements in technology for the district including the 1:1 technology initiative.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:12 p.m. and go into Executive Session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation with National Education Association Barrington (NEAB); and Section 42-46-5(a)(2) pertaining to litigation relative to the Barrington High School Gymnasium Roof. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to adjourn the Executive Session at 11:38 p.m. and to seal the minutes. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mrs. Brody noted that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Dr. Shea moved and Mr. Guida seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:39 p.m. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Shea, Mr. Alessandro, and Mr. Guida voting in the affirmative for the motion.