

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
FOWLER SCHOOL LIBRARY
NOVEMBER 10, 2016**

Present: Dawn Capello , Justin Hemm, Jamal De Vita, Mary Mertsch, Bethlyn Houlihan
Administrators: Robert J. Gerardi, Jr., Superintendent; Michelle Resendes, Business Manager,
Jennifer Gaudet, Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Capello called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Houlihan to accept the minutes of October 27, 2016 as written. 2nd by Dr. De Vita. Motion passed 5-0.

Chairperson's Report

Ms. Capello and Dr. Gerardi attended the recent MASC conference from November 2-4. The Committee met with the Board of Selectmen on November 1 with discussions on the Green Meadow Playground and the FY18 budget. Ms. Capello met with DPW Director, Aaron Miklosko, Leslie Knight and an in-house engineer to get an understanding of Phase I of the Green Meadow Playground.

A letter was drafted by Ms. Capello and read to the Committee requesting an Article be placed on the January, 2017 Special Town Meeting Warrant in the amount of \$250,000 to address the drainage and accessibility issues with the Green Meadow Playground.

A motion was made by Mr. Hemm to approve the letter as currently constituted. 2nd by Dr. De Vita. Motion passed 5-0.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerardi and Ms. Capello presented the Maynard Public Schools successes and challenges with the Foreign Exchange Program at the MASSC/MASS conference.

Dr. Gerardi read correspondence from (DVSN) Domestic Violence Services Network thanking the Maynard Music Director and Students for their performance at the candlelight vigil commemorating victims of domestic violence.

Student Representative Report

Janal Carr reported that the NHS induction on November 9. There were 23 inductees. The Senior Class is putting on powder puff football game in 2 weeks. Spirit week starts next Wednesday. Boys soccer lost the central mass final last night. Girls play tonight. Football goes to finals on Saturday at Doyle Field.

Citizens Comments

Mr. Estabrook. He has an 8th grader at MHS on the cross country team. The team went to league championships with 8 other schools. The Girls varsity placed 4th in the top 20. Boys team was also successful. The bus transportation this year was challenging. He requested that the Athletic budget be one of the priorities next year.

Ms. Capello stated that this was the first year for cross-country and we are so proud of all the work that was done.

Ms. Mertsch also wanted the public to know that the School Committee wants to keep cross country next year.

Technology Committee Update

Charles Gobron and Peter Martin, Technology Director updated the committee on the District Technology Plan.

1. Infrastructure Update

We are pleased that the infrastructure upgrades have been made at both Fowler and Green Meadow. We are indebted to the Town of Maynard for their support of this project. Although funding from the Digital Connections Partnership Grant was put on hold, we were able to obtain significant funding from the federal government's E-Rate program.

2. Adequate Technical Support and Staffing

Because of budget constraints the additional technology support person was not added to the FY'17 budget. This position is even more critical now as our updated infrastructure has allowed us to purchase new devices and replace obsolete ones.

3. Instructional Technology Specialists

We were not able to add this important position in the FY'17 budget and are submitting one position for consideration in the FY'18 budget. New technologies present us with tremendous possibilities for student engagement and improved student learning, and many teachers need job-embedded professional development to see the exciting ways curriculum delivery can be enhanced in the individual classrooms.

4. Five-Year Replacement Cycle

A thoughtful and measured ten-year plan was presented to the Maynard School Committee in October 2015. We were able to implement partially the first year of purchases quite successfully. We replaced outdated equipment but were limited in adding to the inventory as planned because of the lack of an additional technology position. Our goal is to come reasonably close to the five-year replacement cycle.

5. Sustained Professional Development

This recommendation is very much a work in progress. The Digital Learning Committee is reviewing data obtained from the national Bright Bytes survey as well as informal internal surveys to map out a sustained professional development program in technology. Present efforts are focused on the 2017-18 academic year.

6. Web-Site - a Rich Resource for Learning

We continue to make progress in this area. One accomplishment has been the ability to translate all material found on our district and school web pages into a variety of languages, including all languages spoken by present Maynard families. We urge educators to maintain a digital presence to improve communication and increase student learning.

7. Personal Learning Through Digital Tools

We have established a district-wide Twitter account and a district-wide Facebook account to improve communication, promote many of the excellent activities happening in the Maynard Public Schools, and expose both teachers and community members to thought-provoking articles related to education.

8. Teaching of Digital Citizenship K-12

Several Maynard educators have been involved in a subcommittee, outlining our Digital Citizenship initiatives for this year. We are concentrating on the Safety and Security Standards in the Computing and Society section of the Massachusetts Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards. We are in the process of booking a guest speaker from the Middlesex District Attorney's office to address parents and students on the Safety and Security standards. We have asked teachers to address the Safety and Security Standards this year with their classes, using age appropriate materials from Common Sense Media and other pertinent sources recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

9. Standing District Tech Committee (Digital Learning)

We are fortunate to have a number of dedicated individuals who meet monthly to help promote our technology efforts.

Discussion: Ms. Mertsch asked if the Technology Specialist would be phased in each year and if the Technician was an entry level position.

Ms. Capello asked if the Technology Specialist worked with teachers or students. (Teachers)

Ms. Houlihan asked if there was a priority between the Instructional Specialist and the Tech Support position. (There is only one Technology Support person for 3 schools).

Mr. Hemm also would like focus on the Web Site to continue better communication to families.

Fowler Fields

Jim Hines spoke on behalf of Steve Jones, who was coaching a soccer tournament. The group was there in the spring and again they have applied to CPC with an extension and they are seeking school committee support once the study is completed.

Barry Roche, President of Maynard Soccer and is the field coordinator. They rely heavily on the Fowler fields and ask for continued support from the School Committee. Peter Falzone, the Commissioner of Recreation also attended.

A motion was made by Ms. Houlihan to give support to the proposal for CPC funding to move forward once the study is completed. 2nd by Mr. Hemm.

School Improvement Plans

The School Principals work with the School Improvement Councils to develop their school Improvement Plans. The District Leadership Team has worked collaboratively to insure alignment between the School Improvement Plans and the District Goals.

Jennifer Gaudet gave an update on last year's goals. We came forward last year with a series of goals.

Strengthening curriculum and instruction. We spent significant time on the science curriculum at all levels and early release times. Worked with literacy and math coaching and the wellness curriculum.

All schools built a data culture using student work and observational data and continue to look at assessments. Data analysis for specific examples - scheduling and advisory model.

Cultural proficiency work. Went to trainings to look at how we look at our students.

Communication. facebook page and twitter and updated website. Meet the needs of all learners.

Revised the BBST program to look at at-risk students. EL committee has met to provide English learners what they need so all students have support in the classroom.

This year wanted to focus and target on the strategic plan. Initiatives this year were discussed.

Academic Goals

Green Meadow: Through continued collaboration with the Mass Audubon Society and alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards, we will develop a comprehensive overview of topics and expectations for each grade level which can be further supported by common lessons and resources to enhance understanding and foster inquiry based learning.

Fowler School: By June 2017, Fowler School will have a school-wide writing rubric, written in student friendly language to be used to measure student growth in writing. This will be one by developing the draft rubric by February. In March, teachers will begin piloting and norming use of the rubric with students.

Maynard High School: MHS has developed a School Wide Writing Goal to enhance Student growth and proficiency in written expression. Utilizing staff professional development time all teachers are working within their departments to ensure that school wide rubrics and individual departmental rubrics are in student friendly language are used with fidelity and are evaluation in the same manner by all staff members. Staff training has been completed within departments to calibrate grading techniques. Rubric reviews are ongoing and will be completed by March 1.

School Council Goals

Green Meadow: With the support of the math coach as well as grade level collaborations, we will align instructional practices and pacing as well as identify common assessments and expectations to enhance student development of mathematical skills, content knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Fowler School: Family and Community engagement; needs assessment via survey. This data will inform our next steps to improve the home and school partnership.

High School: MHS is discussing and examining the scheduling implications related to the 8th grade moving to the Fowler School, is exploring a later start time at the high school, is interested in expanding elective offerings at the high school and wishes to ensure that two World Language offerings in French and Spanish remain viable from the introductory through the AP levels within the curriculum.

Social Emotional Learning Goals

Green Meadow: Combining the resources and strategies of Responsive Classroom and Social Thinking, we will specify common vocabulary and expectations to reinforce and further enhance the school's core values of being kind, safe and learners.

Fowler School: Given training and support in Growth Mindset the Fowler School community will utilize the concepts to develop social and emotional learning as evidenced by comparing student survey information from December 2016 and May 2017.

Maynard High School: MHS students and staff have read selections and worked to implement a Growth Mindset in the school environment. Students did so in advisory groups in the spring of 2016 and staff trainings occurred last spring, at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year and at our most recent professional development day on November 8.

In response to the MHS NEASC Evaluation Report issued in the fall of 2012, Advisory meetings were initiated at MHS and have evolved into more productive models each school with student and staff surveying being done to inform each refinement. Our students now meet in Advisory Groups once per month and the groups are organized around student and staff interest including topics such as Yoga, Sewing, Self-Defense, singing, and construction/building to name a few. Academic research indicates that when students have the opportunity to meet additional peers and adults in environments such as our advisory groups that positive new social networks are formed and students tend to show improved school performance across a variety of metrics.

Central Office Relocation

Dr. Gerardi presented the two options for the Central Office relocation. Option 1 location is in the student services area on the first floor and Option 2 location is on the second floor in the Technology/Home Economics areas. There will be more data at the December 1 meeting.

Ms. Mertsch while looking at the drawings and looking at the budget, wants to look at the administrative costs and the size of our administrative offices from last fiscal year to this. Just want to make sure that the central office does not take more space than is needed.

School Committee Priorities

Ms Mertsch was inspired by schools to come up with a couple of priorities. A lot falls under the social emotional growth umbrella topic.

Mr. Hemm testing and accountability culture right now. He agrees with Ms. Mertsch. Easy to task on nuts and bolts. If we could find natural ways to be kids and self select some activities.

Ms. Houlihan. When the first NCLB came out classrooms were very structured. So much was expected of students. We need to self-correct to balance it out again. The growth mindset and being totally onboard with trying to see what we can do especially with the teachers. What are teachers excited about learning. What does that look like? Focus on all students to be challenged to grow and be engaged. Growth mindset includes all kids.

Dr. De Vita. My priority. Starts with financial resources. These are all great ideas. Mine is more concrete from the standpoint of how can we streamline the process to make it more efficient. Having better communication with Board of Selectmen, so things don't sneak up on us. It's the foundation for everything we want to do. How do we keep staff (higher wages). How can we be get to the point that here are the things we would like to add - not just take away.

Ms. Mertsch. Concern about turnover at the high school. Teacher salaries. Are they competitive? Don't want to cut teachers. Tighten up the budget. The town has been generous.

Ms. Capello – Budget aside. Have to fund. Understand more about the teachers, kids, building needs. Focus on the joy of learning and teaching. Make some progress for kids and teachers. Lot of kids and teacher are happy. Kids – how much anxiety at all grade levels? There is so much anxiety – joy of learning joy of teaching. Meet the needs of all learners. Still focused on zone time and how do we measure that's happening. How can we have differentiated instruction.

Ms. Mertsch - Love when they talked about the zones. Carol and Jennifer.

Ms. Houlihan. Showing up at the college level also. We need to recognizing anxiety. Higher and higher levels of anxiety.

Mr. Hemm – Epidemic right now. Can't have kids bored in classroom. Differentiated instruction.

Ms. Houlihan – Toolbox looks different every year. Hear more about these goals and monitor.

Ms Gaudet - we did a lot of thinking last year. Had many talks with leadership team and instructional leadership team.

Provide teachers their own teacher development. Need time to talk about student work. Provide collaboration.

Ms. Mertsch – talked about student experience. Talk about teacher.

Budget

Charts that were discussed: FY16 Total Expenditures; Percent Expended by Responsibility Center. Also, the detailed line item spreadsheet. The fixed increase of 4.9% has gone up to 6.4%.

Citizens Comments

A 2nd grade parent had a daughter struggling with disruptive behavior. No guidance counselor at Green Meadow. Feels the class size should be looked at next year.

Mr. Hemm – Every year we agonize over what we have to cut. These are very difficult decisions. We have a good handle on the budget. We don't have enough to spend.

Dr. Gerardi - Love the visionary work we have done. Innovative work is low cost to no cost. Even in good times, there are priority discussions. We are improving professional development for teachers. Nothing is perfect. Last year we did an in depth study in class size. Doing the best with what we have.

Ms. Mertsch - I hear you as a parent. We all want our kids to love school.

Ms. Capello - one of the focuses is classroom management. Hoping we can give teachers what they need. Diverse classrooms are creating challenges.

A parent would like us to make people aware of agenda items in advance. For example, after all the budget is finalized, this is what happened. We need more communication.

Maybe have an open house agenda (workshop) for people to let the committee know their concerns around budget discussions. A December meeting is a possibility.

A motion was made by Mr. Hemm to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote at 9:55 p.m. without the intent to return to open session. Second by Dr. De Vita. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent