

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting

Nipmuc High School, Professional Development Room

Monday, November 1, 2021

Committee Present:

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

Administration Present:

Maureen Cohen, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Cheryl Kirkpatrick, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Jay Byer, Business/Finance

David Quinn, Director of Instructional Technology

John Clements, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School

Mary Anne Clements, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Kerry Laurence.
Pledge of Alliance was recited

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to approve the agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Open Session Minutes from October 18, 2021

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Vikki Ludwigson, to approve Open Session minutes from October 18, 2021

VOTED: Unanimously approved

II. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS - NA

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS - NA

IV. STUDENT'S COMMENTS

Nipmuc Regional High School

John Clements introduced students, Kaylee Servis, Darryl Lubin, Thomas Morrell, and Andrew Nagda who took AP computer science class last year. The students discussed what they are working on this year for independent study.

Darryl is taking an online course IBM Applied AI course in Coursera. Goal is to complete entirety of the 6-section course and create a fully functional chatbot. This chatbox will be similar to Alexa and he is looking to implement a chatbox for official Nipmuc website

Thomas and Andres discussed creating a business - NFT car racing game. The game uses NFT that is purchased to at site or by 3rd party. There is a racing section where users buy in fee. Top 3 winners get a percentage of the funds using virtual monies. This game is using lots of computer languages to develop this site. One language is only a year or two old so not much out there for the students to research. Every car will become 3D model so users can see their cars.

Kaylee stated she is learning about cybersecurity and how data breaches are occurring. She is looking at how to organizations can prevent these breaches. She is also taking a course 'within' her computer so her computer is not damaged. She needs to understand Code in order to identify weaknesses.

Kerry Laurence commented technology education is cutting edge and difficult to 'teach'. Students described how they utilize independent study course in their schedule to access these courses as well as VHS classes.

Mary Anne Moran followed with how these students are impressive and the need to give them space and flexibility for them to design their independent study. Computer science interest and demand has been growing over the last years. They have been working with David Quinn to connect schools with industries to help develop the curriculum 'pathway to innovation' and access to all. Ms. Moran thanked the Math department for their great work. She stated the Math department is sponsoring Project "Lead the Way" which is 4 courses over 4 years for students to take.

V. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Power Outage-Early Dismissal

Dr. Cohen updated the School Committee on the recent power outage in Mendon where Clough and Miscoe students were dismissed early. She thanked everyone especially Mendon Police. Once it was known the power would be out for the day, it was the best decision to let the students go home. The Leadership team was able to develop a plan to safely dismiss everyone and it was a team effort by all.

DESE Updates

Dr. Cohen stated DESE has extended the mask mandate until at least January 15. Official guidance had been given to School Committee members. She updated the percentage of students vaccinated: 72% at HS; 72% 8th grade and 65% 7th grade.

Dr. Cohen is working to get the staff vaccination status. It was noted if district would ever to be over 80%, district, they would need informed consent to apply for the waiver. Thus, data is being collected with vax cards. If vax card is not available, consent is needed to access the immunization database.

ESSER III Survey Results

Dr. Cohen stated a survey for community input was required for spending of ESSERIII funding. Thus, a survey asking about relevant eligible expenses guided the questions was create, shared on social media and sent to the parents.

Highlights of the results:

- Top priorities were facilities, mental health and SEL support, & academic needs post pandemic
- Other responses where responses were high/low included: programming, academic supports, addressing student needs, increasing SEL support, co-teaching and inclusion, technology education, career technical education, COVID response, instructional materials and PD, screening assessments, acceleration academies, community partnerships for equitable environments.
- Facilities comments included HVAC, roof, technology, Miscoe upgrades, lockers, science labs.
- Athletics comments included buses for middle school, replace uniforms, athletic fields, turf field and lights, need of a track, van
- Programs and supports comments included band uniforms, drama, library/media, vocation programming, special education and college preparation.
- People comments included reduce class size with more teachers, add paraprofessional interventionists, don't add people with one-time funds.
- Social Emotional learning and mental health comments included PD and supports for mental health of staff and students.

- Many respondents thanked the district for the opportunity to participate in the survey.
- Demographics of the respondents were: 88% were parents, 9% were teachers, 5% were support staff.

Phil DeZutter is looking to review the whole picture to understand how it could/will impact the budget. Dr. Cohen is waiting to hear what has been approved. ESSER grant was applied for based on this feedback and needs identified by the principals as it relates to COVID.

VI. ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Technology Department--Director of Technology Integration-Dave Quinn

David Quinn discussed the program Thrively with the School Committee. Thrively provides teachers with research-based survey data to help them deepen their knowledge of their students and mini-lessons to support SEL competencies. David had sent an invitation to Thrively to the School Committee members. David reviewed the responses from the members of the strength's profiles.

- Collect data on students has they answer the questions
- Opportunity to understand what student's interest is
- Student gets a customized profile based on their strengths. This profile can be shared out and earn badges. Students can also share highlights for teachers to see.
- David highlighted other features of Thrively for the teachers.
- One teacher is using it for project assignments to assist/track his student's progress. One teacher in the district is being recognized by Thrively and how he is using it.
- Pathways to help students identify a career/community partner that would match their interests.
- Goals will assist with the Portrait of the Learners to collect the data over the course of the students.
- High school level is doing it during Advisory. Middle school level is each department taking a rotation to implement Thrively. At Elementary level, a weekly lesson fit into a spot during the day.
- Thrively is a long-term platform. Primary focus is for SEL and teachers are using the lesson plans from the program for that purpose. Long-term, this program could be shared out as a link as part of the mastery transcript so the student's school career can be viewed.

VII. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Budget Subcommittee

There have been no meetings since last School Committee meeting, thus nothing to report at this time. The next meeting will be November 22.

Policy Subcommittee

Policy Subcommittee has not met and their next meeting is December 6th

Superintendent Search Subcommittee

Vikki Ludwigson updated the following:

- Website is live with information about the search.
- Timeline of the search has been posted and additional information will be posted.
- Focus groups have occurred last week. Next one will be this Wednesday evening. Online survey is available until November 5.
- Candidate profile will be completed and added to website.

- Info on screening committee and meeting next week to select participants to attend training.

Multiboard Meeting

Sean Nicholson updated the School Committee. There was a productive meeting last week. Officials were there and the objective of Multi Board determined. There will be more meetings for open communications in developing the budget. Another meeting should happen mid-January once the expenses of the school have been determined. Phil DeZutter commented Budget Subcommittee is still waiting to hear from Mendon who will be the active representative from Mendon. Also commented the challenges over the last year have been due to no Mendon active representative.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Nipmuc School Improvement Plan--Mary Anne Moran and John Clements

John and Mary Ann stated the full plan has been distributed to School Committee members. They will be discussing the highlights:

- Goal: Understand. Action Steps include: Thrively Assessments (Strengths, Habits of Mind), Panorama survey & Data, Portrait of a Learner Scholars – All 9th graders (previously program had 79 scholars); School-wide norms & PD Communications
- Goal: Support. Actions steps include: AMOS – identify & support struggling learners; Advisory Lessons – Thrively; MTSS, DCAP & Intervention Support; Return Support Services; Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices.
- Goal: Engage. Action steps include: Authentic Learning Definition; Authentic Learning Professional Development; Mastery Transcript; Community & Professional Partnerships

Questions included follow up on the Kaleidoscope project from last year. Phil DeZutter commented there is great ideas in this plan. Question was asked about transition from 8 to 9 grade students and special education. Mary Anne commented Thrively will help the transition to understand the students and not just meetings among counselors. Phil DeZutter commented about the ‘parent experience’ and how it changes from different schools. John commented they working with Jen D’Angelo for an overall picture of what accommodations are made in elementary school and what those accommodations would look like in high school. Sean Nicholson commented it is not just the special education students but all students transitioning into 9th grade. The transition is steep to understand the culture of Nipmuc.

Approval of the Nipmuc School Improvement Plan

MOTION: On a motion of Erick Brown, seconded by Vikki Ludwigson, to approve Nipmuc School Improvement Plan

VOTED: Unanimously approved

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

X. CORRESPONDENCE

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- School Improvement Plans-Miscoe, Clough, Memorial
- Departmental Budget Presentations
- Interim Superintendent Goals

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath