

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the George M. Romm Little Theatre at Brockton High School at seven o'clock.

Present: Mayor Carpenter, Chair; Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Henningson; Mr. Jordan; Mrs. Joyce; Mr. Robinson; Mrs. Sullivan; Mrs. Smith, Secretary

Absent: Ms. Clark

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

Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag.

### Hearing of Visitors

Mr. Brian Rogan, Principal of the Kennedy Elementary School, thanked the School Committee for its commitment to improving the environment at the Kennedy School, specifically the rehabbing of the modular classrooms that were in disrepair; he said the wing is beautiful and acknowledged the work of the BPS craftsmen.

### Consent Agenda

Mayor Carpenter explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked if School Committee members wished to remove any items. There were no requests.

#### **Mrs. Joyce moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:**

- Approval of August 12, 2014 Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes
- Authorization to Submit FY 2015 MA DESE Academic Support Grant - \$96,000
- Authorization to Submit FY 2015 MA DESE No Child Left Behind Federal Entitlement Grants (Title 1, II, III, SPED, Early Childhood, Perkins)
- Approval of BHS JROTC Field Trip to Camp Edwards on Cape Cod
- Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Appointments – Certified and Non-Certified
- Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Actions: Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements

Voted: to adopt the recommendation, unanimous.

### Superintendent's Report

#### **Opening of Schools Report**

The Superintendent reported that 1,400 certified staff reported for work on Tuesday, including 67 new teachers. She thanked Mr. Minichiello for stepping in to address the staff in the Mayor's absence. Teachers were welcomed back with a t-shirt bearing the new BPS logo: *Brockton Public Schools - Instructional excellence for every student, every day.*

The Superintendent reported that she was able to visit the Downey, Kennedy, and Raymond schools, and told the Committee that they would be pleased with the level of engagement occurring in the classrooms. She shared that during her visit to the Raymond School, eight first grade students were being treated for bee stings they received on the playground; fortunately, there were no adverse effects to the children, and pest control was called.

The Superintendent reported growing enrollment numbers - 15,571 students reported for school today and the October 1 enrollment is projected to be around 17,500. There are already 1,399 kindergarten students enrolled; kindergarten registration has been put aside temporarily to allow the Parent Center to process the grade 1 – 12 registrations. She said that class sizes are large, and she would like to keep primary grade class sizes at 24-25; there are already schools where enrollment has been frozen. The Superintendent said that if numbers are high she may need to hire additional teachers, using funds that were reserved for this purpose.

The Superintendent also informed the Committee that last week school department administrators received professional development on the new Discipline Law, Chapter 222, and a crisis management team update.

Elementary Schools - Deputy Superintendent Barry reported that overall, everything went well. Each school was visited by herself, the Superintendent, or one of the Curriculum Coordinators; they walked the hallways and observed classrooms. Reports came back that schools were clean, orderly, and the classrooms were already busy engaging the students. She announced that preK and kindergarten classes will begin on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Middle Schools - Mrs. Barry reported smooth openings at all middle schools. She was pleased to report that South Middle School implemented the Breakfast in the Classroom program today; making it the first middle school in the state to adopt the program.

Brockton High School – Mrs. Barry reported that a new, highly successful postcard system was implemented in place of mailing schedules to students’ homes prior to the start of school. This allowed the school to give students accurate and up-to-date schedules, resulting in less confusion and anxiety, as well as saving the cost of postage and paper waste. She reported an enrollment of 4,235 active students, with attendance at 92%.

Alternative Programs – Mrs. Barry reported the following:

- Champion High School opened with 108 students and 15 new referrals pending.
- The Russell Alternative School opened with 61% of students in attendance; staff will call the home of each student who did not report.
- The Pathways Program at the Keith Center, which re-engages students who are on the drop out list, opened with 25 re-engaged dropouts; last year the program successfully graduated 32 re-engaged dropouts. An additional feature of the program is the ACCUPLACER testing that is used not only to determine student placement, but also for possible dual enrollment at Massasoit Community College.
- The Goddard School’s therapeutic day program opened with 55 students; 82% attendance.

Facilities - Mr. Thomas thanked the Director of Facilities, Ken Thompson, for directing the work done on the modular classrooms at the Kennedy School. He reported that custodians and craftsmen worked very hard during the summer to ensure schools were ready for opening day, including minor repairs and cosmetic work, and the following major upgrades:

- Complete renovation of the Kennedy School modular classrooms
- Refurbishing of West and North Middle schools gymnasiums – floors were refinished and new bleachers will be installed by October.
- Hancock School bathroom upgrades
- BHS – carpets will be replaced in 60 classrooms in advance of the Accreditation visit
- Air conditioning was installed in cafeterias of school buildings that are without. This will provide a cool area that can accommodate a good amount of students and staff during periods of extreme heat.

Transportation Update – Mr. Thomas reported that over 8,800 students were transported on 49 buses 49 vans, and 36 wheelchair vans transport students with outside placements. As expected on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school, there was a lot of automobile traffic and a few busing delays that Mr. Thomas is working with the transportation company to iron out.

Mr. Thomas gave a brief report on the number of breakfasts and lunches served, Breakfast in the Classroom, and the “grab and go” breakfast at Ashfield and Plouffe.

### Crossing Guards

Mayor Carpenter began a discussion by asking Mr. Thomas to clarify the number of crossing guards on duty today; Mr. Thomas responded that there are 72 crossing guards compared with 119 last year, 47 stations were eliminated. The Mayor said that he met with Brockton Police and School Police yesterday in order to develop a strategy plan to assist with traffic; approximately 20 police officers were deployed around the city to facilitate the safety of walking students. The Mayor expressed his deep concerns for the safety of the walking students, and said that this issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible. He was able to visit seven schools, and he felt that at least three of the schools would not have been safe without the police officers there to assist. The Mayor urged the School Committee and the Custodians Union to resume negotiations on this one issue, calling it “urgent”. He said he believes that a resolution that would lower costs and bring back positions is possible. The Mayor also said he made a personal appeal earlier this evening to Mr. Minichiello and Mr. Talbot, President of the Custodians Union, and both sides were willing to work on this. He said at this point, it is incumbent on him as Mayor to press for a reasonable solution, and cutting 47 positions is not an acceptable solution. He added that the police will be out there over the next few days as they were today, but it cannot continue. He concluded by saying he will do whatever he can as Mayor and Chair of the School Committee to facilitate the process and he will work closely with the Superintendent to have this resolved.

Superintendent Smith said that both the city and school department have provided support and outreach for the families of the two children who were involved in the recent fatal

accidents. She reminded everyone that with respect to the non-net budget, transportation costs continue to go up. Last year the district saw an increase of \$330,000 due to the McKinny Vento unfunded mandate, she will continue to address this with our legislators.

Mr. Minichiello expressed his appreciation to Mayor Carpenter for the assistance by Brockton police today. He responded to the Mayor's concerns, stating that with respect to non-net school spending, the committee worked diligently to save buses for 900 students, he called it "almost a miracle." Mr. Minichiello said that, as a senior member of the School Committee he would take the criticism for "things not happening", referring to an article in the Enterprise, all of the hard work was done in good faith. He said he graciously accepts any help from the Mayor, the safety of our students is paramount to everyone.

Mrs. Joyce responded and explained that the Transportation Subcommittee met several times and most, if not all, School Committee members attended these meetings because of the importance of the issue. She said that the Committee, along with Mr. Thomas, painstakingly reviewed every crossing guard position before making tough decisions about how to best transport students in a safe way. Mrs. Joyce asked Mr. Thomas for details; Mr. Thomas said the district was able to save six buses, and stated that each crossing guard positions costs about \$7,200. As well, the Committee was able to keep from extending the walk zones (to get to bus stops), which would have been 2 miles for middle school and 2.5 miles for high school students. Mrs. Joyce asked Mr. Thomas if he had received feedback with respect to any of the eliminated positions. Mr. Thomas responded yes, and there were three sites that he was concerned about: the Baker School parking lot, the Huntington School at Market and Warren, and a position at the top of the Hancock School parking lot. He said that there were also several crossing guards at locations that had little activity, but he would be reluctant to move any positions until after kindergarten starts. Mr. Thomas said he would welcome a subcommittee meeting if there is a need to call back positions, he cannot add back any positions right now due to the budget. Mrs. Joyce said that the subcommittee and full committee will continue to work diligently to provide well thought-out answers, communication will be key.

Mayor Carpenter said that everyone appreciates the great work the committee did over the summer, but the issue remaining is maintaining the level of safety for children with 47 less crossing guards, stating that there are still 8,000 students who walk to school. He reiterated that he believes there is a solution agreeable to both sides.

Mr. Henningson asked Mr. Thomas what kind of outreach has been done with respect to safety in walking, saying that the two recent fatal accidents show that we have traffic issues. Mr. Henningson also said the Committee takes the safety of our students seriously.

Mr. Thomas responded that Nitza Otero from *Safe Routes to Schools*, a program run by the State Dept. of Transportation that provides lessons and curriculum for safe routes to schools, is currently working with all of our elementary school principals. Mrs. Barry added that Maryellen Kirrane, Director of Health and Wellness, instructed her staff to teach the student-community safety unit now, and repeat it throughout the year. Mrs. Barry said Mrs. Kirrane talked with Parent Specialist Jane Feroli to schedule parent nights on this topic.

The Superintendent said space has been designated at the Adult Learning Center for an Advocacy Center. She said that Mr. Pinheiro will be able to fund three bilingual parent advocates who will speak Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, and Spanish; Special Education parents will be included at the center as well. She added that School Resource Officers are willing to do education for students and the community, as well.

Mr. Jordan addressed the issue of communication, he suggested using Brockton Cable Access, BHS cable programming, to run 10 to 90-second ads for children, posters on buses, he said we have many communication avenues available that could be utilized better. To keep costs to almost nothing, Mr. Jordan suggested having students in communications classes prepare the public service announcements as part of their classwork. Mayor Carpenter responded that this was a great suggestion and that he would look into implementing some of these ideas as soon as possible.

### **FY 2015 Budget Update**

The Superintendent reported the Grants and Development office is beginning to see movement, they are going forward with the campaign to recruit and enlist businesses to adopt and/or partner with schools. She said that every business that was approached for donations for the t-shirts responded positively; she will continue to update the Committee.

Mrs. Joyce requested that the Superintendent provide an update on all unfilled non-certified positions in the Friday informational packet.

**Items to Refer to Subcommittee**

Superintendent Smith brought forward the following subcommittee items:

- A Facilities meeting in light of increased enrollment
- A Policy Manual Review meeting to continue working on updating BPS policies
- A Finance meeting with respect to principal contracts
- A Curriculum meeting to hear about the BPS Health & Wellness curriculum - Mr. Minichiello added that this request from earlier in the year was a result of the rash of drug overdoses, the Committee wanted to hear about the BPS curriculum with respect to drug use and addiction, and also to discuss bringing speakers who have had experiences with drug addiction.

Mr. Minichiello announced that a Joint City Council/School Committee/School Department Information meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 24, at 6:00 p.m.\* at East Middle School. He stated that the meeting format will be more of a question and answer session.

**Unfinished Business**

Superintendent's Strategic Plan – The Superintendent made a brief statement that she will continue to update the Committee about benchmarks, timelines and measures.

**New Business**

Mr. Henningson said that on November 4, 2014, a new State Representative will be elected and suggested that a legislative dinner be planned after that date. The Superintendent said that she received feedback from local officials who said they are unable to attend luncheons held during the day due to work schedules. She also stated that she is in the process of scheduling a facilities tour, on a Saturday morning, for local officials.

Mr. Henningson thanked Brockton United CleanUp Crew and Stonehill students for the cleanup work that was done in various areas around the city, and at the Raymond School. He also acknowledged Mark D'Agostino and the Old Colony YMCA for their "Paint the Town" event at which volunteers cleaned the Huntington School and painted lines. Mayor Carpenter also acknowledged cleanup work done by Stonehill students at Tukis Park.

Mrs. Joyce spoke about the ceremony that was held at the Davis School to dedicate the library in memory of MaryAnn Burke in honor of her volunteer service. She said that this dedication provides a great teaching opportunity of what volunteering is all about and acknowledged the Davis PTA for their hard work.

**Mr. Minichiello moved to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD  
Secretary

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