

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting

Nipmuc High School, Professional Development Room

Monday, November 15, 2021

Committee Present:

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

Administration Present:

Maureen Cohen, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Cheryl Kirkpatrick, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Jay Byer, Business/Finance

John Clements, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School

Janice Gallagher, Principal, Clough Elementary School

Wendy Bell, Principal, Memorial Elementary School

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 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 Dorothy Scally, to approve the agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Open Session Minutes from November 1, 2021

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve Open Session minutes from November 1, 2021

VOTED: Unanimously approved

II. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS

Chairperson Laurence stated last week was national school psychology week.

Chairperson Laurence expressed school psychologists are uniquely qualified to help students learn and teachers teach. Thus, she would like to extend appreciation to the districts' psychologists: Rebecca Snelgrove, Donna Barry-Moilanen, Samantha Glenn.

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS - NA

IV. STUDENT'S COMMENTS

Dr. Cohen announced 2 new representatives from Nipmuc who will be coming to School Committee to represent the student body.

Michael Flanagan is a senior. He stated he is looking forward to representing peers. Interested in band and other activities and thank the School Committee for the opportunity.

Diya Deliwala is a junior. She commented she is excited to be here and to learn how the process works.

V. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Review of Substitute Teacher and Nurse Pay

Dr. Cohen informed the School Committee the district did a comparison with other districts, on substitute teacher and nurse pay. It was concluded MURSD has one of the lowest daily rates of \$80 (substitute teacher) and \$100 (nurse pay). Dr. Cohen is recommending to raise it to \$95 for substitute teachers and \$120 for nurses per day. Dr. Cohen noted due to policy, the school committee will need to approve.

New rate will make district competitive. Phil DeZutter asked if the rate is 'high enough'? Upon analysis, district was looking to be competitive but not on the high end and still be able to handle it budgetary. Dr. Cohen is unsure if this will help recruit more subs but will compensate our current subs competitively. Jay Byer stated he is hesitant to go much higher due to budget. Substitute teachers are tough to recruit at this at this time but not due to pay but mostly due to pandemic. It was noted MURSD does not differential between certified and non-certified teachers in the past and would like to continue that practice. This rate will put us at the average of the range. The last time the rates were increased were about 10 years ago.

It was noted it can be a daily struggle to ensure we have enough substitute teachers on staff. State Commissioner is looking at the staffing issues and MURSD will be submitting info to the State to identify the issues.

Approval To Increase the Rate of Pay for Substitute Teachers and Nurses

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the rate of pay increase to \$95 per day for substitute teachers and \$120 for substitute nurses.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Home Instruction Annual Report

Home instruction, per district policy, report is developed for all at home instructions. Dr. Cohen thanked Lauren Sannicandro for her assistance in developing this report. Number of at home instructions is as follows:

- 2021-2022 39 students (18 families)
- 2020-2021 49 students
- 2019-2020 23 students
- 2018-2019 29 students

Enrollment

Dr. Cohen detailed the enrollment at each school and each grade. Highlights are:

Enrollment by grade:		
as of March, 2021		as of October 1, 2021
Clough:	344	347
Memorial:	461	494
Miscoe:	724	665
Nipmuc:	637	635
Total:	2166	2141

Observations:

- Our district enrollment went down by 25 students this year.
- Memorial ES has 147 more students than Clough ES (30 more than last March) with new students enrolling the past two weeks, approaching 500 students
- Largest grade change from last year to this year was in Grade 9--of 208 students in the 8th grade, 160 entered the 9th grade at Nipmuc (same # to BVT, but increase by about 10 for private school enrollment)
- English Learner Population----Total: 55 and 12 recently arrived to the U.S.

- 2015 24 EL, 3 recently arrived in US
- 2019 34 EL, 12 recently arrived in US
- 2020 47 EL, 20 recently arrived in US

Dr. Cohen will keep the School Committee updated on any trends. Phil DeZutter commented it is good to continue to look at enrollment to ensure resources are deployed adequately. Dr. Cohen commented leadership team does look at enrollment.

Facilities Update:

Jay Byer provided an overview of some current facility projects and some upcoming projects. He discussed the following projects:

Nipmuc Regional High School

- Boiler Replacement: Project out to bid on Nov 17. Quotes are due back by December 15 to do this work in the summer. Jay Byer is looking to use capital stabilization account to fund this project.
- Hot Water Tank - \$30,520. Current tank is leaking and is about 15 years old. Tank is delivered and will be installed shortly.
- Clock Tower - \$27,244 (Insurance Claim). Façade broken and took about 6 months to find a company to come and repair it.

Miscoe Hill Middle School

- Playground Equipment - \$10,416 Equipment has been broken and is over 20 years old. It has now been repaired.
- Sewer Ejector Pumps Ongoing issue due to the uphill leech field. Issues have occurred over the last couple of weeks. Looking for quotes of about \$10,000 to repair the pumps.
- Fire Annunciator Panel - \$87,607 (Insurance Claim) – This has been an issue. Water was found thus insurance will cover the cost of this.

Memorial Elementary School

- Media Center Air Conditioning – still waiting on price. This stopped working last spring. It has been this long to get a quote. Conditioner is there but not installed for the next couple of weeks. Estimated cost is about \$15,000

Water Treatment-Miscoe Hill MS and Clough Elementary School

- Miscoe Hill and Clough Water Treatment Systems (PFAS6) - \$150,000, still waiting for DEP approval. Budget does not include these costs and it will need to be determined how to fund this. However, waiting for DEP approval before project can move forward. Bottled water is being used at both schools until this is repaired.

VI. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Superintendent Search Subcommittee

Vikki Ludwigson stated School Committee members have received the 'draft' candidate profile for new superintendent. Feedback had been incorporated in the draft profile from the members, focus groups and other areas. Once this is approved, it will be posted on the website.

Approval of the Superintendent Profile Document

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the Superintendent Profile Document.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Field Trip Approval-2022 Amazon Trip-Laurie Holloway

Laurie Holloway expressed she is grateful for the support of everyone to conduct this trip. It was scheduled for March 2020 and canceled due to COVID. It has been rescheduled to February 2022. The group is 14 student travelers as well as 5 parents

(adult travelers) and 3 Miscoe chaperones, including a nurse. Ms. Holloway detailed the itinerary. This is mainly for 7 and 8 graders. Due to delay, this trip is mostly 7 and 8 grade. Looking to have another trip next year for current 5 and 6 graders.

Approval of the 2022 Amazon Field Trip

MOTION: On a motion of Erick Brown, seconded by Sean Nicholson, to approve the 2022 Amazon Field Trip

VOTED: Unanimously approved

MOA Health and Safety

Dr. Cohen stated this has been working document in last 2 months. This agreement has been discussed for FY2021-22 school year. Dr. Cohen thanked MURTA and leadership team for their work. She noted MURTA ratified the agreement last week.

Key provisions:

- Following the MA COVID-19 Temporary Emergency Paid Sick Leave Program where staff members will receive up to 5 COVID Leave Days with appropriate documentation.
- A process was developed for collecting proof of COVID-19 vaccination so District can track percentages of staff in the community who are vaccinated.
- Additional compensation for our nurses for extra hours they are working on holidays, weekends, or vacation weeks for contact tracing.

Approval of Health and Safety MOA

MOTION: On a motion of Erick Brown, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to ratify the Health and Safety MOA.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Clough and Memorial Elementary School Improvement Plans

Document will be posted for families to see what the details are. It was noted a draft document was presented to a joint school council and feedback was incorporated in the plan.

Highlights include:

- Throughout the 2021 school year, we will develop and implement tiered support and intervention in order to promote the social, emotional, academic, and behavioral success of all students.
 - Thrively will be actively used to help achieve this and excited to see where this program to help
 - Multi-tiered System of Support to be utilized
 - Small group instruction
- Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, in order to increase student engagement, academic achievement and confidence in math, all K-4 teachers will fully implement the Elementary School Bridges Math Program and ST Math application
 - Elementary has adopted a new math program and will take some time to learn and implement the program for teachers.
 - Find time for PD and collaboration for the teachers to learn
 - Clough and Memorial are on track to be the top performers for ST Math out of 200 districts.
- Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, we will advance the Portrait of a Learner competencies at the elementary level to create opportunities for all learners to thrive.
 - Determine benchmarks for students leaving 4th grade
 - Implement 2 inspired learning days with the district

Members asked questions about some of the action steps. Phil DeZutter asked how will we measure the success of ST math program? It was noted the confidence level of students enjoying math program will show the growth of math skills. Students are also

engaging in the programs on their own vs having the teachers assign it. ST Math is measuring participation and their problem-solving skills. Dr. Cohen commented iReady assessments (done 3x per year) will also assist in the ‘measurement’ of the programs.

Approval of Clough and Memorial School Improvement Plans

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the Clough and Memorial School Improvement Plans.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

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

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- School Improvement Plans-Miscoe
- Departmental Budget Presentations
- Interim Superintendent Goals

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded Dorothy Scally by to adjourn

VOTED: Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath