

**Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Frederick Hartnett Middle School**  
**October 14, 2021**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**Introduction of Members:**

Jane C Reggio, Chairperson (arrived late)  
Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson  
Keri L. Gaudette, District Treasurer  
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary  
Tim Howell, Member  
Amanda D. Guilmain, Member  
Sarah E. Williams, Member

Tammy A. Lemieux was absent from the meeting.

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

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

**Report of Student Representatives**

Madison Marchand and Kyleigh Sacco

- JV football won the second game.
- Volleyball made it to the playoffs for the first time.
- Homecoming was a success on Sept. 31st - 230 students attended and the weather was good.
- Food for Thought - Mrs. Conti incorporated shared food into history - On Oct. 5th the class put together tacos for teachers and fed about 37 teachers.
- NHS booth at fall festival at Roosevelt Park.
- Fall concert is coming up in November.
- Solidarity Conference to be held.
- Saturday is the next band competition in Cranston. Our band goes on at 8:00 pm

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco and unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes warrants (minutes of Sept. 16th are held).

There were no items for **Public Forum** -

**Report of the Business Office will be done first-**  
**Matthew J. Ehrenworth**

Total revenue report - everything is being collected smoothly. Some grants have not been issued yet. The State releases those funds.

Medicaid revenue should be higher than projected. It allowed the District to add to their administrative claim for Covid.

General fund expenditure review. It is early in the school year and nothing is standing out. Red numbers in places. On the second page we are in the black in all areas.

Negative \$271,000 will be offset on the grant funding expenditure for Out of District thru Circuit breaker fund. The expenses will be moved from 9300 to circuit breaker.

ESSER II and ESSER III were added at the bottom. ESSER II is just for this year. This grant is split over 2 years. ESSER III is split over 3 years.

**Personnel update** is included in packets.

**Facilities** update:

Baseball and softball fields look good. Old backstop removed. Landscaping: fields were irrigated and slice seeded on 9/30 and 10/1: infield work to follow

Fencing completed on 9/23 (including backstop, sideline/dugout fencing and gates)..

Football is not using this section except for 10-15 minutes of practice each week so there should not be a lot of wear and tear.

They are exploring removable outfield fencing as an option.

They do not have a set date for the tennis court repair work. The company doing the work, Sealcoating and Striping is backed up.

Safety laminate on new vestibules has been completed.

Mr. Ehrenworth had a conversation with Scott Hebert and they discussed what fencing would be practical and found that removable fencing would be best. They are currently exploring the option of this.

Mr. Howell feels that removable fence panels would not be safe.

Mr. Ehrenworth stated football is only using the field for kick off practice in a small area of the field.

Mr. Ehrenworth stated there are inserts that go into the ground so that it doesn't just leave a hole in the ground when the fencing is removed.

Mr. Howell does not want the field to be a multi purpose field again.  
Sports teams played in other locations because it wasn't safe to play there.  
Now it is going to be safe but he is not so sure.  
Mr. Howell wants permanent fencing to keep the football team off of the outfield.  
Mrs. Larkin remembers that this was the plan as well.

Mr. Ehrenworth will go back and review the proposal.  
He stated that permanent outfield fencing was never part of the proposal.  
He does not want to have an additional capital expense for the temporary fencing.

### **Use of Facilities**

The elementary PTO is planning a trunk or treat for elementary students and they thought of using the HS or MS. They are asking for the MS parking lot only. They will do time slots for families to keep the crowd manageable on October 23rd from 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. with a rain date of 10/30/21.

There is also a request for use of the HS auditorium for a Blackstone fall town meeting to be held on November 9, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. .

There is a request from the Dance Company to use the HS Auditorium, Cafeteria and teachers cafeteria in November. They want to use the hydraulic lift to hang the lights.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to approve the Use of Facilities requests as presented this evening.

### **School Committee items.**

Proposal to engage the MIIA to their post 65 medicare program for current and future retirees.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Guilmain and unanimously voted to approve the district engagement with the Mass Interlocal Ins. Association (MIIA) to participate in their Post 65 Medicare Program. As such, the district will assume responsibility for paying the associated Medicare penalty fees for current and future retirees. In return, the district will receive a 3% discount on its insurance renewal rate for FY23.

## **Sponsorship and Advertising Policy update.**

MASC - leave Sponsorship and Advertising policy KHB in place and make this new one KHB-R which is a much more detailed policy as presented to the Committee.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to adopt the Sponsorship and Advertising policy KHB-R which is much more detailed than the original KHB as written and recommended by MASC. To keep KHB - Advertising in the Schools from the policy manual and add KHB-R.

## **Public Comments at School Committee Meetings**

Changes our public comments at school committee meetings.

Previously the policy said "the presiding chairperson will determine an appropriate length of time based on the nature of the topic" and now they will be allowed 3 minutes to present their materials at the Public Forum.

Introduction states that School Committee can listen to comments but not comment on them. "This is not a question and answer period. The School Committee is not able to engage in dialogue during public comment. They are only able to listen. The School Committee meetings are meetings in the public and not with the public."

Mrs. Vinacco wonders if we are putting up a wall by doing this. This may be too open and closed.

Mrs. Reggio feels it is standard and the way they are trained. It needs to be consistent and fair.

We cannot change the rules for certain people and we need to be consistent for all.

Mr. Howell feels the 3 minute window gives the speaker the opportunity to get their point across without rambling on. He likes this.

They cannot stop someone from speaking unless it is offensive.

It is 3 minutes at town meeting as well.

If it will take more than 3 minutes they need to ask to be on the agenda so they can have dialogue on it.

## **Championship jackets- File: JJIBA Championship Jacket Awards**

There seems to be changes in the way the championship competitions are titled. There is a change in the actual bracket structure. The policy may not work any longer due to our bracket structure.

We are only discussing this at this time.

Mrs. Reggio wants to look at this more closely.

They are looking at the difference between the jacket types, etc.

Mrs. Vinacco feels that we should want to give students the jackets. When the band wins there is a sense of comradery and celebration in the community. They are wearing them with pride and representing your school. Shewould love to see more kids with them.

Mr. Howell doesn't just want it to be a participation trophy.

Mr. Howell would like to see the band director and the athletic director at the next meeting to discuss further..

Mrs. Guilmain wants to know what the wording would be on the jacket.

They will explore more and get feedback from coaches, the band director and athletic director.

#### **Covid Review - Lead Nurse KarenYoung**

Mrs. Reggio stated they are staying with masks in schools. Will review it again in November. Staying with the DESE policy. They said they would look at it if 80% of those eligible in our community are vaccinated. This is not the case.

#### **Blackstone**

12-15 yrs. - 46%

16-19 yrs. - 54%

Town as a whole - 54%

#### **Millville**

12-15 yrs - 37%

16-19 yrs - 57%

Town as a whole - 44%

Mrs. Reggio understands it is a personal choice but that personal choice is impacting so many people. We have to be better.

Mrs. Young stated we hit 34 cases in our school district today.

Last year we hit 34 cases in January. Last year at this time we were at 2 cases.

Employee flu clinic scheduled for Oct. 21st.

MS & HS for students - Nov. 3 and 5th tentatively.

They are waiting to hear back from the State on the Covid clinic.

There have been 290 in school close contacts, 48 of those did test and stay, 206 were monitoring only, 10 were vaccinated, 23 opted to quarantine and 3 had previously been positive in the last 90 days.

Over 180 have been tested with the Test and Stay kit.

Mrs. Vinacco wants to add that Hopkinton has been approved to remove masks. They met the 80% and got the approval from DESE. It is 80% of all staff and students of a building. Some are getting vaccinated in RI and not shared with us unless the person shares the information with you.

Other districts are finding their numbers lower than what the state is reporting.

#### **Capital Planning update** Mrs. Williams

The Committee met last night. They assessed future program needs and identified building and capital needs.

They commissioned a demographer for enrollment trends and will be getting that information next week.

They have started fitting the configurations they have into the numbers they have now and how they can fit into our current structure. Maintenance and general repair work is not part of this committee. The focus right now is on the capital planning project.

The next meeting will be held on Oct. 27th at 5:30 at the HMS.

The public is invited to a forum following the school committee meeting on November 11th. At that point they will have an idea of what they want to do.

It will not be set up to approve anything but so the community understands the needs.

They are not at the powerpoint presentation stage yet.

#### **MASC/MASS Joint Conference -**

Mrs. Reggio stated if anyone wants to go to the conference please tell Katherine and choose in person or virtual. It is cheaper if you do it sooner.

## Report of the Superintendent - Dr. DeFalco

Spring 21 MCAS data. Purpose of the test last year. Results have been public for a few weeks.

Last year the assessment as the commissioner said was for instructional purposes only.

Use the information to form and plan where to go next with teaching and learning.

There were differences in last year's tests.

We had a strong participation and all understand the seriousness of this. Over 95% participation even remote learners took it. In some cases as high as 99%.

Additional day to work with staff before students arrived at the beginning of school year. Square what we thought we knew. Which students would need additional time when planning and social emotional learning and support. Able to look at what we thought and what is the data actually telling us.

Once all information was back everyone went through the process again.  
vccvbnm,./iop[No one was thrilled with most of the outcomes but we were already a month into the work.

A check to see if what they were doing was working.

Don't feel discouraged this evening.

Dr. DeFalco gave a few important data points.

They are doing target work with the students who need the help.

In the past few years they have not looked at State district comparison information.

He feels it is important this year because of the year they just had.

It gives you a quick side by side comparison of how we did.

All of this data is on the profile page.

He will follow up with anyone who would like to discuss it.

They are looking at 2019 and 2021 achievement and growth data.

2019 had 3 sessions of english and math and 2021 had 2 sessions.

- Grade 3 ELA saw an increase of those meeting or exceeding expectations.
- Grade 4 ELA saw an increase of the same.
- Grade 10 ELA saw an increase in those exceeding
- Grades 5, 7 and 8 were basically flat.
- Grade 6 saw a significant decrease.

We are struggling with Math across the board.

Kids are more prone to read along and read than to sit and practice math problems at home alone.

5th grade - No significant changes in ELA and Math.

The gain they were making in Science took a step back. It was not easy doing virtual labs.

The data is startling but there is a why behind it.

7th grade is struggling but it doesn't look like this.

Grade 8 data is basically flat.

This was done in a hybrid and remote challenging year.

Grade 10 - 2019 - the state changed the exam. In ELA we did have almost 10% more students in the exceeding category. Math meeting and exceeding were flat

Special Education - There is no one exceeding in this area. We have a crisis happening across our state with students with special needs. The two big focus areas are students with special needs and economically disadvantaged. The pandemic has impacted families living in poverty more than anyone else.

What is next?

Interventionists in every building and increased after school programs.

He thanked Mrs. Vinacco and Mr. Howell for meeting with him to discuss our goals as they are on the superintendent evaluation sub committee.

### **Superintendent Goals FY22-**

Deeper focus - Equity Acceleration Academics and Social Emotional Learning.

Bringing communities together around the schools and being a district of 1.

We went into this situation together and we need to come out of it together.

Thank you for all the work we have done to date. We need to increase the level of support.

What everyone needs is different from person to person. We can't do it without community equity.

### **Superintendent Evaluation focus standards.**

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Management and Operations
3. Family and Community Engagement
4. Professional Culture

### **Professional Practice - District Strategy Plan.**

This really needs to be driven by all. Grassroots from the ground up.



## **Academic Acceleration**

By the end of FY22 100% of our schools will show evidence of all students having equitable access to improved core and intervention instruction as measured by Star, MCAS 2.0 and RTI student performance monitoring. Additionally, we will have the selection and implementation of a core mathematics program in place.

## **District Strategic Plan**

By June 2022 we will have the next iteration of the Blueprint for District Improvement completed and ready for implementation on July 1, 2022. Blueprint 2.0 will be created by thoroughly reviewing the progress made and all indicators met on our first Blueprint, as well as the work that still needs to be done to strengthen the student experience fulfilling our District Purpose and Portrait of a Graduate. Blueprint 2.0 will be driven by feedback from students, families, staff, leadership, governance, and community.

## **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - ALL means ALL**

By June 2022 we will build the collective capacity 100% of our school community around diversity, equity and inclusion, and equitable practices within our work, moving towards improving outcomes within the five focus areas outlined below:

- Strengthening our instructional practices and instructional framework
- Creating a safe place in our schools for ALL students, one where students feel valued, welcomed and where they fit and focused on their social-emotional growth
- Selecting curricula and materials - ensuring the materials we use reflect our community and those around us not reflected in our community .
- Honoring diversity of thought, and realizing there is a tension between awareness and judgement
- Empowering students in owning, valuing and sharing their personal stories as there is power in individuality.

## **Capital Planning**

By June 2022 we will have in place both a short term and long range capital outlay plan for the school district.

## **Student Learning Goal**

Our commitment as a District is for all students to show progress in ELA, math and science on state assessments.

Dr. DeFalco had a chance to listening to 5 and 6 year olds and found they were very honest. They love the opportunity to learn about each other and they get to share about themselves.

Complex MS/HS theme - pandemic has changed the way students feel about each other. When they returned, the kids seemed angry towards them.

MS/HS - we are out from behind a keyboard and now we have to get along with others.

There is resetting that needs to be done now.

Diversity Equity and Inclusion is a focus across the school district.

We are hosting a solidarity conference at our high school. Impressed by the students and what they are doing there.

We have to get back to at least the 50th percentile.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to approve the Superintendent's Goals for FY22..

Dr DeFalco will do a short video and post it on the website

Blueprint 2.0 is moving along with a workshop on November 2nd.

Continued with partner alignment work. The 2nd partner meeting was held yesterday. It went very well.

### **Rate Increase Request**

Cafeteria Manager Mrs. Gonsalves is asking to have the sub cafeteria worker rate increased from \$13.50 to \$14.00/hr.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco and unanimously voted to increase the sub cafeteria worker rate from \$13.50 to \$14.00/hr.

Mrs. Reggio is all for this and then some. Her concern is that if you ask a teacher to sub it is \$75 day but she thinks you need to also look at the daily sub teacher rate. Sub teachers should make more than the cafe subs.

Dr. DeFalco stated the cafeteria is self-sustaining with their own budget.

The daily sub teacher rates impact the larger school budget and need more conversation.

**School Committee Forum:**

Senior field hockey game will be held tomorrow at 3:30 p.m. and volleyball at 5:00 p.m.

BMEPTO - new name of the elementary parent organization.

The next school committee meeting will be held on October 28th.

Joint Town meeting - November 10 @ 6:30 p.m. at the HMS

Capital Planning Sub Committee Public Forum - November 18 @ 5:30 p.m. at HMS.

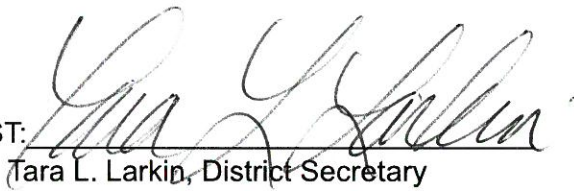
**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary