

Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School

April 8, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Reorganization

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Jane Reggio as Chairman of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Erin Vinacco as Vice Chairman of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Tara Larkin as Secretary of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Keri Gaudette as Treasurer of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Reggio, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Ronald Pierre-Louis as Assistant Treasurer of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Reggio, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Monique Simard as Assistant Secretary of the Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee.

Introduction of Members:

Jane C Reggio, Chairperson

Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson

Keri L. Gaudette, District Treasurer

Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary

Sarah E. Williams, Member

Tammy A. Lemieux, Member

Tim Howell, Member

Amanda D. Guilmain, Member

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States was recited and a moment of silence and recognition for the life and contributions of Mrs. Margaret Lee, 2nd grade teacher and

School Adjustment Counselor in the BMR School District. Mrs. Reggio sends condolences to her family and friends.

Also in attendance were Jason DeFalco, EdD, Superintendent of Schools, Matthew J. Ehrenworth, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Jill Pilla-Gallerani, Christina Shafer, Jenny Chan-Remka, Michael Dudek and Karen Young.

Welcome to our new members Mr. Howell and Mrs. Guilmain. Katherine Francisoco in the main office will help them get signed up with MASC.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the Warrants.

Public Forum

Amanda Lafond - 2 weeks ago Ms. Lafond requested to have her daughter enter Kindergarten early. Her request was denied because of her daughter's birthdate. She is questioning why this wasn't told to her in the beginning. Why did you even bring it to the school committee she asked?

Mrs. Reggio - Our policy is that a child needs to be the age of 5 by the first day of school in order to attend Kindergarten. It does allow the parent to petition the school committee. There are no guidelines for the case. It has been the practice of the current school committee to stick to the first date of school because it is difficult to know where to draw the line.

Ms. Lafond feels that you need to remove the part where the parent can petition the school committee out of the policy. Now she needs to look into a private Kindergarten. She feels that for all intents and purposes that school starts on Sept. 7th and her daughter's birthday is Sept. 6th. She has listed out all of the things she can do. She doesn't want her to suffer for this. She would like to receive the list of private Kindergartens. Her hope is that they will reconsider.

Mrs. Reggio will entertain a motion to reconsider.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Larkin, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco to reconsider the petition on the vote that denied entrance into Kindergarten for Ms. Lafond's daughter who's birthday is Sept. 6th.

Mrs. Vinacco feels that if we accept one request we will be opening ourselves up to many other requests. She wonders if we want to open up and look at the policy?

Mrs. Reggio cautions against changing our policy. There is more than academic readiness to look at.

Mrs. Larkin is in favor of reconsidering. All other members opposed it so they will not reconsider the request of Ms. Lafond.

Mrs. Vinacco encourages the private year of Kindergarten.

Ms. Lafond has heard from numerous parents that once the child goes to a private Kindergarten they struggle to get into 1st grade the next year.

There is no specification on getting into 1st grade.

Mrs. Reggio stated that if she has a successful completion of Kindergarten she will be accepted into 1st grade.

Report of the Superintendent

Welcome to our newest members.

Tonight we will hear directly from our staff and students as we push our way through the pandemic.

We want to learn how to do our work differently. We will hear inspiring and exciting updates tonight.

Student Council - Student Council members were present - They are a part of MASC. The theme this year is magic. They created a slideshow on how they created magic. They have had to adapt. They have held virtual meetings. They have created new events. They would usually go to Cape Cod for training but this year they will have a two day virtual event.

Chargers for Change - led by Ms. Allen - members of the group were present. This is a forum to act on and empower students to become caring, thinkers in a global community. They hold themselves and others accountable pertaining to social justice and to understand that human rights are not a political issue. This was sparked by the murder of George Floyd in June 2020. Speaker Payton Head spoke on his first hand experience with racism at the college level.

Dr. DeFalco - After Payton Heads presentation there was significant pushback. He is proud of the members of this Charger for Change for holding their ground and standing strong.

Chargers for Change also welcomed Saul Flores, who spoke about immigration as a whole, as well as his experiences with it. He walked 5,328 miles to get to the United States.

The group has implemented the Anti Defamation League's No Place for Hate Initiative.

Next year they will utilize the Anti Defamation League's Peer Training Program. They will host in class student presentations where one social justice topic will be taught per month.

The two students with Ms. Allen expressed what it has meant to them and the impact the program has had on their lives.

People don't understand the hard work they put in every day to have discussions that are difficult. Mrs. Reggio is learning a lot. She thanks them.

The girls feel it is so important to have these discussions no matter how afraid you are.

Math Curriculum Committee - Mrs. Vaughan and Mrs. Highcove were present.

Mrs. Vaughan spoke on Strategic Assessments, Standards Aligned Materials and Meaningful Professional Learning.

They have a 3 year plan to look at quality of materials at all levels and recommend subjects for adoption and implement the new programs in the third year.

The High School has the oldest Math curriculum.

They start each meeting by Focus: Getting all students on track to be college and career ready.

Lens 1: Alignment to Meaningful Standards

Lens 2: Vision for Excellent Instruction

Lens 3: Needs of our Community (usability)

Timeline and Process Overview: Understand the quality of current math programs and materials.

Setting a vision for High Quality Math Instruction.

What do the teachers want to see and what do we want to see for our students?

Finally they are looking for feedback.

Key Themes:

Students:

Utilize Multiple Strategies

Collaboratively Engage in Discourse

Experience Challenge and Success

Teachers:

Plan Collaboratively to meet the needs of every student and

facilitate learning through meaningful student dialogue

feel successful

Administrators:

Understand the curricular materials

Support the execution of the vision in classrooms

In the last couple of months they have been looking at evaluating their material.

How they align to the standards.

They have had great discussions across the grades at the elementary level. They see the flaws and what works great.

They will start to make recommendations.

Mrs. Lemieux feels there is a follow through when you are spending substantial amounts of money on curriculum. She wants to teach at the High School level what is going on in the Elementary level so it can be reinforced when they reach HS level.

The focus is to have all students ready for college. They want an entry point for each student so they are not left behind along the way. There is not one end point for all students.

They are looking for programs that support at all levels. They are concerned about the enrichment and making sure that they have supports in place for those who struggle as well. As long as the kids are working with us they will keep diving in. There are many ways to reach the child. Try something new. They want them to have the right base.

Elementary Organization - significant amount of work in this area. Mrs. Shafer and Mrs. Remka will give an update on this.

Make sure they have equitable education for students and allow collaboration between teachers.

Several steps to start the process:

Communication to families

Went class by class to explain to students how they would be going from MES to the Complex
Almost all students in Millville would be going to the Complex.

Holding PLC's by grade level once a month

Joined the Elementary ILT's

Share instructional strategies across both schools

Held joint staff meetings

Shared placement of classrooms for those switching buildings/rooms

Met with MESPA and BEPO

Try to make it as easy as possible for all

Dr. DeFalco - every opportunity to get input and pull the community together.

This week they showed the teachers the map of where the teachers will be moving to.

They have portable bins to move things.

They have a full action plan in place. Seamless transition is the goal.

They are working as a team and the teachers know each other. They are all familiar with each other. This year they provided more opportunities for this. They will have adjustment counselors on hand to help students with the move.

Mrs. Remka wants to make adjustments to her leadership style to be sure the MES staff is comfortable in the Complex environment.

There are potential busing configurations in place far in advance of the school year.

Mr. Dudek - Senior Activities

Navigating through the senior activities.

What can they offer students to truly celebrate them.

Senior community day on May 3rd. They will be hosted at the Boys and Girls Club with a barbecue and social activities in the afternoon.

They hosted a small event for them to give them their t-shirts a month ago.

Kids don't care what they are doing as long as they are together.

Prom in the traditional sense will probably not happen. They are looking at the Pleasant Valley Country Club on May 27th. They thought of having the prom and senior banquet combined. They wanted to have a meal, slideshow and distribute yearbooks.

They want to do a virtual senior awards night June 3rd and later on have a barbecue/pizza party and give the physical awards later on in the courtyard looking at June 7th or 8th

Graduation will be hosted outside and they will not have the drive through graduation this year.

They will have about 300 folks on campus and maybe consolidate it a bit.

There is no dedicated senior trip.

As of right now one senior is going into the Marines.

Mrs. Vinacco thought they would have 6 tickets available for graduation per student and now Mr. Dudek is saying 2 tickets.

Mr. Dudek said they could have pods of families but they need to be living in the same household. Right now it is two tickets per student. They may minimize the amount of staff that can attend to allow the students to have more tickets. It will be live streamed as well.

If they host events with a dance floor gathering and then they have close contacts it will not be good for the actual graduation. They need to feel more confident that they don't need to quarantine close contacts. The actual graduation is the most important thing.

Karen Young - Lead Nurse

The Committee should see Covid 19 exposure or positive test on page 5.

We are back to the handbook.

Looking at Elementary quarantine protocol. If there is a positive case in elementary classroom they are all considered close contacts.

They are looking to revise that to what the Middle School and High School have been doing. They are looking at the students or staff who have had close contact by who they sit with, play with at recess or sit with on the bus. The look back is 2 days before symptoms have appeared or 2 days prior to the test if there are no symptoms and 15 minutes of being within 6 feet of the person. Students must remain with classmates during recess.

They want to isolate the group that needs to quarantine.

They are not finding large numbers of kids in a quarantine class are testing positive.

She gets nervous over recess time. They don't seem to social distance well during recess. It is better if recess is outside. It is important to keep classes together and separate classes. This is important for isolating the groups.

The tents will be up and running soon.

At the secondary level they haven't been notifying with separate letters to the members of the classroom. They can continue with this and the close contacts will be notified and not the entire class. They speak to all close contacts and the nurse emails them as well.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mr. Howell and unanimously voted to change the recommended Covid 19 handbook as read and submitted by Mrs. Young and adding lunch and removing separate class letter.

Mrs. Young asked if lunch should be listed? The answer is yes, The cafeteria should be added.

District Social Worker

Looking for approval for a 12 month social worker.

Critically important to our school system. Need the right supports in place to work to come out of the pandemic.

It will be a grant funded position at first through the ESSER grant. The salary range will be between \$70,000 - \$80,000. ESSER will more than likely cover the position for two years. Later Dr. DeFalco will ask the Committee to keep the position and eventually add it to our budget.

It is a contracted and not a unit position.

Provide wrap around services for tier 3 issues around food security, housing and clinical services.

It is different from what school psychologists and school adjustment counselors do.

Many times family crises impact learning.

Planned coordination for students that are at high risk.

There are big chunks of time we are not with the students and we don't know what they are doing during times when they are not in school.

Develop care plans for this summer. We are worried as we near the end of August with the food program. Some will need help figuring out where to go next with feeding their families.

This person will have an office within the Superintendent's office area and will work in all schools and do social histories as well. They will report to Jill Pilla-Gallerani.

Mr. Howell questioned the job description and posting for someone with a masters degree. You can be a social worker without a Masters Degree and the LMAC without the masters.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the posting of the Social Worker job description and the hiring of this person currently utilizing ESSER grant funds.

Business Report and Report of Assistant Superintendent Matthew Ehrenworth

Mr. Ehrenworth discussed the business office expenses and revenues.

The House Ways and Means did increase the educational spending and looks like a promising budget.

Personnel Changes are in the Committee packets.

We will be landing the budget in a very good place this year.

Facilities - running smoothly

There are general upkeep items that will keep popping up.

Complex - leak in boys room and heater repair.

MES - want to change the boiler controls to thermostats. The Town wants to upgrade to digital controls. They are talking about a three year process and get Phase I done. They want to assess where the largest issues are and take care of these in Phase I.

MS - circulator pump needs to be repaired. They will get a few estimates and move forward.

HS - patch job of the handicap ramp and need a long term fix and number of leaks in the boys locker room.

The Capital Planning Sub Committee is formed and ready to go with the first meeting on April 14th at Hartnett Middle School at 5:30 p.m.

DRA reps will be joining us. They will walk through the plan and next steps and determine dates.

They will need a member to go to the Finance Committee meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall on that date. Mr. Howell volunteered to attend.

A discussion of Partner Teachers took place.

School Committee Forum

Mrs. Lemieux - Thank you to Mr. Keefe and Mrs. Vernon for their work over the years and welcome to the new members. If you have questions we are all willing to help with them.

Mrs. Lemieux would like to put Chargers for Change on the future agenda with the possibility to have a Community Service Proponent for graduation from High School. She thinks it is important to give back to our community. Getting involved in giving back is something to think about for the future, like how the seniors will be helping at the Boys and Girls club on May rd for their summer program.

Mrs. Guilmain stated the playground in Millville behind the police station is closed for safety issues. This might be a place to help out.

A discussion was had about the Kindergarten parent who attended tonight. A child would need to be evaluated socially and academically to be deemed eligible to attend Kindergarten early. This is an area that the School Committee feels they lack the expertise and this is the reason they don't want to change the policy.

The next School Committee Meeting will be held on May 13th.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. and enter into Executive Session not to return to the regular meeting. This was followed by a roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:


Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary