

**Brockton, Massachusetts Regular Meeting March 15, 2016**

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the George M. Romm Little Theatre in the Fine Arts Building of Brockton High School, at seven o'clock. These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Present: Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Ms. Asack, Mr. D'Agostino, Mr. Gormley, Ms. Plant, Mrs. Sullivan, Superintendent Smith, Secretary

Absent: Mayor Carpenter, Mr. Sullivan

Also Present: Executive Team; Laurie Mason, Special Education Director; Olga Garriga, Special Education Assistant Director; Cedric Turner, Peter Czymbor, Heather Ronan, Eileen McQuaid

Mr. Minichiello called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag. Mr. Minichiello asked everyone to remain standing for a moment of silence in observance of the death of Mr. James Daley, former school committee person. Following the moment of silence, Mr. Minichiello announced that Mayor Carpenter was ill and unable to be here, and Mr. Sullivan was also unable to attend due to a family medical issue.

**Consent Agenda**

Mr. Minichiello explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda and asked committee members for requests to remove items for discussion.

**Ms. Plant moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety.**

Voted: to adopt the recommendation, unanimous.

**Superintendent's Report**

**Student Report**

Before hearing Gavin Rocha's report, the Superintendent commended him for his participation in the SNAP (Special Needs Aquatics Program), for which he recently took part in a "polar plunge" to raise funds.

Gavin reported that 80 BHS students attended the first FBI Academy and it was very well received; he said Officer Leedberg will work with Principal Wolder for additional workshops this year and during the summer.

Upcoming events: An *IB/AP dual-enrollment workshop* for parents this evening; *Spring sports tryouts* next week, *BHS parent conferences* on Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m., and *MCAS testing* will take place next week. He reminded sophomores to take this seriously and to prepare properly. Superintendent Smith said she has met with high school students and she wanted parents to know that many students are stressed over MCAS exams, parents can help by making sure students are well-prepared, also by speaking with their children and reassuring them.

Budget Update - The Superintendent reported there is a lot of hard work going on as we prepare for next year's budget. She said she is regularly communicating with legislators and she has heard from other district superintendents that they are also engaged in a difficult budget year. She has asked her executive team to complete reviews of

administrative positions by March 25<sup>th</sup>; and all programs and areas beyond the school day by April 15<sup>th</sup>; stating that protecting the classroom during these budget cuts is a priority.

The Superintendent spoke briefly about the incident during the boys basketball game in Mansfield and thanked Mansfield School Superintendent Zeffro Gianetti for his commitment with her to ensure this becomes a teachable moment. A joint statement was released about the incident by both, and there are plans to bring Mansfield and Brockton students together for conversation.

Superintendent Smith announced that *CNN Heroes*, a program that honors individuals who are making a difference in their communities, has selected Marquis Taylor and his Coaching4Change (C4C) program as one of their heroes, they will be filming at East middle school on two dates this week. She said the program will air during the March Madness Final Four series on CNN, she congratulated Mr. Taylor on this honor.

Finally, the Superintendent highlighted events she recently attended:

- Kudos to Amy Korim for a wonderful *Children's Concert* this past Sunday, and to the many Brockton Public Schools' students and staff who participated;
- Kudos as well to Mr. Cunningham for the excellent *BHS choral concert* last week;
- She recently went before City Council to talk about automated external defibrillators (AED); the council was grateful for the efforts the district has made with ensuring these are located around the schools and the training;
- The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial service of the Strand Theatre Fire, in which 13 Brockton firefighters lost their lives;
- The Public Safety Mass for firemen, police, first responders at St. Patrick's Church.

### **Empower Yourself Presentation and Recognition**

The Superintendent congratulated Mr. Cedric Turner and Instructor Peter Czymbor for their teams' recent successes at the global economic symposium held at Bridgewater State University; she invited them to present to school committee.

Mr. Czymbor shared a power point presentation about this financial literacy program which Mr. Turner started in 2011; he credited Mr. John Jerome for seeing the value in the program and assisting Mr. Turner in getting started in the middle schools. Following Mr. Czymbor's presentation, Mr. Turner invited high school participants Albert Michel, Opal Polynice, Angela Girodier and Mary Sanonto speak about their experiences, what they have learned, and what the program has done for them.

After the presentation, certificates for each team were presented by Superintendent Smith and Vice-Chair Mr. Minichiello. Mr. Minichiello congratulated the students and commented on how well they presented themselves. He also reminded them that as they realize their successes, to come back and help the students behind them.

### **Special Education (SPED) Presentation**

Ms. Mason and Ms. Garriga gave an overview of the Special Education Department using a power point presentation. The presentation included discussion about the four overarching areas of the department--programming, compliance, support, and communication. A question and answer period followed, during which Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Garriga answer questions from members about how parents can initiate the evaluation

process, funding, and several questions about out-of-district placements and how these students can be brought back into the district.

### **PARCC Presentation**

Deputy Superintendent Barry, together with curriculum coordinators/PARCC fellows Heather Ronan and Eileen McQuaid, presented information about the transition to what will be the new state assessment, MCAS 2.0. Mrs. Barry said the state's timeline is to have the new assessment begin in 2017, with all students participating in a fully online assessment beginning in 2019. She said this timeline has already been revised more than once and she would expect additional revisions.

Ms. Ronan and Ms. McQuaid explained key differences and similarities between PARCC and MCAS, and said at this time it is unknown which features will be adopted from each test to make up the new MCAS 2.0. Mr. D'Agostino asked whether classroom teachers were involved in the process, Ms. Ronan said "yes". Mr. Gormley asked why the state was moving to online testing when there are districts, including Brockton, for which it is not affordable; Ms. Barry agreed that it is frustrating and the funding needs to be there. Ms. McQuaid said that this is pushing districts to move their schools into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The question was raised about responding to parents with respect to "opting out", and whether there is a downside. Responses included:

- There is no opt out, the state calls this a refusal
- There is no penalty to the student for refusal, but it will hurt the school's participation rate
- It is a good way for parents to see their child's progress on the assessment
- When parents refuse for the child, the student misses taking the test and becoming familiar with it, perhaps having their first experience with the test when they must take it in high school in order to receive a diploma
- This is not unlike the type of competition/testing students will encounter in college and as they go through life

Dr. Cancell said he felt strongly that the most important thing is to do what is best for the students. He said we are trying to prepare students for the future and parents are not helping their child or district (by refusing).

Mrs. Barry said resources on this topic were recently made available and she will include them in the Friday packet for school committee.

Lastly, Mr. D'Agostino asked whether anyone felt we were moving toward excessive testing; Ms. Barry said we are always looking at the number of assessments we give our students, we have no control over state assessments but do have control over district assessments, which are what we use to inform what the teacher is actually doing with the students, in that way we want to be sure we continue to offer them. Superintendent Smith thanked Ms. Barry, Ms. Ronan, and Ms. McQuaid for the presentation.

Before moving to the next agenda item, the Superintendent wanted to remember Jim Daley, calling him a kind and caring man who served the city on many boards, and was always concerned about the welfare of the children. She expressed her condolences to his daughter, Erin, and his family during this difficult time.

Mrs. Sullivan said Mr. Daley was a personal friend of hers and echoed the Superintendent's comments; she said he will be missed.

Finally, the Superintendent announced that New England Patriots player *Malcolm Butler* would make an appearance at West Middle School tomorrow.

**Items to Refer to Subcommittee**

The Superintendent asked School Committee to confirm April 9<sup>th</sup> for the Superintendent's Contract Subcommittee meeting; there were no objections.

**New Business**

**Introduction of the 2016-2017 Draft School Calendar– First Read(handout)**

The Superintendent called the committee's attention to the 2016-2017 draft school calendar that was handed out, she said she would like them to review and discuss it this evening in order to submit it at the next regular meeting. There were several questions but no objections to any dates; Mr. D'Agostino pointed out a minor error for correction. After discussion, the Superintendent said she will include this on the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda for final approval.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD  
Secretary  
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handouts:  
2016-2017 Draft School Calendar  
PARCC/MCAS Transition Powerpoint  
SPED Presentation Materials