

**School Committee Meeting
September 8, 2016
Frederick Hartnett Middle School**

The Blackstone Millville Regional District School Committee met in the library of the Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Erin P. Vinacco, Chairperson
Wendy L. Greenstein, Vice Chairperson
Jane C. Reggio, Treasurer
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary
William F. Chaplin Jr., Member
Jo-Anne Watson, Member
Steven J. Tringali, Member

Mrs. Jarret was absent from the meeting.

Also in attendance were Superintendent of Schools, Allen W. Himmelberger and Assistant Superintendent of Schools, David Thomson, Ed.D.

Report of Student Representatives

Brittany Dwyer – spoke on the freshman orientation on August 29th which was run by the Student Council. It was very successful and took on the start strong initiative.

Jack Keefe – spoke on the new phone policy at the High School. Phone use is allowed in the hallways and study classes.

Family Fun Day will be held on Sept. 11th for marching band from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. The cost will be \$5.00 per person.

Fall sports just kicked off.

They have been reviewing their summer reading in class.

Mrs. Vinacco wants to be sure that the Executive Session minutes are done. She asked Mrs. Larkin for the Executive Session Minutes for the August 11th meeting. They were not sent to the Committee members but Mrs. Larkin has them in her possession.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Reggio, seconded by Mrs. Greenstein and unanimously voted to approve the Warrants and Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting of August 11th.

5th Grade Staffing

Mrs. Vinacco stated that the School Committee met on August 11th to discuss the staffing for the 5th grade classroom in Millville. She thought they had a set plan in place even without an approved budget. This fact made it very difficult to plan. At that time they did not have 30 students enrolled in the 5th grade class but had 28. When they met they thought they had a plan put in place which was if in fact there were 30 enrolled

students there would be extra support in the room splitting the room in two sections until the end of the month when they had definite enrollment numbers. If at that time there were 30 in the class they would get a certified teacher in the room at the end of the month. She then asked the Superintendent to give information on what actually happened on the first day of school.

Mr. Chaplin didn't think we would split in two classes but give support in the classroom if there were 30 students enrolled.

Mrs. Reggio stated that at the June 23rd meeting support was promised in the classroom for 28 students. At the meeting of August 11th Mrs. Reggio made a motion to split the classroom in two and use a permanent substitute who had been used in the classroom the previous year. If the numbers went to 30 we would find the finances to hire a certified teacher. Numbers don't steady out until the end of September. If on September 22nd there were 30 students in the room they would hire someone more permanent. Until then they would split the classroom in two and use a permanent sub as a teacher.

She stated that this is where we left it.

Mrs. Vinacco stated that it was never communicated to them that their plan was not put in place. They wanted to give them time to get the enrollment numbers and give them two sections already so that they would not have to move student's months into school.

Mrs. Watson and Mr. Tringali stated that when and if there were 30 they would consider it. They agreed there would be additional help in the interim.

Mrs. Larkin stated that in the Executive Session minutes they never made a motion because they would review it in September.

Superintendent Himmelberger said thank you everyone for being here tonight. He attempted to clarify one issue. Social media stated that the large class size was done in some way as retribution for a budget that couldn't be supported by Millville. This is not true. They do what is best for students. The Committee made the right decision at the time. They didn't know if 6 more would move out or move in. No one here wants to put any students at risk. We do what is right for students and children and spend a lot of time getting it right. Given where they were with the budget the bottom line is they did not have a budget until September 1st. They were unable to purchase all of the materials that they need to operate. The Committee made the right decision to see where they ended up. It is not perfect which is why he wanted to discuss it now and not on September 22nd.

The question remains, If we want to support an additional teacher where does the money come from? The Superintendent stated that they will reduce in the area of building substitutes and in maintenance if they have to. If there is a teacher who could make this work it is Mrs. Faulkner with the help of Mrs. Laskowski, Mrs. Stearman and Mrs. Landry. They started the year very well in that classroom. The students are amazing. In the ideal world they would have had less students and this is where we are now. It is a challenge because a class of 30 works but is not optimum. They are looking at the options and then they will proceed accordingly. There are not a lot of

areas to find the money this year. They would look to substitutes and building maintenance.

Mrs. Reggio disagrees with Mrs. Larkin's notes. She believes that they said they would split the classroom and get a sub in there as a second teacher. She would like to see the notes. Also that was then and this is now and the people involved in this discussion need to know how to move this forward. The students that excel get left behind and it is happening in this classroom. The adjoining classrooms are no longer adjoining.

Mrs. Larkin stated that based on her notes from the Executive Session meeting they made the decision not to vote on it at that meeting.

Mrs. Reggio thinks that those that excel get pushed in the corner. Where do we go from here.

Mrs. Faulkner prepared all summer long for this.

Mrs. Faulkner and Dr. Haughey spoke. She thinks that all of their children are delightful. It's crowded and hot and she has gotten to all of them. It is not so hard on them. They roll with it. She doesn't know how she would split them. She has had someone in the classroom at all times but not the same person. She would like to have the adjoining room. Parents want to volunteer but she could use them if they were in adjoining rooms. She sees value in both splitting them or keeping them together.

Superintendent Himmelberger stated that they can move her to adjoining rooms.

Mrs. Vinacco is worried about disrupting classrooms.

Mrs. Faulkner feels kids are resilient. Sometimes the parents are the ones who are not resilient. The students have been delightful, easy going and adapting better than we do.

Dr. Haughey knows that the adults want the best for students. They have an alternate schedule ready to roll if need be. He recommends that they split the classroom into two classes. Teaching at this level is challenging. It's a lot for Mrs. Faulkner to do and to do it right and well. It provides skill development and the needs of students being met. They said 30 and now they are at 30 and he feels they should split the room. If she could have the adjoining room it would be much better to keep the door open and go back and forth. She feels confident in her ELA skills.

The Superintendent stated that they have plans to have the two classrooms adjoining and make the move and do it all at once.

Currently all students move around together. For most of the day there are 30 students and there are always 2 people in the classroom.

Mrs. Greenstein wants there to be hands in that room. She apologizes if there wasn't enough support in the classroom. If there were 30 in the class on opening day there needed to be a lot of support in that room. They thought they had the man power in the room on August 11th.

Mrs. Reggio feels they should split the classroom. How do we do that best? The students deserve a certified teacher. What is the timeline for all of this?

Mrs. Greenstein asked where is the money going to come from? She worries about that.

Superintendent Himmelberger stated that there is more flexibility in Sept. Historically they have used a substantial amount of money to cover subs. They have reduced this with permanent building subs. He feels they will use less dollars in the sub line. Where they can defer maintenance of the buildings is what they will do.

Mrs. Reggio wants to know if there is savings in the new staff hired. Superintendent Himmelberger said yes. You don't fill many of the positions in the same level as the people who left.

Mrs. Greenstein is concerned about the subs in the building but she is not concerned about the custodial.

Mrs. Vinacco feels they need to show where the money came from. She wants an update and to know where they stand with all of the items that they were going to purchase.

Superintendent Himmelberger said they saved about 300,000 in the change in staff. The dollars are continuing to shift throughout the school budget. It doesn't give us a lot of wiggle room as we go through the year. We cannot forecast most of it.

Dr. Thomson stated that the Towns need to understand there are many things that were cut and will not be brought back quickly. We need to deal with this.

They can post for a teacher now and do not need to wait pending funding.

They need to have someone in the room on a regular basis. They need two consistent people in the classroom.

Dr. Haughey wants to have the person in place in 2 weeks.

They want it posted right away and we will find the funding.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Chaplin, seconded by Mrs. Reggio and unanimously voted to hire a teacher for the 5th grade MES classroom.

Charter School Cap-

Mr. Chaplin asks everyone to vote no on Question 2 on the November ballot. This is a resolution against lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools.

The following was read to the School Committee by Mr. Chaplin:



BLACKSTONE-MILLVILLE REGIONAL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OFFICE
175 LINCOLN STREET
BLACKSTONE, MA 01504
(508) 876-0137 PHONE #
(508) 883-9892 FAX LINE

**Resolution Against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools
(We urge you to Vote No on Question 2 on the November Ballot)**

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students of income, ability, need or English language proficiency are foundational to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, all of our students deserve high quality public schools that teach the whole child, providing enrichment and addressing social and emotional needs in addition to core academic subjects; and

WHEREAS, local accountability for our public schools is necessary to ensure that schools are responsive to the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Public school districts across the state are losing more than \$408 million this year alone - a loss of funds in part due to a declining reimbursement, that is undermining the ability of districts to provide all students with the educational services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, Governor Baker's proposed reform charter reimbursement neither fully funds reimbursement nor equitably treats sending districts; and

WHEREAS, Commonwealth charter schools are often approved over the objections of the majority of community residents and their elected officials and are not accountable to local elected officials once they are approved; and

WHEREAS, Commonwealth charter schools often fail to serve the same proportion of special needs students, low income students and English language learners as the districts from which they receive students and often use high suspension rates to drive out students they don't want to serve; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth charter school system is creating separate and unequal opportunities for success; and

WHEREAS, lifting the cap on charter schools would greatly worsen the problems listed above and lead to a costly and divisive two track school system;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Blackstone Millville Regional School Committee opposes lifting the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

BMRSD Chairperson of the School Committee

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Chaplin, seconded by Mr. Tringali and unanimously voted to oppose lifting the cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools.

Sub Committees Review

Policy and procedures – will we use the \$10,000 to have a company come in and review our policies with us over 3 years or will we do it ourselves. We can pay for them to post our policy and if it changes they will let us know about it and then we can make the necessary changes. We have wanted to update our policies for a long time. We do not know where we stand on the budget so it is hard to consider spending the money on it.

Mrs. Reggio doesn't think we need to spend the money and can do it ourselves. We need to figure out the ones we don't have and go from there. She is willing to do this. Mrs. Greenstein is concerned about the timeline on it.

Regional Agreement – Mr. Chaplin wants to get data and bring it here and decide whether they want to move forward. He is willing to do this. This is not a committee but he will handle it. It would become a committee if we want to move forward with it.

Mrs. Reggio feels that it is important. She feels Millville will not grow and continue to have smaller numbers and if this is the case we need to look at solutions and get more voices involved.

Mr. Chaplin feels we spent 3 years on this and doesn't know how much more they can do with it.

Mrs. Greenstein feels there were other ideas on this that may be helpful.

If we had changed the Regional Agreement the 5th grade classroom would have had approximately 23 students in it.

Negotiations

Mrs. Reggio will take it on as well as Mr. Tringali. The alternate will be Mrs. Vinacco. They want to start them in October.

Mrs. Larkin will take on Regional Agreement as well.

School Safety –

Mr. Tringali will take it on.

Facilities –

Mrs. Greenstein will move forward on this but would like someone to take it on with her. Mrs. Watson will take this on.

Legislative updates-

Mr. Chaplin will take it on.

Evaluations –

Mrs. Greenstein will continue to take it on.

They will have an update of these Committees on the last meeting of each month.

Communications and Procedures all will be on the Committee – Mr. Chaplin would rather not be on it.

Superintendents Evaluation

It was just sent out this morning. They will review it and put it on the Agenda of Sept. 22nd.

Mr. Chaplin stated that he wants it all individualized. The responses are like a jig saw.

He feels moving forward that all people need to put a comment when they give a response.

If you give needs improvement you need to give a reason why.

The Superintendent has the ability to ask what needs improvement means to someone.

Mr. Chaplin wants them to be transparent.

Where there is a needs improvement the Superintendent stated that he would ask that person the reason why and discuss it with them.

They will wrap it up on September 22nd.

Mr. Cameron – Field Trips

Mr. Cameron is looking for a 6th grade Nature's Classroom on October 2nd through October 4th. They will attend for 3 days and 2 nights. They will leave on Sunday afternoon, October 2nd from the Middle School and return on Tuesday, October 4th. Each student saves about \$18.00 for arriving on a Sunday afternoon. The cost is \$175 which includes all meals, snacks, room/board. They will have available over 2K in scholarship money for those families who need assistance. Families can defer a portion of the payment to after their son/daughter returns from the trip. There will be a family information night on Tuesday, September 20th.

The 8th grade trip to Washington, DC will be from June 7th to June 10th. They will go for 4 days, 3 nights leaving on Wednesday, June 7th after school and returning on Saturday, June 10th for a total cost of \$550. This trip includes all meals, snacks, room/board and a dinner cruise. The cost is slightly higher since they will be getting a hotel closer to DC so to avoid spending time in traffic on buses when leaving and coming back from the hotel. They have available over 3K in scholarship money for those families who need assistance. Family informational night will be scheduled for October.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Greenstein, seconded by Mrs. Reggio and unanimously voted to approve both the 6th grade Nature's Classroom trip from October 2nd through October 4th and the 8th grade Washington DC trip from June 7th through June 10th.

Superintendent Himmelberger stated that back to school was exciting and smooth at the same time. There was a great breakfast on the Orientation Day. We have had a great

transition and turnover in our personnel. It is great to see that we have increased student numbers. We have a lot of good things happening.

We were given a strong write up in the Worcester Magazine with a B+ rating. That was gratifying to see and validates the work we are doing. He looks forward to a productive school year.

Mrs. Vinacco wants to know where we stood on September 1st. How much we saved and have and where we cut and what we cut and could not get due to added budget cuts. We were not able to make certain purchases. When will we be able to make these purchases?

Mrs. Reggio asked if there were issues in cutting 2 buses. The Superintendent feels this was the smoothest in terms of transportation. Elaine Tellstone worked very well with Wen Cobb on this.

Julie Guertin – Blackstone parent spoke. She was distressed to hear the French program was cut at the high school. She feels they need more of a choice than Spanish. There is no French offered in the 9th grade.

The Superintendent stated we do still have some French but due to staffing and budgeting some had to be cut.

They had a teacher resign and they used this for the LMC director.

Mrs. Guertin wonders if the 9th grade next year will be offered French.

They hope that they can assess what they need next year earlier on.

Dr. Thomson states that some classes do not run due to a small high school with limited resources.

Mrs. Vinacco never heard anything on this before.

They offer Spanish and only some French.

Mrs. Vinacco asked if they have ever talked about it as a Committee.

Mr. Himmelberger will get the breakdown from Mr. Dudek.

We are sharing Lacrosse from Hopedale and we are eliminating French. Mrs. Vinacco does not like this idea.

Mrs. Guertin said that they register for classes early on but don't get their schedule until August.

It would work better if they could get their schedule in June.

Dr. Thomson said this usually happens in July but due to a state data issue it did not happen until August.

Mrs. Vinacco feels that mandatory classes should be available to all students.

She feels we will lose students for this.

Many towns only offer Spanish but they offer it all the way through.

Mrs. Vinacco wants to see how many students requested French as well.

Mr. Chaplin never heard that if 60 students signed up for French that they would cut it.

Mrs. Greenstein appreciates her coming out and sharing her concerns.

Mrs. Vinacco feels this is serious and that we need choices to offer our students.

We are not phasing out French with this incoming freshman class. They can still take it in 10th grade if it is offered.

Report of the Assistant Superintendent

Due to the budget and our delayed purchasing they do not have all items for the 6th grade math.

There are no additional Chrome book carts. They did order 245 for 9th and 10th graders.

PD - October 8th first P.D. day – next step in the curriculum mapping process.

PD November 8th – regional conference based on social emotional skills and building positive and safe climates for students.

Stipends for Data Team were set aside.

Stars is rolling out – 3,4,5, and 9 in Math and ELA. Did upgrade 6, 7, and 8 with Stars 360.

There was a Title 1 funding 20% decrease and 15% decrease in Title 2A-

School Committee Forum

Wendy Greenstein is wondering if our students in Blackstone can play on the basketball court on the AFM side. As a taxpayer she feels that the Blackstone students should be able to play on it.

She questions the amount of paperwork that comes home. She wants to see that throughout the District so that if there are no changes in the paperwork you should not have to complete everything. This is how it is done at the FWHMS.

Proof of residency - She wants people to be forced to provide proof of residency in the new school year packets.

She sees RI plates lining up at the bus stops.

Mrs. Reggio wants to update everything on the portal system.

Dr. Thomson found that people have family in RI and MA and they still have a residence in MA. It may be difficult to have proof of residency checked on all students since we only have one clerical person in each building.

Mrs. Watson has not had to show proof since her child started in Kindergarten. She feels that it may be a good idea to prove residency.

Mrs. Vinacco feels that it should be done every time they move or change schools.

She wants a school improvement plan for the Complex.

Mr. Tringaii wants to see the students come out again to our meetings. He wants to give credit to those achieving students. We should highlight the band, sports teams and clubs. We need to constantly show off what we do well.

Millville Centennial Day- Mrs. Larkin has put together a photo booth on behalf of the school committee.

They asked NHS students to help out on that day which is 9:00 to 4:30 on Saturday.

Mrs. Watson – Thanks Mr. Cameron for the first few days of school for 6th graders. He had a huge assembly and the students were very excited.

Dr. Thomson stated that when there is a question the parents should go to administrators to get the answers. These discussions on social media are counter productive because they are many times not fact.

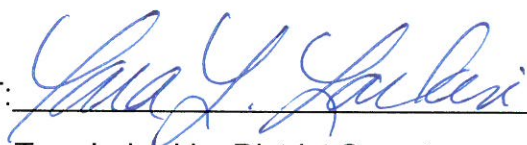
Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Greenstein, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to adjourn the school committee meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary