

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
FOWLER SCHOOL LIBRARY  
FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

Present: Dawn Capello, Justin Hemm (Absent), Jamal De Vita, Mary Mertsch, Bethlyn Houlihan  
Administrators: Robert J. Gerardi, Jr., Superintendent; Michelle Resendes, Business Advisor,  
Jennifer Gaudet, Assistant Superintendent, Charles Caragianes, MHS Principal, Donna Dankner,  
Green Meadow Principal

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Mertsch to accept the minutes of February 2, 2017. 2nd by Dr. De Vita. The motion passed 4-0.

Chairperson's Report

Ms. Capello reported on the recent town budget meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. The public can view the meeting at the following site.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WAVMproductions/videos>

Mary Mertsch presented the school committee budget request at the meeting with a level service of 6.25% increase. The school department received 4%. Now begins the work.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerardi reported that the central office is in the process of moving the central office to the front area of the Fowler School. The facilities director and the assistant facilities director are doing the renovations. Dr. Gerardi thanked the Fowler custodial staff for all their hard work in this endeavor.

Student Representative Report

Sophia Lappas and Olivia Palmer reported on sports updates. Basketball won against Nashoba last night. Cori Olivier got 1,000 points. There are many students bringing topics to these student representatives for discussion. Presently the talk is about scheduling for next year. Students asking the teachers what they are teaching next year. Students are talking about junior classes and the importance of AP classes.

Ms. Capello asked the representatives how they get information at the high school. Their answer was from their teachers and the guidance department.

Ms. Gaudet explained that during the scheduling process it is important to know that the student requests drive the schedule. In regards to who will be teaching what subject, there are a few

drivers. Teacher certification and trying to get the right balance for each classroom is required. My recommendation is to sign up for the classes you need for college and your interests.

International week coming is up. Foreign language week in March will have an international dinner on March 23. Each student gets assigned a menu, dresses in traditional clothing, and prepare a meal.

#### Citizens Comments

Larry Schultz, a Maynard resident, and a school substitute is in an organization called Maynard Neighbors and wanted to inform the school committee of this non-political organization. They are interested in getting students excited about science. Dr. Gerardi suggested he contact Jennifer Gaudet as a starting point for his program.

#### MHS Program of Studies

Mr. Caragianes presented offerings for the coming school year. Students in consultation with their parents select courses. The program of studies is on the high school website. We are not anticipating huge changes this year. There is an increase in WAVM. Science curriculum at MHS the teacher licenses are extremely important. Another area undergoing change is the art curriculum.

Ms. Gaudet said that at the high school we will continue our partnership with LaSalle College. We are also pursuing a partnership with Middlesex College for dual enrollment.

#### Review of Recess Protocol in GM Student Handbook

Ms. Capello: We have been hearing that lunch aide workers and teachers are holding recess from students. We will have a discussion tonight about this. Thank you all for coming from the Green Meadow School.

Dr. De Vita: I have a discipline concern. If a student didn't finish their work, their recess was affected.

Dr. Gerardi: When is it appropriate to withhold recess?

Ms. Mertsch: We have discussed this topic at the curriculum committee. The American Academy of Pediatrics says withholding recess is counterproductive.

Ms. Houlihan: We are trying to think of the whole child. As part of the visioning process, what I have been reading, with that view in mind, free play and active time need to be part of their day. In a recent article in the American Academy of Pediatrics, recess should not be withheld for punitive or academic reasons.

We are not trying to tell teachers that they are doing it wrong. How do we support teachers? What do they need? That's where I'm at.

Ms. Mertsch: When I was in Finland, I learned that students have 15 min break every 45 minutes.

Ms. Dankner: We believe in the importance of recess and play and to be creative and unstructured during their free time. We are a responsive classroom school. Teaching children

through logical consequences. The idea is not to take away breaks. Movement is incorporated into all their lessons. It is an essential piece of what we do. Because we are focused on the whole child, we teach safe choices.

Dr. De Vita: This makes sense and I agree. Still concerned of the recess being held for unfinished work. I don't think it should come at the cost of the recess.

Ms. Mertsch: It's better for the brain to get that break.

Parent: This is happening at Fowler also. Keeping recess away for discipline problems.

Ms. Dankner: Please come to me and let me know your concerns. We can address the issues.

Parent: I am hearing a lot that teachers are taking away recess from something that happened in the classroom.

Ms. Dankner: We have had discussions at recent staff meetings. We are also working with the school council for clarity around this issue.

Ms. Houlihan: Does that mean that recess won't be taken away for classroom behaviors? If a student is not behaving, they still need the opportunity to get outside.

Ms. Mertsch: What can the district do to support the students? Would like to hear from the teachers in regards to what are their supports? What are the challenges?

Ms. Smart: If a child is bothering everyone while it's work time in the classroom, the logical consequence would be to explain that you chose to play while it was work time.

Ms. Holly: A lot of times I have students who could not focus and did not complete the work and asked if I have to take time at recess. In a matter of 3 minutes with no distraction, and he was outside. I do not use recess as a punishment. We have a job to do and this is the time to do it.

Mr. Schultz: We have highly dedicated teachers, they would never punish a child. Their goal is to master the knowledge of a particular subject. If the child is not done with the work it's because he is not focused or distracted.

Ms. Gaudet: Teachers have lots of expertise in many areas. How can we have clarity on this policy? If there is a feeling that a consequence is given that is not logical, then there should be a conversation.

Ms. Houlihan: There are ways to balance the rigors.

Ms. Capello: We hear that recess monitors are keeping whole tables in for recess. What I'm hearing is we do not have a district policy. We can create a simple district policy.

Ms. Holly: We can struggle as a teacher to make a responsible decision in a moment. My hope is you will consider all the perspectives that go into the decision.

Parent: As a building substitute, teachers don't have a disciplinary plan to fall back on. Kids are disrespectful to the cafeteria monitors.

Ms. Gaudet: How do we address behaviors? We are looking at Dr. Ross Green's work who designed a program on collaborative and practice solutions. We will engage in a book study "Lost at School". The premise is clear expectations, clarity around expectations. We are beginning our process of advancing this.

Ms. Capello would like Dr. De Vita and Mr. Hemm to get together and do a district policy on recess.

Ms. Houlihan: I appreciate the conversation. Let's make sure we are on the same page and move forward.

FY18 Budget

Dr. Gerardi said we are in the process of trying to meet the directive from the town administrator. We are starting the process of analyzing everything. We need to cut \$400K.

Citizen's Comments

None

Member's Comments

Ms. Houlihan appreciated the conversation tonight and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting

A motion was made by Ms. Capello to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote at 8:40 p.m. without the intent to return to open session. Second by Dr. De Vita. The motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore  
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent