

MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: School Committee Room

March 24, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

In attendance:

George Scobie
Jessie Harrington
Gail Holloway
Dottie Kauffman
Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield
Beth Chamberland
Cecelia Wirzbicki
Gregg Desto

Visitors: Alyssa Gervais and Mrs. Gervais

CALL TO ORDER:

CITIZENS' COMMENTS: None

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:

Auburn Middle School 6th grader Alyssa Gervasi, daughter of Reno and Tricia Gervasi of Auburn, was recognized by Mr. Desto as she has published a book titled Maya and the Shelter Grove Jumping Competition which is currently on Amazon. According to Mr. Desto, "she is a terrific person - great personality and high honor student." Alyssa and her family plan to give a copy to the SWIS Library, as that is the age appropriate school for this book. Alyssa shared that she has also published a short story and she is currently working on her next book!

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES INTRODUCTION / REPORT

Aaron Zheng and Jasmyn Gates

Due to technical issues, neither representative was able to report in to the meeting.

MINUTES: 3/10/2021 for Approval

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10th meeting; Mrs. Kauffman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Second Donation of PPE from Gentex Optics

Dr. Handfield thanked Mr. Edward Chamberland and Gentex Optics in Dudley, MA for another donation of 200 reusable face shields, noting that the shields will be distributed for staff usage and are greatly appreciated.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to accept with gratitude the second donation of reusable face shields from Gentex Optics in Dudley, through Mr. Ed Chamberland; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

COVID Update/April 5th Return to School

Dr. Handfield noted that Covid numbers continue to ebb and flow but they continue to trend downward compared to where we were at the start of 2021. While we are pleased to see this happening, it is imperative we continue to mask, wash hands, socially distance. We should not be lulled into a false sense of security particularly those under 19 years of age.

Dr. Handfield shared that there will be two transition days next week with all students being together for the first time. Remote students had the opportunity to tour the buildings if they are returning to in-person learning. Tents will be erected this week at the elementary schools to provide more space for social distancing. If students are home sick, they will be allowed to zoom in to class.

There will be staggered pick up and drop off times with traffic details. Remote teachers, who had been coming in to their classrooms to teach remotely, will now be teaching from home because we don't have space in the buildings.

2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Dr. Handfield reported that we are still double-checking the School Calendar for next school year and reviewing it carefully to make sure that PD time in the calendar will be sufficient for the initiatives we will be undertaking. We will have the final calendar for review and approval at our meeting on April 14th (Public Hearing on Budget) or April 28th.

Mrs. Kauffman asked if Step Up Days/Transition Days could be added to the calendar and Dr. Handfield confirmed that they certainly could.

FY '22 Budget Update

Dr. Handfield shared that he had the opportunity to present the School Department's FY'22 budget to the Finance Committee on March 17th. It was a more streamlined version of what we presented during our budget discussions this year. The Finance Committee were very supportive and voted to recommend our number of \$27,988,540.45, which again is a 0.99% increase over last year's appropriated number at the June town meeting and a 2.89% increase over the appropriated number at our special town meeting in October. He noted that the School Committee's public hearing on the FY 22 draft budget will be held remotely on April 14th and then we will be seeking town meeting approval at the Annual Town Meeting on May 4th.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT

Dr. Chamberland shared that recognizing the commitment we have to our students and staff, she shared several upcoming initiatives that should drive the professional learning in the District for several years to come. Each of these will positively impact the work we do with students in relation to academics, mental health, equity and diversity, and the use of technology:

CLEE-Center for Leadership and Educational Equity will serve to facilitate a Collaborative Equity Audit. This audit will examine data focusing on the root causes of inequity that may exist in the district and create recommendations to address these inequities. This work will harness the commitment of the team created by Dr. Handfield earlier in the year, providing us with a committed group of stakeholders to do this work.

Apple Innovation Team: Early last year, Mr. Bouvier and Dr. Chamberland established the Apple Innovation Team. This team is composed of interested and forward thinking staff members who recognize the importance of continuous growth in our use and application of technology to engage our students. Initial meetings were held last school year, with the pandemic interrupting the initial training of the committee. That training will begin again in earnest this summer. The model being that the staff members on the team become the school based leaders. Our initial focus will be on Auburn High School and Auburn Middle School, with the hope to expand to elementary schools as well.

District Mental Health Team: Mrs. Reidy and Dr. Chamberland are spearheading the creation of a District-wide mental health team. The initial focus of this team will be to complete a needs assessment examining the current staffing levels and programming in place to support the mental health needs of our students. Upon completion of a District Level Mental Health Profile and a review of Evidence Based Practices present in the district, we will create

an action plan. The action plan will serve to guide staffing and programming decisions along with identifying areas of need to create a robust and comprehensive mental health program for our students.

Summer School: Through the use of grant funding, we will again offer summer programming to meet the needs of our students. This programming will focus on further developing the literacy and math skills of our students. We are using grant funding to add additional staff, allowing us to then invite more students. The summer sessions will include students from kindergarten through grade 8. We hope to have additional special education staff as well as guidance staff added this summer to ensure students receive all the support they need. The program will run for 4 weeks from July 12th to August 5th.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT

Year to Date Budget Report:

Information

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report dated March 22, 2021.

Budget Transfers:

Action

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a list of budget transfers dated March 22, 2021 between same series for the Committee's information and some between different series requiring their approval.

Prior to making a motion to approve the transfers between series as presented, Mrs. Holloway asked why there were notations "to preserve school choice for future funding?" Mrs. Wirzbicki explained that we can carry forward school choice funds to the following year but have to fully expend the operating budget. We try to offset different things to preserve for future funding. With this explanation, Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve the transfers between the series as presented; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Bus Application for 2021-2022 School Year

Mrs. Wirzbicki noted that the bus application for next school year has been shared with all families via One Call emails and will continue to be. Hard copies will be sent home with Tri II report cards at the end of March. It is also posted on the website.

She noted that she is currently working through busing with families for the remainder of this school year. March 24th is the deadline for families to register if they have not already done so. Anyone having a question with regard to busing should reach out to me directly.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:23 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to adjourn for the evening; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Ailaine Zautner
Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

Minutes from March 10, 2021
School Calendar for 2021-2022
Year to Date Budget Report
Transfers