

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

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

Also Present: Executive Team

Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and requested that everyone remain standing for a moment of silence following the flag salute. Superintendent Smith announced that Kathleen Driscoll Kazanowski, a retired, long-time Brockton educator, passed away, she asked for a moment of silence in her memory.

#### Hearing of Visitors

Mr. Gerald Conefrey addressed the committee.

#### Consent Agenda

Mayor Carpenter explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda and asked members if they would like to remove any items for discussion; there were no requests.

**Mr. Minichiello moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following remaining items:**

- September 6, 2016 Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes
- September 13, 2016 Finance Subcommittee Report
- Submission to DESE for FY17 Federal Entitlement and Allocation Grants
- Submission of proposal for FY17 Investing in Innovation (i3) Development Grant
- Notification of Personnel Appointments, Certified
- Notification of Personnel Actions: Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

#### Superintendent's Report

##### **Recognition - Cradles to Crayons Backpack Donation**

Superintendent Smith said she was pleased to have Kylee North and Kirsten Sims, representing Cradles to Crayons, in attendance this evening to accept a certificate of appreciation for the donation of 2,000 backpacks to Brockton Public Schools students. She thanked Ms. Asack for coordinating the donation and working with facilities staff on the delivery. Ms. North said they were very pleased to be able to bring the backpack program to Brockton this year and that Cradles to Crayons is interested in partnering further with the schools and with the city. She explained that the organization's focus is to provide essential items for children in need. The Superintendent presented a certificate of appreciation from the school committee.

##### **Recognition - NorthEast Electrical Distributors Grant**

The Superintendent invited Mr. Thomas and Dr. Murray to present a certificate of appreciation to Northeast Electrical Distributors for their donation of \$50,000 of lighting products and upgrades at West Middle School. Mr. Nate Pedro, Energy Solutions Manager, accepted the certificate. Mr. Thomas introduced Mr. Pedro as a proud alumni of West Middle and Brockton High schools.

Dr. Murray thanked Mr. Pedro on behalf of the school's staff, students and parents; he talked about the energy efficient upgrades to the lighting in the auditorium and throughout the building.

**Recognition of Recipient of 2016 Biotechnology Educator's Award - Jonathan Shapiro**

The Superintendent congratulated Jonathan Shapiro, BHS Science Department Head, on receiving the very first *Champions for Biotechnology-Educator's Award* from the Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation (MassBioEd). Mr. Shapiro expressed his appreciation for this recognition and acknowledged the support of many people who contributed to this award.

Mayor Carpenter welcomed and acknowledged the presence of city councilors Anne Beauregard, Shayna Barnes, and former city councilor Jass Stewart.

**Kindergarten Opening:** The Superintendent reported a smooth opening at all schools, there are currently 1,368 kindergarten students enrolled compared with 1,371 last year, plus 232 pre-school students at the Gilmore Center.

Finally, the Superintendent talked about "International Dot Day" celebrated last Thursday across the district. She explained that *The Dot Book*, a book that encourages students to express themselves and their creativity, was read in classrooms across the district.

**Presentation by Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester, Ed.D.**

The Superintendent welcomed Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester to the meeting, she invited him to share his 2016 Back-to-School power point presentation and said she would be co-presenting with him.

Commissioner Chester thanked the school committee for the opportunity to speak tonight, he was pleased with the turnout at the "meet and greet" held earlier this evening. Commissioner Chester's presentation included updates in the following areas:

- Performance of Massachusetts students nationally and globally
- The 1993 Education Reform Bill
- State and local K-12 spending
- Statewide and local student progress
- ESE priority areas
- ESE upgrading of standards and assessments

Mayor Carpenter thanked the Commissioner and Superintendent for the presentation then opened the floor for questions from school committee members.

Mr. Minichiello talked about the district's budget challenges over the past few years and asked the commissioner to update the committee with respect to implementation of any of the Chapter 70 Review Commission's recommendations. He said the school committee appreciates the increase in funding over the years, but it does not take into account the challenges the district faces. Commissioner Chester responded, stating that health care costs and SPED were the two places the commission identified that "needed adjustment".

Mayor Carpenter expressed several concerns to the Commissioner with respect to budget issues, including inadequate state funding toward Brockton to meet the cost of educating the highly challenged student populations that Brockton embraces, in disproportionate

numbers to most communities; losses in funding due to the new direct certification requirement and the October 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff date, both of which he called discriminatory to communities like Brockton. He asked the Commissioner for help to address these inequities, and to think about fair treatment of children in gateway cities like Brockton, stating the tenet of public school education is to provide a level playing field for all children.

Mr. Minichiello stated to the Commissioner that the committee wants him to convey Brockton's issues to the governor and legislature. He said it is getting more difficult for Brockton schools to absorb the costs and maintain the quality education we provide, that the community sees the charter as another obstacle that is chipping away at our resources. The Commissioner assured the Mayor and Mr. Minichiello that their message was heard.

Ms. Plant asked the Commissioner to answer how the district will close the achievement gaps when we are losing funding; he responded that legislature has given the DESE until December to look at direct certification to make it more equitable.

Mr. Gormley talked about the lack of people entering the teaching profession and obstacles that make it difficult; he said this has affected Brockton's attempts to bring more diversity to its teaching staff. He asked the Commissioner if the DESE has any plans to fund alternative pathways into the teaching profession, Commissioner Chester responded and encouraged Mr. Gormley to look into what Lawrence is doing.

Mr. D'Agostino asked several questions with respect to New Heights Charter School, the Commissioner responded.

Ms. Asack asked if DESE will push for full funding of McKinney Vento; the Commissioner responded that the state does advocate for this funding, with respect to homeless students he said they are sorting through new requirements in the new Every Student Succeeds Act.

Mr. Sullivan asked how the DESE could grant New Heights a waiver for a late opening when the Kennedy School was denied a waiver a few years back; the Commissioner responded that he has always been a stickler on 180 days.

Mayor Carpenter questioned who is responsible for the financial oversight of New Heights Charter School, citing that \$250,000 was spent to renovate a building that was never finished, followed by construction work at a second location that was started with no plans or permits and had to be shut down pending proper paperwork; the Commissioner responded that he keeps close tabs on the project and with respect to permits, he relies on local authorities.

The Superintendent closed with comments about Brockton's work in the areas of social and emotional learning. Commissioner Chester said that he appreciated the opportunity to come before school committee, he understands the challenges and has heard the concerns loud and clear. Principal Wolder presented the commissioner with a Boxer sweatshirt.

## **New Business**

Voting Delegate for 2016 Joint Conference - Mayor Carpenter called for a motion to elect a voting delegate to the November, 2016 MASC-MASS Joint Conference.

**Ms. Sullivan nominated Mr. Minichiello, the vote was unanimous.**

Mr. Gormley spoke about how inspirational Ms. Driscoll Kazanowski was to him as a teacher.

Ms. Sullivan said she has already met with two parent groups and everyone is very pleased with the opening of school this year.

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD/Secretary

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