

The Brockton School Committee held a Retreat in the Professional Development Room at West Middle School in Brockton, MA, on Saturday, January 21, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. These minutes contain a summary of the retreat 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

Absent: Mayor Carpenter, Mr. Sullivan

Also Present: Executive Team Members E. Barry, M. Thomas, J. Saba-Maguire, A. Petronio, C. Murray, M. Bolton, S. Wolder; BHS Deans Carolyn Copp, Andrew Donovan, Sean Desmond, Dorothy Presser from MASC, Julianne Andrade, Wanda Alves and Patricia Balchunas

The meeting began at 8:35 a.m.; Superintendent Smith thanked staff and school committee members and began the meeting with an agenda overview. Later in the morning Mr. Minichiello announced he received notification from the Mayor sending his apologies that he would not be able to attend as planned due to a sudden family situation.

The Superintendent called the committee's attention to the enclosed *Brockton Public Schools Draft Diversity Task Force Action Plan*. This task force, headed up by Dr. Moran, has met several times this year and has drafted an action plan that will be presented to school committee as soon as it is finalized.

The Superintendent reported that she will go before the city's Diversity Commission on February 2nd to review the commission's November, 2016 report analyzing diversity in hiring by the school department. The commission did not grade the district favorably. She invited school committee members to attend at 7 p.m. in the GAR Room at City Hall.

FY18 Budget

Mr. Petronio prepared and presented an "FY18 Budget Projection" which is a first look at the preliminary FY18 budget. The level services budget he presented is an increase of 6.31%, \$10.5 million higher than last year. Mr. Petronio also provided a preliminary revenue forecast showing an increase of \$1.4 million. After consideration of possible savings and possible additional revenues, Mr. Petronio estimated the budget shortfall would be between \$5 and 6 million. He said factors that will have a major impact include the direct certification requirement and whether Brockton will be held harmless again this year; and whether any of the recommended Chapter 70 revisions will be implemented. He pointed out that over 85% of the school department budget is connected to the classroom and

when cuts are made they affect teaching and learning. He also pointed out that he has not taken into consideration grants that will be lost in FY18.

Mr. Petronio responded to questions from school committee members.

Mr. Minichiello made the following recommendations to the Superintendent and Mr. Petronio:

1. Set up a meeting with state legislators to put them on notice with respect to advocating at the state level for funding, and prepare talking points for them
2. In preparation for a budget shortfall and in order to be flexible, ensure that every employee (group) is put on notice in keeping with contractual obligations, as well as looking at closing and/or combining facilities.
3. Follow up with Representative Cronin on an earlier conversation about pro bono legal representation for an equity in education lawsuit.

MASC Presentation: Evaluating the Superintendent and Board Governance

Dorothy Presser from MASC prepared a power point presentation to review the superintendent evaluation process and best practices for school committee. She said that the state's Ed Eval process requires greater attention to evaluating and then reviewed the process. She suggested that the mid-year formative evaluation, which is not a written evaluation, is a good time to discuss progress and concerns. With respect to evidence, she suggested that school committee create a year-long agenda with what the committee wants to see, along with a checklist, and not leave evidence review until the end of the year. Ms. Presser reminded members that the goals should point to student achievement and are set together with the superintendent, but school committee has final approval.

Part two of the presentation addressed best practices of highly effective committees, understanding the roles of the school committee and the superintendent, and operating protocols for committees. Ms. Presser provided a handout about this topic that included protocols from other districts. She said it is a good idea for school committees to post their operating protocols on the district website.

At the conclusion of Ms. Presser's presentation, Superintendent Smith informed school committee that a workshop on school committee governing modules is offered by MASC free of charge. Ms. Presser also informed school committee of the *2017 Summit on Poverty* on March 10th at Clark University. This workshop will deal with the impacts of poverty on students.

Kindergarten Entry Age/Preschool

June Saba-Maguire and Julianne Andrade presented a proposal to phase in a rollback of the kindergarten start age and expand the preschool program. The power point presentation included data with respect to early childhood programs in Brockton and compared the state's academic, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical standards/expectations for pre-school (older 4-year-olds and younger 5-

year-olds) to those of kindergarten students. The proposed multi-year rollback would happen in three phases, with the cut-off date of September 1st occurring in 2019-2020. The idea is that this will allow time to prepare the community for this change.

A discussion followed about the impact on budget, facilities and transportation, and whether the change should be done sooner, if phasing it in actually complicates it. The Superintendent advised that once school committee makes a decision the district can go forward.

Brockton High School

The Superintendent began by saying that in light of concerns that have been brought to the attention of school committee and herself about discipline at the high school, she has invited Principal Sharon Wolder, Deans Andrew Donovan and Carolyn Copp, and Assistant Dean Sean Desmond to talk to school committee about discipline issues at the high school.

Principal Wolder and her team's power point presentation illustrated staff training, the protocols and procedures that are used building-wide, and data showing numbers and types of incidents, as well as numbers and types of consequences from September to date. Data on infractions was also compared before and after Chapter 222.

Important to note was that each incident requires, at minimum, a meeting with the student and a phone call to the parent; depending on the infraction additional meetings or hearing may be required. Principal Wolder said the addition of daily substitutes in mid-November has had a positive impact on the climate of the school, and the five behavior interventionists are also making an impact. Student concerns were included and the presentation ended with a list of supports/needs from BHS administration. A question and answer period followed.

Followup requested from discussion:

- A presentation from Attorney Paige Tobin for school committee
- Ensure that discipline resolutions are communicated to classroom teachers. The Superintendent said she will also look into ScholarChip and whether it has this capacity.
- Ensure that all BHS staff are aware of the availability of the new behavior interventionists
- Look into whether texting will make it easier to communicate with parents (in response to the amount of phone calls that are required)

Facilities

Mr. Thomas presented a proposal for possible school moves that will help the district better utilize school space and provide a cost savings. During the discussion that followed, members stated that if the district plans to implement school moves informational meetings for everyone need to be scheduled as soon as possible, it was suggested that they begin before February vacation. Mr.

Thomas said the first thing is to develop a clear timeline, he will prepare one and send to school committee in the January 27th packet.

Other Business

Save Our Sports School Committee Representative - the Superintendent and Mr. Gormley reported that Save Our Sports (S.O.S.) has asked for a representative from school committee to serve. General agreement among members was that this position could be appointed annually at the organizational meeting. This will be placed on the February 7th School Committee meeting agenda. Mr. Gormley was brought up as the probable appointee.

Request for Finance Subcommittee Meeting - Mr. Gormley said he would like to schedule a brief Finance Subcommittee meeting on February 7th to discuss freshman baseball and men's and women's outdoor track coaching positions.

The retreat adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD
Secretary
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Handouts: Characteristics of Effective School Boards (D. Presser)
Copy of BHS Powerpoint