

**MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
FOWLER SCHOOL LIBRARY
SEPTEMBER 29, 2016**

Present: Dawn Capello, Justin Hemm (Absent), Jamal De Vita (Absent), Mary Mertsch, Bethlyn Houlihan

Administrators: Robert J. Gerardi, Jr., Superintendent; Peter DiCicco, Business Advisor, Jennifer Gaudet, Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Capello called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Houlihan to accept the minutes of June 23, 2016 as written. 2nd by Ms. Mertsch. Motion passed 3-0.

A motion was made by Ms. Houlihan to accept the minutes of June 30, 2016 and August 25, 2016 as written. 2nd by Ms. Mertsch. Motion passed 3-0.

Chairman's Report

Ms. Capello reported that she and Dr. Gerardi recently met with BOS Chairman Chris DeSilva and Town Administrator Kevin Sweet.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerardi introduced the Central Office new Assistant Business Manager, Michelle Resendes. Her previous experience was with Minuteman Regional Technical High School and Hudson Public Schools. We are excited to have her.

Dr. Gerardi thanked Jennifer Gaudet, Principal Caragianes and Guidance Counselors Lisa MacLean, Renee Muise and Dana MacPhee for all their work on the High School schedule.

Dr. Gerardi shared research articles on homework in the elementary grades. There was discussion on doing a parent survey on homework and trying a no homework pilot at our elementary levels of PK-5.

Student Representative Report

Janal Carr reported that this is her third year as student representative and there are two alternates this year. Olivia Palmer and Sophia Lappas. She reported that there is a different way of doing Advisory's this year at the High School. 8th grade class elections have been done. The school is

planning their powder puff football game for November and the cross country team has already won two meets. Back-to-school night was Tuesday and the Student Government and National Honor Society students were there to help parents find their student's classes.

Citizen's Comments

Maynard Music Association President handed out the MHS Music Calendar for the year.

Central Office/8th Grade Relocation

Dr. Gerardi reported on the history of the space needs of the central office. The condition of the building had deteriorated to the point where the central office had to move out. The School Committee investigated temporary solutions for relocating the central office including portable classrooms, relocating in the Fowler band room, and relocation in the Fowler 5th grade wing. Ultimately the decision was to make the 5th grade wing a central office temporary solution.

History of 8th grade parental concerns and the space needs at MHS:

The MSBA required the relocation of the 8th grade to MHS as part of the justification for funding a small high school. There was considerable parental concern that the 8th graders were too young to be at the High School. This concern has been relayed by parents each year since the new high school has been opened.

The MSBA approved building a new high school for a student population of 410 students. The following are the student enrollments between the first year of the new MHS and now:

2013-14 = 427 students.

2014-15 = 445 students

2015-16 = 485students

2016-17 = 516 students to date (October 1st will be the official census date used)

Based on the current 12th grade and 7th grade enrollments Principal Caragianes has predicted that the student population will be approximately 550 students next year.

Rational for Moving 8th grade back to Fowler and finding a more permanent location for central office.

For the last two years Principal Caragianes has communicated to these student enrollment trends and his concerns that the new MHS is not equipped for the growing student population. Before the school opened the construction committee had to add 50 extra lockers to accommodate the 17 students above the MSBA estimate. By next year they will need to add another 50 lockers at an additional expense. Principal Caragianes has identified that even if we hired additional teachers at the high school to reduce class size or add programs, there are periods of the day where there would be no classrooms available.

Timelines:

The vote of School Committee approval and commitment to relocate the central office, the 8th grade team, and the 5th grade team will need to be made quickly because of the following reasons:

1. There will be central office relocation costs that may include building a small corridor wall, setting up communications, and moving expenses as was the case in moving to the 5th grade wing. The costs for the 5th grade wing move was approximately \$50,000. This needs to be budgeted for as the school committee prepares the FY18 budget.
2. There will be movers costs to move the 5th grade and 8th grade teacher supplies and materials.
3. The scheduling of the Fowler and MHS starts in January and having 8th grade relocation will impact the staffing and scheduling in both buildings.
4. We will need to work out how our summer programs will be impacted by the simultaneous moves of the central office, 5th grade team and 8th grade team.

This is not insurmountable but it just suggests that for planning, budgeting, and implementation, the sooner the decisions and commitments are made, the smoother the transitions will be.

Questions

Ms. Mertsch asked how much the first move was from Coolidge and the cost of the phone and new security system.

Dr. Gerardi felt that it is ideal to be in a school. We also need a secure location.

Ms. Houlihan asked about the band area. (High school space limited, what is the rationale? Try to think of every possible space. Wanted to show we were looking at every available space. Right now the High School is the least expensive location).

Ms. Capello said we are looking at the impact of all these spaces at the schools and these are early discussions.

Linda Thayer – How many people are at the central office? (11 people.) 8th grade has 6 classrooms.

Anthony Midey – The High School has critical class space. Any space at the High School should go off the table. As a band parent, I value the space and don't want to eliminate the space. At fowler where are the teachers in the front office suite area going to go?

What about town hall? (Bob. We looked at the town hall. Not enough space.) Portable classrooms. Mr. Midey felt that this is not the way to go. As a member of the building committee, the design was built as the 8th grade to be part of the high school. Part of the discussion in getting the new high school was the grade configurations.

Chuck Caragianes - grades 9-12 with class sizes of 110. Current 7th grade is 120. Grade 12 is 83. We have 3 vacant lockers now. We added 100 lockers when we opened the doors. Lunches are crowded but manageable. We have several periods where every space in the building is in use. We cannot physically add any classes. We can reasonably carry 475 students.

Melissa Egan – Do all members need to be in the same space? (makes more sense to keep us together).

Ms. Capello - Can someone tell me what it means to have the 8th grade band at Fowler vs. the high school? (It means the 8th grade has an extra year of instruction with a 6,7,8 grade band. Grades 7-8 go to junior districts and grades 9-12 go to senior districts. The 8-12 experience gives them mentors also).

Fiona Nauseda – What is the cost to build a wing? (Bob \$1M. and no reimbursable money for a wing).

Stephanie Lee – Concern over the Fowler offices. Concern about checking in at the front Fowler office and checking out.

Ann Stachowitz – Did you explore ArtSpace? (Mary heard it is filled and has a wait list).

Lydia Clancy – What is the percentage of kids who choice in? Stop allowing choice in.

Ms. Flood - How will the chrome books be handled? (Ms. Gaudet – completely renovated the infrastructure. We have talked about 8th graders having chrome books here at Fowler. That would happen next school year). Apartments coming in town soon. What about the number of new students?

Stephanie Gavin – What will be the cost of the removal of the wall in 5th grade wing. Fowler class size. If we bring back the 8th grade, what is the effect on band? Band at Fowler is taught separately. We don't want to lose the band room.

The current 7th grade already effected once. We don't want to disrupt the educational program. Make sure teachers have good space and time to set up their rooms and not disrupt the students.

Glenn Wilson – Consider looking at the guidance department at the high school and the area connected to the principal.

Steve Coleman – This has to happen. We have made alot of progress. When they come back think of it as a 7th and 8th jr. high.

Chuck Caragianes - It hasn't been said how good the 8th grade teachers are and how they do a phenomenal job. I want to see the 8th grade team land in a great space. This is a problem, but it is a good problem. I appreciate the school committee looking at the issue.

Linda Thayer - How many students left 8th grade for another school? (6-8).

Ms. Mertsch - We appreciate so many people who came out tonight. With our request to move forward, I would like to take off the band room as an option. The Arts are very important.

Ms. Capello - My gut reaction is not to take the band room. My least favorite of the recommendations is band room.

Ms. Mertsch - Explore the guidance area at the HS.

Ms. Houlihan - With the understanding that this is an exploration. Look at other viable options.

Dr. Gerardi – The architect will do a feasibility study.

A motion was made by Ms. Mertsch to continue with the Architect and look at what are the options and expand all the options rather than narrow them down. 2nd by Ms. Capello. Motion passed 3-0.

Finland Education and Student Leadership Travel

Ms. Mertsch presented information from the Global Student Leadership Summit Program she attended over the summer.

She went in June to Finland and the Netherlands with 53 other educators, with the opportunity to explore the Finnish education system through workshops led by the Finnish Board of Ed and visiting Finnish Schools.

- Pay is low but they are respected.
- Helsinki has Immense trust in teachers. 90% trust schools.
- Less emphasis in testing. All have a masters degree that takes 7 ½ yrs.
- Less instructional time more play time in lower grades.
- No fancy schools.
- Higher level of satisfaction among teachers.
- Less diversity in terms of culture and background.
- Unions are different.
- Average instructional time is 3 hrs a day for students up to grade 7.

We also went to the Global Summit in the Hague, with 1300 students from around the world for a Summit on Human Rights.

Dr. Gerardi thanked Ms. Mertsch for going and doing the research. He has read about Finland's education and it is amazing to hear an you have the first hand knowledge.

Ms. Capello asked about standardized testing? (Not a regular part of every year testing. Their comprehensive schools go to 9th grade. Then they go onto academic or vocational).

School Committee Priorities

The School Committee spend some time discussing their priorities and expectations for this year.

Dawn – had a good year last with outreach. Book talks, mission statement, constituencies together. Social emotional component. Need more.

Ms. Mertsch - what are the things we know are important for kids. We should relook at class size. Important for teachers to know kids. Look at long term differences at how boys and girls perform.

Ms. Houlihan - We need to see at ways to look at social emotional learning aspects. At the MASC conference, it was said that boys that had a mentor do better in school.

Last year themes and topics last now it is interest based activity. Can bond and have conversations with their teachers at MHS. It was staff generated.

Dawn – engagement surveys around staff and parents.

More from curriculum sub-committee, i.e., where are you going? Cost impact of class sizes, and adding programs.

Ms. Houlihan - more professional conversations. Revisit. Look at some of the focus of what is has been going on in the curriculum committee.

For the next meeting. It's not just what the school committee wants, but pull in what the leadership team wants to focus on.

Ms. Gaudet - In the November/December timeframe, send a survey to staff and parents around a homework pilot in Grades PK-5.

Ms. Houlihan - Cultural competence. Long term sense of well being.

Curriculum Update

Jennifer advised that there are several committees in the district this year. There is professional development, English language committee, instructional leadership, curriculum committee, teacher leader, mentoring safety, digital learning.

There was discussion on school/community strategic initiatives.

Budget Update

In addition to structural deficits, there are other likely increases that need to be considered like the impacts of Collective bargaining with three unions this year as well as the potential relocations. This will be a complicated budget this year.

The three principals will bring their school improvement councils to the 12/01 meeting to discuss the principals sections of our 2nd Annual Budget Proposal Document. This practice will allow the School Committee to hear perspectives from each school as we go through the prioritizing process this year.

Citizen's Comments

Have you looked at the empty store fronts downtown? Is the 4th grade going back to Green Meadow?

Members Questions/Comments

None

A motion was made by Ms. Mertsch to adjourn the meeting by roll call vote at 9:49 p.m. without the intent to return to open session. Second by Ms. Capello. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Moore

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools