

**Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**FWHMS**  
**June 23, 2021**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**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  
Tim Howell, Member

Tammy Lemieux and Amanda D. Guilmain were absent.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States was recited.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes Warrants and Minutes of June 10, 2021.

There were no items for the Public Forum.

**Mr. Ehrenworth - Business Office Report**

**Update on FY21 projection.**

**General Fund Preliminary Projection.**

The Dept. of Education looks at our general fund. Top left of document see E & D beginning balance FY20 at \$411,257. We applied \$140,000 to FY22 budget which leaves \$271,257 as the ending balance. Any other E & D expenses do show up in the general fund expenses. Dept. of Revenue only looks at the listed revenues. We had budgeted \$25,178,714 and showing as of now an actual \$25,536,599 as an actual revenue. They originally budgeted for Chapter 70 shortfall but ended up receiving more Chapter 70 funds. The total E & D is \$358,000. He showed actual budgeted expenditures to date. The total unencumbered left over is \$207,358..

He expects to be at E & D of \$836,000.

### **Surplus Cafeteria**

Surplus Disposal Request for a food warmer at the Complex. They purchased a new food warmer and had a significant surplus in their account so the cafeteria manager is making sure they have the equipment that they need.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Larkin, seconded by Mr. Howell and unanimously voted to approve the disposal of the Complex cafeteria food warmer.

Mrs. Reggio thanks the food service staff for their hard work and reminds everyone that food service will continue on Wednesdays through the summer.

Your child does not have to be a child in this district just up to 21 years of age.

### **Facilities Projects update:**

- Baseball softball field project - materials 10 week lead time. Company will work outside and the project should be completed by the end of October. They will make sure there is temporary fencing around it.
- Tennis court and track area - track not complete resurfacing but will patch larger areas. The tennis courts will be a complete resurfacing. Booking 8 -10 weeks out. Should be completed by the beginning of September.
- High School security system work will begin next week with Omega alarm. The project should be finished by the end of July.
- Engaged a designer to do the Complex and MES safety vestibules. Estimated costs are in and need a 6-8 week lead time on hardware and frames. Mr. Ehrenworth hopes to have it finished by the end of August. If it runs into the school year they will do it after hours and leave it safe for students in the area. Laminates for vestibules will be a one or two day project.

Mr. Howell - you need to plant something in the fall to keep it going on the fields such as rye grass. Mr. Ehrenworth will look into this.

### **Facilities Request Report**

Application for use of school facilities from French River Education Center to use the library at HMS.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Gaudette and unanimously voted to allow the French River Education Center the use of the Hartnett Middle School library.

There is a request by new homeowners on Mendon Street to use the Complex parking lot on July 24th for a family and friend gathering at their new home. They will charge them a \$50 space fee for use of the parking lot.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mr. Howell and unanimously voted to approve the use of the Complex parking lot on July 24th for a family gathering by new homeowners on Mendon Street for a \$50 charge.

### **Personnel Update on district social worker**

Mrs. Pilla-Gallerani formed a committee that came together and for the first round they did not find a social worker. It has been re-posted and they still have not found anyone. She has asked principals to identify the tier 3 families and children. It's been quite a process and they will continue to post. She wants the outside of school experience as well as in school. Job description is very clear and does not lead to misinterpretation.

Mrs. Reggio feels the overarching position may be overwhelming for some. We cannot have one social worker in each school and it will need to be Districtwide. Feels the market for this will come and it may not be there yet.

### **Facilities Director**

Received quite a few applications and scheduling interviews. Want to have someone begin the second week of July.

Groundskeeper position - will be involved in the facilities work. Scheduling interview for Friday and hope to make an offer the following week. Mr. Ehrenworth wants someone to start on July 1st.

### **Wage Increase Request**

Wage request to increase the pay for cafeteria sub workers from \$12.00 - \$14.00. Funds come from the food service budget.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to increase the rate of pay for a substitute cafeteria worker from \$12.00 to \$14.00 per hour.

The hours worked by the sub would vary depending on who they are filling in for.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

Elementary School Reorganization - on target for all timelines for moving classrooms next week, transportation schedules, classroom lists and road work.

Mrs. Vinacco asked to get the class lists out to families sooner if possible.

Mrs. Larkin - Elem. PTO wants to have a back to school social and will run it by the Committee.

Dr. DeFalco is waiting for grant approval to get remote learners back to school at least the week before school begins.

### **End of Cycle Evaluation - Dr. DeFalco**

Dr. DeFalco wants to open with a sincere thank you to everyone at the table and to the leadership team, teachers and support staff. The amount of work that went into making sure as much in person learning happened took a lot of time and energy. He is humbled by the work all across the school system have done. He doesn't think the families and students received enough credit.

Students had to learn to do things differently and with very little complaining. Families got behind the changes. There was no good decision but the best of the challenging decisions to make. He feels we did the best we could. The constant collaboration made it happen.

He is leading the work of the District but it is not a one person show. Shouts out to the leadership team. When school committee and leadership works collaboratively, amazing things can happen.

### **District Improvement Strategy - Improved Outcomes for Students**

He will touch on each goal and highlight the evidence.

The What, The How, The Community and the Whole Child.  
Continue to work with Ms. Purcell this year.

### **Superintendent Evaluation Focus Standards**

#### **1. Instructional Leadership**

- a. Student Engagement
- b. Meeting Diverse Needs

#### **2. Management and Operation**

- a. social and emotional well being
- b. student health and safety

#### **3. Family and Community Engagement**

- a. student support
- b. family support

#### 4. Professional Culture

- a. commitment to high standards
- b. continuous learning of staff

Professional Practice Goal around navigating through this interesting school year. By June 2021 they have successfully managed our pandemic by collaborating with the School Committee, local boards of health, other community agencies, district leadership team, families new superintendent induction program yr 3 cohort participants and Blackstone Valley Superintendent Consortium.

Dr. DeFalco wanted to bring the community together and Mrs. Reggio feels that this outline shows this. The partnership with the Boys and Girls Club is really using the strengths of the community.

Mrs. Reggio wants copies of classes into both town libraries.

Dr. DeFalco feels they have met this goal.

He reviewed the mid cycle and end of cycle with a number for each piece of evidence to the goal it is associated with.

He is continuing to be impressed by the team at the Boys and Girls Club. Bruce and Sara are only a few days into the program and they handle all requests and are amazing and flexible. They are great to work with and he can see the give and take on both sides.

Our staff will start there on Monday. Also, our kitchen is feeding the kids who are there and many of our own students are working there for the summer.

Summer care plans and almost 390,000 meals have been distributed to the community.

#### **District Improvement Goal**

#### **Curriculum and Instruction The What and the How**

Literacy Training - asking what the teachers feel doesn't make sense still and feedback they had for us.

He will be working with the leader of the Wonders program.  
Design staff development around patterns and trends.

They will actually sit down and design everything with the program trainers that come into the District. Most training is done in- house with staff.

We need to do a better job with the must do and the can do when it comes to letting the teachers know.

They believe as a leadership team that feedback on instruction is one of the most important things they do.

All of the work must be calibrated and aligned.

They have created the space for PLC's between coaches and teachers to do student analysis and unpack the actual work to get a sense of what students are doing well and where they are struggling. He feels they are not utilizing the tools enough. They talk about the so what, now what.

Mrs. Reggio is happy to see others taking on the work and the lead and responsibility and owning their work rather than it all falling on the shoulders of Dr. DeFalco.

We now need to get better at the work that is within the space.

He wanted to show at the higher level the data meetings they do have with administration, principals and assistant principals.

### **District Improvement Goal - Equity**

Helping all school systems across Massachusetts appropriately addressing the all means all.

There is not a single child who is not important in any school system.

It's a lightning rod topic in many ways. It is also equity from a learning advantage.

There are serious issues that need hard work. Feels the work we are doing in our district is being used as a model in some aspects.

He will meet at a state superintendent's conference on equity in our BMR schools. They customize the work to the system. It was facilitated by the Brockton Superintendent.

Survey results are important to mention. Wanted a sense of where families and staff see this level of work.

Mrs. Reggio wants them as a school committee to better support equity.

She knows the committee supports Dr. DeFalco and wants to continue this.

She wants one of the Committee goals to be equity. It is not the easy work. She challenges the committee to support it even more strongly.

The framework the superintendent's organization is putting together will lay out the roadmap for this. He is not out in front by himself on this work. He has the committee backing him. He appreciates that.

### **Fiscal Management Goal**

Setting the long term trajectory to track all grants and the local budget. This work was more operational but moving forward it remains very strategic work. ESSER grant positions will not all remain in the budget once they are able to remove them when they are no longer necessary in the district. They need to monitor this. The ESSER grant lines will stick around for a little while and then they will fund certain positions locally if they feel they should continue with them.

Mr. Ehrenworth stated that everyone is in a reactive mode to handle the changes. They now need to plan and put these plans into place and sustain everything for the next three years.

They applied for an Acceleration Academy Grant and are just shy of under \$1 million dollars applied for in grants for students.

Damien Gaudet will run an Audio Visual class at night in the Spring which is a credit bearing course.

Students need opportunities in their sophomore and junior years to make decisions for college before their senior year.

### **Student Learning Goal**

The most important thing to measure but can be the hardest.

No results from MCAS yet.

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 move to at least 65% meeting/exceeding expectations on the ELA and Math STAR assessment and will move to at least the 55th percentile on the growth measurement. Specifically, at least 20% of the students with special needs will meet/exceed grade level expectations while growing in at least the 50% percentile. These targets are set based on a review of the last two years of student performance data.

It will be done by implementing our four point strategy outlined in the Blueprint for District Improvement, specifically the priorities laid out in the "Curriculum" and "Instruction" goal areas with a focus on building and strengthening our remote teaching and learning practices.

He wanted to look at the beginning of the year data but after mid year testing in February they were bringing back students. They wanted to see if there were differences. The middle school students need to be in school, in person every day. This stands out so much to them.

Mrs. Reggio stated there are more mental health issues everyday with kids but it really comes to light at the middle school age. Some of the big crises we faced this year were in middle school. The pressure of changing and fitting in and going from child to teen is so difficult and when they didn't have the supports there they really struggled.

Dr. DeFalco stated Grade 6 and 7 had only a 37% and 31% growth in ELA as compared to other grades. Getting kids back the week before school begins is so important.

**To the parents:**

If you want your child to participate in any of our academies by all means let us know.

The growth in Math was low in the 6th grade but better in 7th grade.

The special education data was shown. Mrs. Pilla will be putting together an analysis of which students we have transitioned out. The goal of special education is if you are doing your job correctly, you will transition the students out of the program. 9th grade seemed to have issues in both ELA and Math. There is significant urgency with our special education students and their testing results. They need to have those interventions built right into the Math program. The kids are struggling most in the inclusion classrooms. Those in the resource room are showing growth with more guidance. You can't take kids out of core instruction for remedial instruction. A huge help will be the 2 new coaches for a total of 4 coaches in the District.

The goal was at least 55% meeting/exceeding and they met it in a few places. They are nowhere that they want or should be. They are not making excuses and staying focused on the work. They want to focus on working on the issue and getting it done to improve.

He is not saying the program of study is the problem. He is stressing the urgency here.

Mrs. Williams is looking at the co-teaching model and exploring this area.

**Survey Results**

Each survey came with open ended questions so he will email them to the Committee members.

Who took the survey:

- 866 students
- 130 staff members
- 523 families
- 6 administrators



Staff called 200 families to talk to them about the survey. Out of the 200 families, they reached 56.

**Data points:**

- 5% of community said no progress is being made
- 40% said much progress is being made
- 55% said some progress is being made

Some families spoken to said "what goals" when asked about them. Dr. DeFalco feels this is a problem that they do not know we have goals in the District.

Mrs. Reggio stated they will review all of this at the next meeting in the form of feedback from the Committee as a whole. Please provide your feedback to Mrs. Vinacco. They will go into Executive Session to negotiate and return to inform the public.

Mrs. Vinacco appreciates all of Dr. DeFalco's efforts in putting this together. She wants everyone to know this is only a snapshot of the work that was done. She also appreciates getting this done in the Pandemic year that we had. There are many educators and administrators that walked away from their jobs because of the pandemic year. She wants to be sure that all committee members go through the binder he set up for them. She will meet together on a Google hang out with any member who requests it. She wants to be sure they all understand what they are looking at here.

**School Committee Forum**

Mrs. Vinacco - Recognition of Students - She would like to look into having different cords for honors or high honors and personalizing the cords. She is looking for recognition of students who have worked very hard and questions why don't we do more for them? Our top 10 students should be recognized at graduation with a cord. Recognition of sports as well. Equity is important.

We have an opportunity for our 8th graders to take Spanish I. She has been told that it doesn't count toward their 2 foreign language credits. She is wondering where it really stands. Seems to be a miscommunication. Does 8th grade Spanish count as a high school credit?

Mrs. Vinacco wants to offer Algebra to more kids in 8th grade. It always fills up. Why aren't we running more sections?

Mr. Howell - for those students who didn't meet the criteria for mandated testing is there some type of credit recovery available over the summer to help them get to grade level.

Dr. DeFalco said there is credit recovery online as well as a project based learning. Both pathways are available to students.

Were there more male or female students who did not meet grade level?

Dr. DeFalco stated it is the male population who has not met grade level more than female.

Mrs. Larkin is a PTO officer this year. She is one of only 3. They will be looking for volunteers as well.

Mrs. Reggio said that remote learning is over at this time and back to school and back to business in the fall.

The next School Committee meeting will be held on Monday, July 12th with Mrs. Vinacco chairing the meeting. Mrs. Reggio will be participating remotely.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mr. Howell and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:   
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary