

***MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT***  
School Committee Meeting  
Nipmuc High School, Professional Development Room  
Monday, September 13, 2021

Committee Present:

Sean Nicholson, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Phil DeZutter, Dorothy Scally, Erick Brown

Administration Present:

Maureen Cohen, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Jay Byer, Business/Finance  
David Quinn  
John Clements, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Kerry Laurence.  
Pledge of Alliance was recited

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Approval of to Amend Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to amend the agenda to include review of vendors for superintendent search.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Amended Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve the amended agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Open Session Minutes from August 23, 2021

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by DS, to approve Open Session minutes from August 23, 2021

VOTED: Unanimously approved

**II. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS – NA**

**III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

**IV. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

*New Superintendent Induction Program*

Dr. Cohen was announced she is currently involved in New Superintendent induction program. The program has been existence for 12 years. There are currently 38 other new superintendents, who are meeting monthly. Retired superintendent act as coaches for each of the new superintendent. Dr. Cohen introduce her coach, John Brackett.

Mr. Brackett

- Pleased to be working with Dr. Cohen and MURSD. He noted he has been a coach for 4 years and worked as a Superintendent for 22 years

- Mr. Brackett would have liked this program when he started as superintendent
  - Coaching includes focusing on urgent issues, relationships with community and school, and teaching and learning
  - Goal is to make every superintendent successful and happy to have Dr. Cohen in program
  - Dr. Cohen has a strong and positive reputation in the State
  - Program includes monthly meetings with all coaches and new superintendents. There is a curriculum associated with the program that is delivered at these meetings. Also includes 6 hours each month of one-to-one meetings with visit schools and coach role is to help her build her leadership
  - Mr. Brackett attends leadership team meetings as well as school committee meetings to assist Dr. Cohen
  - Noted, Superintendents who focusses on teaching and learning early, are long term and successful superintendent
  - Coaching program is for 3 years, first 2 years for meetings/coaching and 3<sup>rd</sup> year are regional meetings and how to implement strategies for improvements
  - Entry plan is a deliverable as part of the program
- Dr. Cohen stated she appreciate and thanks him for his assistance

#### *District Strategic Action Plans 2021-2022*

Dr. Cohen discussed the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the 5-year plan of the strategic with the action steps. Highlights follow:

Strategic Initiatives for 2021-2022 focus are:

- Improving School & Classroom Communication with Our Families
- Sustaining and Ensuring Efficiency of District Operations
- Defining, Communicating, and Celebrating Authentic Learning
- Developing Partnerships That Draw Upon the Expertise of the Community
- Providing Tiered Supports and Interventions
- Developing Structures & Practices that Support Student Agency
- Teaching and Modeling the SEL (CASEL) Core Competencies
- Bring the Portrait of a Learner to Life through Deeper Learning Experiences

4 Strategic Goals:

- Improve communication and positive engagement with Mendon-Upton families and community members through open and frequent communication, partnering with community members, and developing new methods for communicating about budgetary priorities and celebrating authentic learning
  - Actions Steps included Communications, Celebrating Learning, and Budget
- Improving School & Classroom Communication with Our Families, Sustaining and Ensuring Efficiency of District Operations, Defining, Communicating, and Celebrating Authentic Learning, Developing Partnerships That Draw Upon the Expertise of the Community, Providing Tiered Supports and Interventions, Developing Structures & Practices that Support Student Agency, Teaching and Modeling the SEL (CASEL) Core Competencies, Bring the Portrait of a Learner to Life through Deeper Learning Experiences
  - Actions Steps included MTSS and Data Inquiry Cycles
- Reconnect with our students through a strengths-based approach where students are known well, celebrated, nurtured, and have a sense of belonging and social-emotional curriculum is integrated PK-12
  - Action steps included Thrively Implementation and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Design authentic learning experiences that integrate Portrait of a Learner competencies and engage students in deeper learning.

- Actions steps included Portrait of a Learner and Authentic Learning

Next Steps:

- Use District Action Plans as a foundation for School Improvement Plans.
- Create model goal menu of options for teachers to use in their own goal-setting if they choose.
- Develop timetable of midpoint and end-of-year assessment of progress

Sean Nicholson commented about having a timeline for her goals to see the whole picture

Phil DeZutter commented budget forecasting is important to give district an idea of where it is going. Operationalize our learning approach to rethink the delivery of learning and drive budget impacts in a positive way. District needs to understand the budget timeline. Dr. Cohen commented she would like to start the budget earlier with the departments to get the information out earlier

Kerry Laurence commented is happy and appreciative of the SEL component of the goals and giving the teachers more development in this area.

*Opening of School--New Hires, Staff Recognition, PD  
New Hires*

Dr. Cohen updated the School Committee there are 27 new hires to our district including a wide range of positions such as teachers, nurses, paraprofessionals, custodians, administrators, adjustment counselors, BCBAs, administrative assistants, and school psychologists.

Dr. Cohen wanted to welcome one of our new hires in person. New School Resource Officer Ciara O’Conner was introduced at the meeting to the School Committee. Her background includes an Upton Police Officer for over a year and serves as a Sergeant in the Army National Guard as a Military Police Officer. Officer O’Connor also has a background in early childhood education, and past experience teaching preschool. This education, training in criminal justice, and training as a School Resource Officer, Officer O’Connor will be an asset to the district

*Staff Recognition:*

Welcomed back all of our faculty and staff, Dr. Cohen public recognized the following teachers and staff who had more than 25 years of experience:

25 years:

Tricia Moloney	2/6/1996	World Language at Nipmuc
Marc King	2/20/1996	Custodian at Nipmuc
Nancy Lopes	8/26/1996	Grade 1 at Memorial
Karen Presbrey	8/26/1996	Special Education Teacher at Miscoe

26 years:

Nancy Robbins	3/31/1995	Nurse Assistant at Nipmuc
Jan Gallagher	4/10/1995	Principal at Clough
Karen Hadley Nawrocki	8/28/1995	Food Service at Nipmuc
Marie Brigham	8/28/1995	Grade 4 at Memorial
Kathy Guertin	8/28/1995	Guidance Counselor at Memorial
Katie Jordan	8/28/1995	Technology Specialist at Clough
Wanda Monroe	8/28/1995	Preschool Teacher at Memorial
Kristine Thibault	8/28/1995	Grade 1 at Clough
Campbell, Kevin M	8/29/1995	Art Teacher at Nipmuc

*Professional Development*

Dave Quinn is assisting Dr. Cohen with her responsibility. Thus, he worked with the PD Committee to develop PD for the opening day. He thanked the Committee for their assistance with the planning. Highlights follow:

There were 4 PD Strands: Understanding our Students, Supporting our Students, Engaging our Students, Engaging with Content and Skill Development

- Understanding and supporting Students
  - PD included Thrively, Panorama, Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain
- Engaging our Students
  - PD included Speaker Heidi Hayes Jacobs. She was keynote speaker to include recover, refresh and reset. She also had 2 more extensive training
  - Julie Stearn was also a guest speaker to speak to designing curriculum for a changing world
- Engaging with Content and skill development
  - PD included Desmos Math for grades 6-8, Bridges Math for Pre K- 5, Amplify Science 5 grade, Elevate Science for grades 6-8

Educators' feedback was positive and enjoyed the sessions offered.

Dave Quinn will meet with PD committee for planning on the next program. Dr. Cohen thanked Dave for assisting with the PD development.

## **V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

*Negotiations Subcommittee*

*Ratification of MOA: Teacher's Association*

Phil DeZutter commented formal vote is needed to ratify the MOAs because it has been agreed upon by all parties.

Approval to Ratify the MOAs for Teacher's Association

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to ratify the MOA for the Teacher's Association.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

## **VI. VENDORS FOR SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

Vikki Ludwigson sent out information about the vendors to School Committee members.

- MASC currently had 1 search underway with 5 staff members dedicated to assisting with the search. It would be a 3-month timeline and the fee is \$10,000
- NEDESC had a comprehensive proposal detailing the steps of the process; 4-month timeline but more expensive. As a member, there is a discount and the fee is \$13,000

Phil DeZutter commented he believes NEDESC is a more thorough process.

Kerry Laurence commented the search will be transparent and we can do this with a qualified interim.

Approval of the NEDESC as the Vendor for the School Superintendent Search

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve NEDESC as the vendor for the School Superintendent Search

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Vikki Ludwigson will reach out to the vendor.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

*Field trip approval*

Simon Harding from the Music Department presented a Field Trip to the School Committee for approval. This trip is reproduced from a trip taken in April, 2018. This

trip provides students with an authentic musical experience by participating in Disney Workshops where they will perform and record soundtracks to famous Disney songs/movies while working with a cast member. This would take place in April 2022 but dates are yet to be determined and will follow all protocols. Mr. Harding is hoping to avoid Easter dates due to cost. There is not a plan to perform in the festival portion. Mr. Harding commented previous students commented who attended the field trip expressed the workshops are the highlights of the trip. School Committee is willing to allow the dates to be determined for best possible dates for everyone  
SN/PD to approved music trip in April 2022

Approval to Music Field Trip to Disney in April 2022

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to ratify to approve the Music Field Trip to Disney in April 2022

VOTED: Unanimously approved

*Prom out of State*

Emily Ayers, co-advisor to class of 2023 presented a request to have the May 2023 prom out of state. The class is looking to have it on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in May, 2023 at the Graduate in Providence. Pricing is around \$60 per student which is less expensive than other venues. Total price will include food, music and transportation. The students are planning a 1920s theme and are happy with this venue.

Approval to Out of State Venue for May 2023 Prom

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve an out of State Venue for Senior Prom in 2023

VOTED: Unanimously approved

*Request to renew lease agreement*

Dr. Cohen informed the School Committee the leases for Memorial and Clough School needed to be renewed.

Approval to Renew the Leases of Memorial and Clough Schools

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to approve Renewing the Leases for Memorial and Clough Schools

VOTED: Unanimously approved

**VIII. Other Matters Not Anticipated by The Committee Within 48 Hours of the Posted Meeting**

**IX. CORRESPONDENCE**

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- EOY Close-Out
- Approaches to increase transparency in communications and decisions

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: On motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Phil DeZutter to adjourn

VOTED: Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.  
Minutes by Kelly McElreath