

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

A meeting of the School Committee was held at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at the Central Middle School Media Center with the following members present: Melanie Fiore, Chair, Betty Pryor, Vice Chair, Jaime Wallace, Nicole Nial and Megan Samborski. Also present was David Ljungberg, Superintendent, and Kathy Martin, Assistant Superintendent.

Chair M. Fiore called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 6:00 P.M. and called for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3): To discuss pending litigation and the chair so declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

The Committee returned to open session at 6:34 P.M.

### A. Approval of Items by Consensus

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the minutes of October 12, 2023. The motion was approved 5-0.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by B. Pryor to approve Warrant #2416 in the amount of \$698,256.05. The motion was approved 4-0-1 with J. Wallace abstaining.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by B. Pryor to approve Warrant #2417 in the amount of \$ 148,587.07. The motion was approved 5-0.

### B. Consideration for Items Withdrawn from Consensus

None

### C. Public Comment

None

### D. Student Representatives

Maddy DiLeo reported that fall sports is coming to an end; the football team has a playoff game tonight in Abington; senior privilege is going well; the Spanish classes will be visiting the Fine Arts Museum.

### E. MASS Superintendent's Academic Excellence Award – Melis Baloglu

Superintendent Ljungberg announced this year's recipient of the MASS Superintendent's Award that recognizes academic excellence, community service and other activities that distinguish high school students. This year's recipient is Melis Baloglu.

Chair M. Fiore called for a five-minute recess. The Committee returned to open session at 6:45 P.M.

**F. Population and Enrollment Forecast – Jerry McKibben, McKibben Demographic Research, LLC**

Superintendent Ljungberg introduced Jerry McKibben from McKibben Demographic Research, LLC, who was commissioned to do a study of enrollment and enrollment trends.

Mr. McKibben's presentation included:

- Explanation of the process of the forecast
- Forecast assumptions such as 30-year interest rates, existing home sales and new single family housing units.
- Detailed population from 2020 Census by town and school districts
- Population forecast
- Total school enrollment numbers 2020-2033
- District maps showing student density

The report showed increased enrollment numbers over the next ten years.

**G. Approval of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Waiver for Softball**

J. Wallace, on behalf of Athletic Director David Pignone, requested an 8<sup>th</sup> grade waiver for softball. This has already been approved by the Middlesex League based on the anticipation that numbers will still be very low again this year. This would support a Junior Varsity team with the hope that roster size and talent will be ready to compete at the varsity level the following spring.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the 8<sup>th</sup> grade waiver for Junior Varsity softball in the spring. The motion was approved 5-0.

**H. School Calendar – Approval of Revision PreK-8 Conference Dates**

Superintendent Ljungberg requested a revision to the School Calendar to change the PreK-8 conferences from December 6-7 to December 5-6 due to December 7<sup>th</sup> being the first night of Hanukkah.

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the revision to the School Calendar for PreK-8 conferences. The motion was approved 5-0.

**I. JLMC MOU Ratification**

Tabled to the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**J. Professional Development Update**

Assistant Superintendent K. Martin gave an update on professional development workshops and activities that have taken place through October 27<sup>th</sup> this year.

**K. Policy Review**

Chair M. Fiore reported that the Policy Subcommittee has been very busy updating policies and brought forward two policies for consideration.

M. Samborski gave a first reading of a proposed revised policy *2-37 Participation by the Public*. After discussion, the committee agreed to changes that included participants must state their name and address and that the chair has the discretion to increase time limits in extenuating circumstances.

B. Pryor gave a first reading of new policies for sponsorships. After discussion, the Committee agreed to exempt student publications.

Chair M. Fiore requested that these draft policies be posted on the website.

#### **L. District Offices – Update**

Superintendent Ljungberg reported that the appraisal for the Arnold House came in at 1.6 million dollars – more than one million dollars under the asking price. To move forward, this would need legislative approval. In addition to this, if improvements are over 30%, the entire building would need to be brought up to code. The architect is working on a general estimate to bring the building up to code.

Superintendent Ljungberg also reported that a 1600 square foot section of the new High School, known as the “mechanical well” is being studied to see if it can be redesigned as usable space for Central Offices. The Building Committee is expected to discuss this at their November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **M. Modular Classrooms - Update**

Superintendent Ljungberg reported that the RFP brought in only one bidder at \$837,000 which was a sticker shock for all. This is not feasible and we cannot afford to do this. For this year, we will convert the library into a STE maker space classroom, put the library on a rolling cart, and use flexibility for specialists. When the preschool moves into the new high school, it should open up more classrooms.

#### **N. Superintendent Evaluation**

Per Massachusetts state law, the Superintendent’s annual evaluation must be conducted entirely in open session.

B. Pryor gave a background on the process of the evaluation using the rubric as presented by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. There are four standards:

- I. Instructional Leadership
- II. Management and Operations
- III. Family and Community Engagement
- IV. Professional Culture

Under these standards, there are 21 indicators. Superintendent Ljungberg scored 1 needs improvement, 13 proficient and 7 exemplary in these standards. B. Pryor went through the standards, highlighted an indicator under each, and read the comments.

#### **O. Committee Liaison/Subcommittee Reports**

M. Fiore reported that the Policy Subcommittee next meeting is scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup>; J. Wallace reported that the next SEPAC meeting has also been scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup>, and M. Samborski reported that the coalition will meet next week.

**P. School Building Committee**

N. Nial reported that the next meeting of the School Building Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup> and asked if the School Committee would be interested in attending. The Branding Subcommittee will be discussing graphics, the spartan head logo, color schemes, etc. The graphic designer will be present at this meeting.

The School Committee stated that they would like to have a quorum to attend this meeting and asked that it be posted.

**Q. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Ljungberg reported on the following:

- The MUNIS system has been upgraded and they are working through minor issues as they arise. The next financial update will be December 14.
- Facilities update: Gerrior Masonry has submitted an estimate of \$439,000 to repair two chimneys at the old Central School and to demo the other two chimneys. In the meantime, they estimate about \$6,000 for a safety netting to deter the flaking brick from falling from both large chimneys.
- One of the Central Middle School elevators has been out of commission since August. There is only one company in the U.S. that provides the part needed for the control panel. We will continue to call every day until we get the part necessary to fix it.
- The furnace in the High School cafeteria that is used for hot water is broken and does not work. We can buy a new furnace at a cost of \$25,000 that can be saved and used in the future or do a temporary fix for \$5,000 and when the building gets demolished, it would go with it. The Committee agreed with the Superintendent's recommendation to go with the temporary fix.
- A section of the Central Middle School bridge is corroding because it did not have a protective coating on it. A structural engineer is coming to assess it. It is currently still open for use.
- The need to schedule a special meeting to present the budget schedule.
- The heat in the buildings has been turned on.
- Personnel update: The Director of Special Education and the Building Engineer positions have been posted.
- The first of many WestEd focus groups met today and was a varied group of general education and special education staff who rated the school district on their strengths and weaknesses in many different areas.
- Will attend the MASC/MASS Joint Conference next Wednesday through Friday along with all members of the School Committee.

Assistant Superintendent K. Martin reported on the following:

- The FF&E Committee, along with departments at the High School, have gone over the final furniture and equipment list with a fine-tooth comb. A furniture fair was held on October 24 in the library and staff were invited to come in and vote on furniture styles via a QR code. We have also started talking about the move and what will go and what will stay and what needs to come over from the preschool.
- Town departments have been invited to the High School on November 8<sup>th</sup> for a furniture give-away. It will be open to other school districts the following week.
- The annual School Safety Night will take place November 15<sup>th</sup>. A walk-through of the High School is being offered beforehand.

**R. Discussion/Correspondence/New Items**

**None**

**S. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**ACTION:** A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2), (3) and (6): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with STA Bargaining Unit, to discuss pending litigation and to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiation with non-union personnel – and the chair so declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call at 9:30 P.M.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED  
DAVID LJUNGBERG, SUPERINTENDENT**