

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting

Nipmuc High School, Professional Development Room

Monday, March 28, 2022

Committee Present:

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

Administration Present:

Maureen Cohen, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Cheryl Kirkpatrick, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Jay Byer, Business/Finance

Jennifer D'Angelo, Director of Student Support Services

John Clements, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High School

Mary Anne Moran, Co-Principal, Nipmuc Regional High 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 Phil DeZutter, to approve the agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Open Session Minutes from March 14, 2022 and March 15, 2022

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve Open Session minutes from March 14, 2022 and March 15, 2022

VOTED: Unanimously approved

II. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS - NA

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS - NA

IV. STUDENT'S COMMENTS

Nipmuc Student Presentation – DECA: John Clements spoke to the School Committee about the exciting activities occurring at Nipmuc. Mary Anne Moran introduced Nipmuc business teacher James Caprarella noting he is one of a 2-person department and has worked hard on the DECA program. James discussed the DECA program. He introduced the students Phallon Clark, Liana Patrick, Connor Jason, and Alex Heather were present to highlight the success of the DECA program presented highlights of the DECA program and how they qualified for the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Atlanta on April 23 – 26.

Ales and Connor discussed their DECA career and what their project was for DECA. They worked with a local business JJ's ice cream (their 3rd partner Kali Tewksbury worked their) to assist with identifying problems and coming up with solutions. One solution was creating a new website and changed their colors since they needed to go to paper cups. They spoke about the workshops they attended at the State competition.

Liana did research on her home ice rink where she plays hockey. She also created a website and conducted additional research. She assisted with creating signs for the rink to show where to go. She noted she also attended the workshops at the State competition.

Phallon Clark competed in the role play portion of the competition. Role play is where she was given a case to review and she had 10 minutes to review the case and then meet with a judge to review your presentation. Her presentation exemplifies her 21st century skills. She is looking forward to going to Atlanta to meet new people.

Michel congratulated the DECA students going to the national competition. He also announced Nipmuc band and chorus will be traveling to Disney world on Thursday for 6 days to attend workshops and seminars with experts. He noted those students have worked hard to coordinate their assignments since it is the end of the semester.

Michel stated the induction for new members of Nipmuc National Honor Society is tomorrow. Family and friends are invited to attend and asked for RSVPs from attendees. The theme of the evening is “The Future is Bright”

Lastly, Michel stated he and Diya hosted a ‘get to know your school committee student reps’ during break time at Nipmuc. He is looking forward to hosting more of these events this in the future. Diya and Michel are actively planning school visits with Dr. Cohen to learn more about the other schools.

When asked about the student engagement during the event, he stated it was good but they are now aware of how to do some things differently.

Diya followed up that some students did come up and ask them about their roles and it was good to connect with them. She stated last weekend the drama club presented the play “Adams Family”. Lastly, on May 6th is the junior/senior prom and there will also be an after-prom party for the 1st time in 2 years.

V. SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

District Updates/Announcements: Dr. Maureen Cohen

Dr. Cohen announced the new H.P. Clough Principal. She read the following press release to the School Committee:

After welcoming three extremely qualified candidates to Clough as finalists, we are delighted to announce that Ms. Liz Garden has accepted our offer to become the next principal of Clough Elementary School. Liz is the current principal of Dr. Leroy E. Mayo Elementary School in the Wachusett Regional School District and comes to Clough with over 2 decades of experience as an educator and educational leader. She has worked in a variety of districts, including Groton-Dunstable, Leominster, and Westborough and has taught at various levels from preschool through high school.

In addition to her educational experience, Liz is a lifelong learner and brings with her a professional background that enhances each school community she leads. Liz is a highly respected published author and professional development provider. She participates in several state and national professional organizations and will serve as the President of the Massachusetts School Administrators Association this upcoming year. Liz serves as an editorial advisor for NAESP's Principal Magazine, a publication in which she regularly contributes articles and book reviews. She has provided a voice for principals across the state of MA as a member of DESE's Principal Advisory Cabinet and across the country as a member of the Scholastic Principal Advisory Board, as well as NAESP's National Coronavirus Task Force.

Additionally, Liz is a passionate leader in literacy and was part of the team of literacy experts from across the state who advised DESE in the creation of the MASS Literacy Resource Site, and was selected to be a member of the MASS Literacy Support Network.

When Liz is not engaged with supporting her students and staff at her school or colleagues across the state, she can be found reading, writing, or spending time with her family. Liz lives in Shrewsbury with her husband, who is a musician, and she is a proud mom of her daughter Emerson who is in first grade and son Cayce who is in second grade.

Based on the Clough community feedback and the dedicated work of the screening committee, we are confident that Liz embodies the qualities that the Clough community wants and deserves in their next leader, and that she will support and nurture the strong, positive student-centered culture that is a hallmark of Clough.

The mixture of feedback from our community along with the references provided a full view of Liz's range of skills. One reference described her as a "child-centered" leader who is "reflective, passionate, and energetic" who they would "hire again in a heartbeat." Another colleague described her as a "lifelong learner" who has "distinguished herself as a creative, intelligent, and resourceful leader with an energy and passion that are contagious." Others described ways that Liz actively builds positive relationships with staff, students, and families and her passion for early education, literacy, and universal design for learning. Through our screening process, positive feedback from our community highlighted the following:

- *"she has a lot of heart and compassion for staff and students"*
- *"extensive classroom experience"*
- *"early education experience"*
- *"very personable, kid-oriented, and collaborative"*
- *"understands the value of inclusion"*
- *"transparent with her communications"*
- *"honest and authentic"*
- *"brings innovative ideas to the leadership team"*

I would be remiss if I did not personally thank all who contributed in this extensive process. First, thank you to our dedicated screening committee which included Cathy Hack, Tracee Perkins, Becky Pilkington, Lauren Poxon, Amy Curry, Emily Carlson, Wendy Bell, Lisa Van Lulling, Evan Hanson, Julia Busby and Cheryl Kirkpatrick. This group reviewed resumes, conducted initial interviews, greeted candidates at the door, and organized site visits for finalists including leading the visits of classrooms. Second, thank you to the entire Clough community who took the time to provide feedback to inform our principal vision for the ideal candidate as well as to provide feedback after the site visits. Their contributions were integral to this process and I personally read through each comment, note, and recommendation that was put forward as part of the decision-making process. Finally, thanks to all of you who stopped by to meet the finalists and hear what they had to say, as well as answering their questions.

Between now and the end of the school year, Liz will be working closely with Janice to ensure a smooth transition for all. While this is a bittersweet time, we are also extremely fortunate. First, we are fortunate to have such an amazing leader with Janice at the helm right now and although we are sad to see her go, we are also fortunate to have a talented leader with Liz to follow in her footsteps. Please join me in welcoming Liz warmly to Clough and MURSD!

Liz Gardner comments included she is very excited to come to Mendon-Upton and knows she has tough shoes to fill with Janice Gallagher leaving. Liz is excited to work

with this leadership team. Her visit to Clough and interacting with the community and students was a great environment and looking to forward to joining.

Dr. Cohen commented her district updates included updates on the trip to Disney. Also, she was able to attend a performance of the Adams Family and how great it was. Jazz ensemble was also a wonderful event as John Clements had noted.

Dr. Cohen noted she presented to the Men's Club recently and it was a great event to share district updates. She also participated in the cable show in Upton and participated in Community Reading Day. Dr. Cohen also spent some time at Nipmuc and was able to interact with some of the students. She feels lots ideas are coming to her now that there are less meetings about the budget.

Finally, Dr. Cohen noted district is co-hosting a job fair at Milford High School where all schools in Blackstone Valley will be present on April 7th to highlights job openings in the district.

Student Support Services Update: Ms. Jennifer D'Angelo, Director of Student Support Services

Jennifer presented a Spring Update. Highlights included the following:

Parent Engagement Workshops

- Basic Rights Presentation
- Local State Agencies conducted info sessions
- Parent Training Workshops were conducted to include preventing challenging behaviors, life skills and coping strategies, using visuals, point systems and token boards and reinforcement and structure in the home.
- Other workshops to focus on the junior and seniors to engage with the State agencies.

MURSD Website was updated with the following:

- Student Support Services main page includes updated newsletter and upcoming workshops, early education program, community resources around behavior health, DESE links about special educations
- Link to Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) includes mission and upcoming community resources and activities. This will assist to help families find resources and family events.
- Early Educational Program page is a quick overview of the program and what the programing looks like as a daily schedule. Also, information of the lottery program for PreK.

DESE Tiered Focused Monitoring

- Areas reviewed during the process included licensure and professional development, parent/student/community engagement, facilities and classroom observation, oversight, time and learning and equal access.
- Phases of Tiered Focused monitoring include the self-assessment phase and the on-site verification phase
- Findings: ***"The Department is pleased to report that the district was found to be in compliance with all criteria reviewed; no corrective actions is required at this time."***
- Dr. Cohen commented this is a big accomplishment to receive this finding and kudos to everyone who made this happen.
- Jennifer recognized the administration team and provided tremendous support.

Flutie Foundation Playground Communication Board

- This was a competitive grant program
- MURSD was awarded the grant.
- Communication Boards helps show the students how to communicate on the playgrounds.
- These will be installed on the playgrounds in the district.
- She is reaching out to Flutie Foundation to have a dedication ceremony after install to unveil the boards.

What's Next:

- Scheduling for 2022/2023
- Transition nights for incoming 5th grade at Miscoe and for incoming 9th grade at Nipmuc
- Curriculum Development

School Committee members commented this is great information to see.

VI. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Policy Subcommittee next meeting will be on April 11th at 6 pm.

Budget Subcommittee members met with Upton's Finance Committee this past week. The Finance Committee meetings in both towns went well. It was noted Town Meetings are May 5th and May 6th.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

School Field Trip Approval-Kate Reardon, Nipmuc Regional High School

Kate Reardon presented a field trip opportunity. This trip will be to Peru during next year's April vacation. She is working with Explorica since they have been such a good company to work with through COVID. Committee has been presented with the itinerary. It was noted there is a discount through April for anyone who signs up to travel for next year.

Approval of Peru Field Trip in April 2023

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to approve the field trip to Peru in April 2023

VOTED: Unanimously approved

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

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Technology Department Update and Miscoe Student Update

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Kerry Laurence, seconded by Sean Nicholson to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a), exemption #2. to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (The Committee will not return to open session.)

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes

Erick Martin, yes
Vikki Ludwigson, yes
Kerry Laurence, yes
Phil DeZutter, yes
Dorothy Scally, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath