

Brockton, Massachusetts Regular Meeting September 5, 2012
The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening at the George M. Romm Little Theater at Brockton High School at seven o'clock.

Present: Mayor Balzotti; Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Robinson; Mr. Donegan; Mrs. Joyce; Mr. Carpenter; Mr. Healy; Mr. Sullivan; Dr. Malone, Secretary

Note: These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Mayor Balzotti called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag. Following the salute she called attention to the Brockton High School of Champions shirt that was given to each of the Committee members by Dr. Szachowicz. She thanked Dr. Szachowicz and said that everyone can "wear them proudly."

Hearing of Visitors

Bill McGauley, of the Brockton Youth Foundation, expressed his gratitude to the School Department for its assistance during the Summerfest event held on August 18th. Over 1,200 children and parents were in attendance when the event had to be moved quickly indoors due to rain. The event was still a huge success for the children. Summerfest was renewed last year after a long hiatus and relies on community and government working together. Mr. McGauley recognized the many agencies that took part, and August 17, 2013 has been chosen as the date for next year, with no rain date. Event coordinators will be requesting more space at the high school. Mayor Balzotti thanked Mr. McGauley for the hard work he put into the event.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Balzotti explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked if School Committee members wished to remove any items from it. Mr. Minichiello requested to remove Enclosure # 3, *Acceptance of Donation*. He then expressed the Committee's appreciation for the generous donation. Dr. Malone agreed and further explained that *Backpacks for New Beginnings* was founded by two middle school students from Boston, and he is happy that they chose Brockton as a recipient. The backpacks will be given to children of homeless or struggling families.

Mr. Sullivan wanted to acknowledge a donation that was given to the Raymond School by Walgreens in Brockton. Almost \$1,000 worth of school supplies have been provided and will be given to students who are homeless or whose families are struggling.

Mr. Minichiello moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve all of the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Regular Meeting Minutes on August 21, 2012
- Acceptance of donation of backpacks
- Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Appointments
- Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Action: Leaves; Resignations; Retirement; Early Retirement

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Malone began by saying that there was tremendous excitement across the system for this year's opening. The schools were well prepared and *all* staff made a great effort toward readiness for the arrival of the students. He also mentioned the camaraderie and spirit among the staff at the convocation, which included a "flash mob" by 60 teachers from various schools. Dr. Malone then asked Mr. John Jerome, Deputy Superintendent, to give the Opening of Schools report.

Mr. Jerome referred to the report that was distributed at the meeting, and stated that the enrollment figures are preliminary numbers--200 students were enrolled yesterday and 200 more today, and are not yet counted at the schools. Projected enrollment this year is 16,400. The growth is encouraging, but concerning because of the issues with class size. He said that three of the four additional kindergarten classrooms the System had requested in the spring are already filled, and the fourth is expected to open next week. The System would like to cap the kindergarten class size at 27. Three of these classrooms are located at the Gilmore School.

Mrs. Barry, Executive Director of Learning & Teaching PreK-8, reported on the openings at the *elementary schools*, stating that every elementary school was visited by school administrators and they were pleased with the presentation of the schools, inside and out; classrooms were student-friendly. She stated that there are new administrators at some of the schools and the transitions at those schools were good. Mrs. Barry said that the smooth opening reflects the organization and professionalism that it takes to make this happen. Mr. Donegan stated that he was pleased with the openings in his Ward (3), as well. He thanked Mrs. Barry for the update.

Mr. Jerome said that, at the *Middle School level*, he is fortunate to have consistent teams at each school. The openings at the middle schools were wonderful; the Grade 6 – 8 design has worked very well.

Dr. Szachowicz, Principal of Brockton High School, said that the opening at the *high school* was excellent, despite the ongoing construction. She thanked the Committee, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Thomas, and the Superintendent for their continued support. She was encouraged by the 93% attendance on the first day, and commented on the many positive, personal exchanges between staff and students she witnessed throughout the day. Mrs. Joyce said that she understands the frustration that the ongoing construction has caused, but looks forward to the benefits of having the new windows when it is finished.

Dr. Terrasi, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services, reported on the *alternative programs* and echoed the same positive comments about the opening of school. He added that a new therapeutic program at the Pathways Center opened, and he was encouraged to see the three separate programs at the Keith School well organized on the first day and commended the staff. Mrs. Joyce asked how the number of students in the Gateway Program compared to last year, and Dr. Terrasi responded that the numbers are about the same. Mr. Donegan inquired about methods used by Brockton Public Schools to reconnect with students who were previously not successful in school, and how we keep track of these students; Dr. Terrasi responded.

Mr. Minichiello asked Mr. Jerome for clarification on his statement at convocation that we are starting off the year with “qualified substitutes.” Drs. Malone and Moran explained new regulations from the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education that have changed the way the System hires.

Mr. Thomas gave an update on *Facilities and Transportation*. He stated that we bussed over 7,000 students today, and by 4:45 p.m. all buses were clear with no major issues. Regarding the buildings, there were no problems aside from the extreme humidity causing moisture on the floors of one school. Mrs. Joyce inquired about the police traffic duties at the intersection of Belmont Street and the Brockton High School exit during school times. Mr. Thomas responded that they are in place, as well as using crossing guards. Mr. Sullivan thanked Mr. Thomas for his hard work and dedication and wanted to let him know that the teachers are very happy with the work in the buildings. Mr. Donegan inquired about the estimated completion date for the work at Brockton High School and other issues regarding the ongoing window replacement. Mr. Thomas said that, at this point, the contractor is about one month behind.

Mr. Petronio gave an *overview of the budget*, schools indicated they have all the materials and supplies they need in the classrooms; school lunch is working hard to get the free and reduced lunch applications returned by parents because this counts heavily towards reimbursement. There will be a raffle with prizes to encourage students to return their forms. He said they have hired extra staff to help process these forms because of the importance of timely filing.

Dr. Malone invited the Committee to *Friday Nights Under the Lights* football games at the stadium, and highlighted the Brockton High cross country track meet he was able to attend today. He asked the Committee to contact him to set up visits at the schools.

Items to Refer to Subcommittee

Dr. Malone said that Mrs. Joyce and Mr. Minichiello are in the process of setting up the next subcommittee meetings. Dr. Malone would like to schedule these meetings on evenings that are *not* regular School Committee meeting nights. Mayor Balzotti agreed, saying that subcommittee meetings held beforehand have been delaying the start of the School Committee meeting, it is important that an open, advertised meeting begin at the stated time. Mr. Minichiello responded that they will schedule these meetings sometime in October.

Unfinished Business

Dr. Malone brought up for discussion two positions that are already in the budget, but have not yet been hired: *Assistant Director of Special Education*, and *Supervisor of Nursing*. He invited Mr. Jerome and Dr. Terrasi to discuss the positions and answer any questions.

Dr. Terrasi answered questions from the Committee about the Supervisor of Nursing position. Mr. Minichiello asked if *not* filling this position would impact Brockton financially, and Dr. Terrasi responded by saying there is a risk of losing a \$200,000 grant from the Department of Public Health that Brockton receives if the System does not employ a Supervisor of Nursing.

Mr. Jerome stated that the *Assistant Director of Special Education* position will be grant funded; Mr. Minichiello would like to add the caveat that, should the funding change for this position, the Committee will need to revisit the existence of the position.

Mr. Minichiello then moved the Superintendent's recommendation to hire the following:

- Supervisor Of Nursing
- Assistant Director of Special Education, *with* the caveat that the position continues to exist as long as it is grant funded, and should it not be grant funded, it must be revisited by the School Committee for its further continuation.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously.

New Business

Mr. Sullivan gave a report on the Bid Review Subcommittee meeting held at 5:30 p.m. this evening. Mr. Sullivan then moved the Superintendent's recommendation to accept the report of the subcommittee.

Voted: to accept recommendation, unanimously.

Mr. Sullivan moved the Superintendent's recommendation to award the FY 2013 School Bid for Heating and Venting Services to CAM HVAC & Construction.

Voted: to accept recommendation; unanimously.

Mr. Healy brought up the status of the Brockton High School webpage, specifically, that many areas are not properly updated. Mr. Minichiello echoed Mr. Healy's concern. Dr. Malone responded that we have not had a webmaster position for two years, and that this is an item that Brockton is aware of and has a plan to address. He thanked Messrs. Healy and Minichiello for bringing this to the Committee's attention.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Matthew H. Malone
Secretary

wka