

Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Virtual Meeting
February 11, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Introduction of Members:

Jane C Reggio, Chairperson
Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson
Caryn D. Vernon, District Treasurer
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary
Sarah E. Williams, Member
Keri Gaudette, Member
Tammy A. Lemieux, Member
Jack R. Keefe, Member

Also in attendance were Jason DeFalco, EdD, Superintendent of Schools, Matthew J. Ehrenworth, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Karen Young, Lead Nurse and Jill Pilla-Gallerani.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes Warrants and Minutes of January 14, 2021.

There were no items for **Public Forum**

Mrs. Reggio stated the March 11th meeting will be an in-person meeting.

Jenny Chan Remka - Parker Savard is one of her heroes. She wrote to the:

[TINYSUPERHEROES](#) - a squad that empowers children who are overcoming illness or disability. Cloaked in their very own cape, the Tinysuperhero will feel strong, able and proud of qualities that make them unique.

They sent a cape to Parker. Parker was born with a rare genetic syndrome. He has had multiple surgeries in his life. None of his disabilities define him. Parker said thank you for the cape. His favorite subjects are reading and art. His parents Victoria and Michael Savard are his heroes. Parker started school at a very early age.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT PREVENTION AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT POLICY Purpose of Policy: It is the policy of the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District (“BMRSD”) to (a) promote an orderly, safe environment for its students and employees that is conducive to learning, (b) ensure that every BMRSD student is free from use of physical restraints that is inconsistent with this policy, and (c) ensure that physical restraints on BMR students are used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. The purpose of this policy is to comply with the Massachusetts regulations regarding physical restraints, 603 CMR 46.00.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to amend the Physical Restraint Policy and forego the reading of the entire policy by adding the following additional language to the Physical Restraint Policy for restraints lasting longer than 10 or 20 minutes:

Under section 5E, the last sentence of that section has been added and reads as follows:
Approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.

We have crisis teams in each building that are CPI trained. It is school based. The policy is school based for crisis intervention. This is for all students who need it.

OPEB Liability Trust

Investment Policy Statement

The purpose of this Investment Policy Statement (IPS) is to provide a clear understanding between the Blackstone-Millville Regional School District (BMRSD) and Rockland Trust Company (Investment Manager) regarding the objectives, goals, risk tolerance, and investment guidelines established for the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund.

A. Scope

This IPS applies to all funds that are separately designated as long-term OPEB funds. The account will be established as a pooled investment portfolio unless otherwise stated. Any additional contributions to the account will be maintained in the same manner.

The second policy is for **OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits)**

They are establishing a liability trust fund to create a trust to hold monies to this fund.

They can invest and reinvest the money and use the money to pay the retiree health insurance benefits.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Gaudette and unanimously voted to approve the creation of the OPEB account and the ability to open a trust and follow the investment policies. Section 20 Chapter 328. Holding money, treasurer as trustee, transfer of money to pay retiree health and life benefits to the trust and invest and reinvest the funds with Rockland Trust as the investment manager.

Report of the Superintendent

Karen Young, Lead Nurse - The nurses offices have seen over 1200 persons with the highest between mid November and mid January. Currently down to 2 to 3 positive cases per week. Less students and staff testing positive and also close contacts from other sources.

Educators are in Phase 2 for the vaccination. At this point we are looking at the March to April timeframe.

Athletic Director - Robert McAnulty

Fall Sports 2

MIAA Modified Falls Sports

Football after February break with a max of 5 games
Fall Cheerleading only allowed at home football games
Volleyball undecided similar to Basketball
Indoor Track with 1 meet

All players and coaches will wear masks at all times.
All players must provide their own water bottle.
No buildings will be accessed such as weight rooms and locker rooms.
Spectators are not allowed for Volleyball. They will live stream the games.
Football, Cheerleading and Track are undecided at this time for spectators.
They are to register on Familyid.

Fees:

Football \$150
Cheerleading \$100
Track \$100
Volleyball \$100

Parents can be patient, supportive and be positive role models.

Indoor Track shortened.
Football mostly practices outdoors. Only indoor when necessary. Not able to do contact drills.
Take it day by day. Guidelines are constantly being updated.

Football games are projected to start on March 19th.
Volleyball will look much like basketball and are not allowed fans.

Mrs. Lemieux asked why can football practice indoors but Track can't have an indoor meet?
She feels uncomfortable charging track parents \$100 for only one meet. She can't understand how MIAA approved this package for Track.

Mrs. Vinacco - feels they should push out the meets to April and have one every week in that month.

Mr. McNulty will voice their concerns.

The Committee can change the fee rate for Track if they choose.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco and unanimously voted to merge the fee for indoor and outdoor track for this academic year.

Mrs. Lemieux asked if we are part of a co-op for Swimming at the Whitinsville Community Center?

Mr. McNulty will look into this. It is Winter sports which already passed but he will check into it for next season.

Mrs. Lemieux asked if we are allowed gators?

Mr. McNulty stated yes we are if they are double layered. Most students use the traditional face masks.

Mid Cycle Evaluation Report - Dr. DeFalco

Thanks Mrs. Vinacco for helping him with this process.

District Improvement Strategy

Keeping in the forward direction with curriculum instruction.

He wants to show the impact of the work.

1. Instructional Leadership
 - Student Engagement
 - Meeting diverse needs
2. Management and Operations
 - Social and Emotional Well being
 - Student Health and Safety
3. Family and Community Engagement

- Student Support
- Family Support
- 4. Professional Culture
 - Commitment to High Standards
 - Continuous Learning of Staff

Professional Goal Update

Professional Practice - navigate the pandemic and ensure the health and safety of staff and students and return as many students back to the classroom as possible.

Mid Cycle

Rank top in State with Structured Learning time

Adjustment to learning plans is very frustrating for those who need consistent day to day learning

Remote meal service - Beginning of February is just under 300,000

Successfully completed the work with the Regional Agreement

Mrs. Vinacco - the Regional Agreement could fall in all of the professional standards. Wants the Committee to feel the impact of this on the work being done. It touches every corner of the work.

Curriculum and Instruction

District Improvement Goal Update

- Implement new Literacy Programs PK -12 with necessary training and support
- Ongoing classroom visits seeing the new programs in action
- Draft of new Math Instructional Vision Statement
- Two year Math Curriculum Review Project Scope
- Math Committee List of Members
- Focused Schools Update - great job of moving the work forward. There will always be a distraction but we need to adapt and keep the work moving forward.
- Implementation of new SIP's - School Improvement Plans -
- Data meetings with school based teams - very important last year - Dr. DeFalco shared that they were derailed and hit this area very hard this year and looked at student performance and looking at all the gaps and filling the gaps with action plans. Also in special education. Data cycles have started. Looking at protocols to see what is working and what is not.
- School based data team meetings - meet to see how central services can help to drive the work forward.

Principals host a meeting in their building and will look at a particular instructional practice.

Looking at what the shifts are that need to be in place for Mathematics for both teachers and students to get to where it is they need to go.

The math committee will meet with the School Committee soon to give them an update.

Mrs. Chan Remka was featured with Focused Schools to share the great work being done here.

They did not stop the important work that needs to be done during Covid.

Equity

Joint School Committee Leadership Team training

Leadership Team focus selected goals

MASS Equity Standing Committee and Worcester County Superintendent representative

Chargers for Change - standing meetings, fund guest speakers, Elephants and Onions training.

No Place for Hate, Anti Defamation.

Had a guest speaker who captured the migrant journey from Latin America to the United States. He shared information on the journey but also about college and spoke to seniors on how to navigate into the next phase of work.

Wants the High School to become a no place for hate building.

Met with Chargers for Change group and updated them on the work happening at the District Level. Incredibly moved and feeling heard.

Fiscal Management

Two fold - Navigating the Covid agenda and the FY22 budget as well.

Want to continue to increase opportunities for this year and the upcoming year.

Creation of Draft FY22 Budget

FY22 budget process to date

Meetings with town governance and leadership

Tracking CV-19 grant dollars and adjusting local budget accordingly

Applying for all CV-19 and MEMA grants

All things lead to the **Student Learning Goal**

Fiscal Piece needs to support the Student Learning Goal.

The ultimate goal for the District is for all students to show progress in ELA and Math, regardless of the pandemic, as measured by the STAR assessment.

By the end of the school year all students in grades 2-10 will move to at least 65% meeting/exceeding expectations on the ELA and Math STAR assessment.

Dr. DeFalco showed the growth percentiles. Student growth is okay but he wants to remind folks that they are put in the same bucket as the nation. The numbers can look better when everyone is struggling. He wants us to proceed with caution with growth this year. Second and third grade have a high SGP in ELA. Grade 2 and Grade 8 have a high SGP in Math.

We are delving into the amount of time in the special education area. Grade 2 was a standout in ELA. The others went flat or went backwards. Many students are still in the not meeting category. The staff are doing a great job trying to get the students into the school for learning. There are some situations where families want to keep their kids fully remote. It is not a lack of effort in this area but it is a challenging year. Mrs. Pilla Gallerani meets one on one with the teaching staff to review the results. In Math Grade 2 and 3 made a good jump.

We have made a tremendous amount of progress and we have done a lot of work.

If they give any kind of feedback to the Superintendent they have to share it with the public. Mrs. Vinacco will put something together.

Facilities Use Form from the Board of Health - they want to run a Covid vaccination clinic on February 19th for age 75 plus persons. They are asking to use the gym and cafeteria.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mr. Keefe and unanimously voted to approve the request by the Board of Health to run a Covid vaccination clinic on February 19, 2021 for 75+ aged persons in the High School gymnasium and cafeteria.

Mrs Vinacco said if you assist a person who is 75 or older you can also get the vaccination at that time.

They want to get as many teachers vaccinated as soon as possible.

Unit A Conversation

Dr. DeFalco wants authorization to enter into conversations with Unit A to eliminate the hybrid model to move into full in person learning or full remote between now and the end of the school year.

He has a survey to send out to find out what they require to back out the hybrid model and begin full in person learning.

There is new guidance on increasing the number of students on buses.

Hanover Public Schools are going back to school in person learning 100%. They are looking closely on how they are doing this. The teachers are all on board in that district. He wants our District to feel safe and comfortable to do this.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to open discussion with Unit A regarding returning to full in person learning or full remote learning.

Mrs. Lemieux is fully in favor of the fully in person model and agrees that hybrid is hard.

FY22 Update

How do we preserve the return and recovery work but also make it something viable for our two towns?

How do we do this work with existing staffing and schedules?

Dr. DeFalco had conversations with different towns officials recently and were clear in all cases where we are in the process. We need to talk through the needs based budget with the School Committee and be sure we put forward the best budget for the towns and townspeople.

Matthew Ehrenworth - Business Report

The students' needs will be met. We need to reorganize and reallocate where funding will go. We were able to bring the budget to \$25,975,000 with a percentage increase of 2.75% overall.

Some funding for facilities work was cut. We are putting together the Capital Planning Sub-Committee which will look at some of the larger items.

They still need to invest in OPEB.

The number is 13.1 million after state aide, grants, revenues and fee collection and will bring the assessments to:

Blackstone - 3.7 % increase

Millville - 1.35% increase

Remember the minimum local contribution is set by the State.

Blackstone is facing a \$700,000 deficit and they are very concerned about the 3.7% increase.

There is another workshop scheduled for February 23rd.

Mrs. Reggio asked for a picture of what it will look like with the cuts.

Dr. DeFalco will lay out a staffing plan for each building.

Mrs. Reggio doesn't feel that going over the budget line by line is most beneficial.

The line by line breakdown is available to the public if they request it.

Job Descriptions approval:

Teacher for the Deaf and BCBA position.

We had a BCBA in the district but we want to re-fill that position. They don't teach students but they are involved with students with behavioral issues.

They are still looking at contracted services for another year in the area of Teacher of the Deaf. This is a difficult position to fill and we do not have any applicants at this time. This person needs a certification for this position.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Larkin, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to approve the job descriptions of Teacher of the Deaf and BCBA in the school district.

Business Office Report

Excess and Deficiency numbers have not come in yet.

Mr. Ehrenworth - There is a request for surplus disposal from Maureen Gonsalves of 2 large warmers that are broken. They are In the High School storage room and taking up space needed for something else.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to approve disposal of 2 surplus kitchen warmers that are broken.

Transportation MOA -

Tellstone Busing was very fair on the last agreement. It was a pleasure to work with them and they were open to giving us discounted rates. There were 10 days in the beginning of the school year when we had no transportation and we paid nothing to Tellstone for this. We came up with a sliding scale on the non transport days. After those initial 10 days that we were given no price for the next 10 we paid 100%. If it goes to 11-25 days we pay 90% and up to 40 non transport days 26-40 we pay 87.5% . And then 100% of the remainder of the contract for additional days after this.

Mr. Ehrenworth wants authorization to enter into the MOA with Tellstone so they can pay them.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to enter into the MOA with Tellstone Busing Company.

Revenue Report

All coming in as scheduled. Chapter 70 and Title Grants coming in as expected and our Town assessments as well.

Total expenditure report - Broken into 2 pieces

General fund on one page

Grant and Covid funds on the second page

We are in the same place as we were the last time we reviewed it

There seem to be large amounts of remaining funds in teacher lines we see the Covid lines are exceeding what we expect to receive in Covid funds

We are about \$250,000 under budget right now when we factor in everything

Facilities Report

Issue at Complex - Mixing valve with a crack that was diverting hot water. This was repaired.

Stages at Complex - need to resurface the stages. The cost will be \$1500 for smaller stage and \$2500 for larger stage

MES - work on 2 exterior doors. Replacement of hinges.

Mr. Ehrenworth hopes the Capital Planning Committee will have a long term plan for taking care of some of these maintenance issues.

High School handicapped ramp replacement - looking into pricing on this.

Mrs. Gaudette and Mrs. Vinacco are volunteering to be on the Capital Planning Committee.

Mrs. Vinacco would like to get Town invitations out there to see if anyone from the Towns wants to be a part of this. They would like someone from the Board of Selectmen and from the Capital Planning Committee. Please contact Mr. Ehrenworth if interested in being on the Committee.

Mrs. Vinacco asked how things are going with the Millville boiler project?

Mr. Ehrenworth stated it is complete and tying up the finance pieces. There are aesthetics to complete but the boilers are working. There have not been any problems. They may need work on the thermostats.

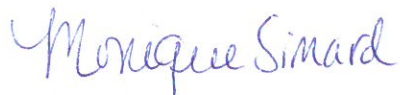
There were no items for School Committee Forum.

Meeting workshop will be held on February 23rd at 5:00 p.m.

Public Hearing will be held on March 11th @ 6:00 p.m. in person at the Hartnett Middle School

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mr. Keefe at 8:15 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Strategy with Collective Bargaining or Litigation and not to return to the regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken.

Respectfully Submitted,



Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:


Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary