

**School Committee Meeting  
December 11, 2014  
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:

William F. Chaplin Jr., Chairman  
Steven J. Tringali, Vice Chairman  
Wendy L. Greenstein, Treasurer  
Erin P. Vinacco, District Secretary  
Diane C. Robin, Member  
Brian T. Faulkner, Member  
Georgette A. Jarret, Member  
Jane C. Reggio, Member

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

There were no items for the first **Public Forum**.

**Student Representatives**

The student representatives spoke on the NHS Hats and Mittens Drive and the upcoming NHS field trip where they will bond over leadership. The fall Marching Band season has ended. Winter Ensemble, Guard, Woodwind and Brass Choirs have begun. The girl's basketball team will be playing a home game this evening.

**Chairman Update**

Chairman Chaplin stated that Regional Transportation has not been funded at 90% that it was supposed to be. The governor used 9C cuts after elections and notified Towns that he would make cuts to the \$18 million to additional regional transportation moneys. As it stands now the money is being cut.

They do not know what will happen with a lot of advocacy from Mass. Assoc. of Regional Schools going on right now. When the new governor comes in they do not know what he will do.

There is currently a survey for the Regional Agreement and the Budget. They will both be placed on the website for a month and an article will be placed in the Blackstone Enlightener. The surveys are both geared to different audiences. Once it goes live they will spread the word via social media.

The Committee decided to schedule the extra budget meetings at night prior to the regular School Committee Meetings.

The Committee will be looking into getting re-trained from MASC on how to complete the Superintendent Evaluation. They would like to have MCAS data available to them when they complete the evaluation.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Faulkner, seconded by Mrs. Greenstein (Mrs. Reggio – abstain, 7 in favor) to move the Evaluation of the Superintendent from August 15 to October 15 to give them more accountability data to use.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Robin, seconded by Mrs. Reggio with discussion requested by Mr. Tringali on Consent Agenda A.

Mr. Tringali would like to see more cohesive field trips take place between buildings. He would also like to see more detail on these. He would like to have it publicized when the PTA contributes to the cost of the field trips.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Robin, seconded by Mrs. Reggio and unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes Warrants and Minutes of Meeting of November 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

Mr. Cameron had a discussion with Superintendent Himmelberger about the field trip to New York City for grade 7 and 8. He mentioned that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Chorus group will sing in New York City on the 88<sup>th</sup> floor of the Empire State Building.

He would like to continue the tradition for Nature's Classroom for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the Washington, DC trip for 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He wants to have a trip for the 7<sup>th</sup> graders as well.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Reggio, seconded by Mrs. Greenstein and unanimously voted to approve the trip to New York City for the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade Middle School students.

Superintendent Himmelberger clarified the inclement weather procedures. He makes the decision if school will be open by contacting the public safety officials and the D.P.W. They determine the safety of the roads in the communities. He does not like to bring students into school and then dismiss early. If school is canceled he notifies the police, staff and bus company and places it on the website. He does not like to call school off the night before and does not consult with other Districts but decides on the condition of our roads. We all must have a bit of personal responsibility and be prepared for treacherous walkways and driveways. If there is a 2 hours delay or day off, he will make the call between 5:00 and 5:30 am.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Chaplin, seconded by Mr. Faulkner and unanimously voted to transfer \$22,000 from the student activity account into the student activity checking account.

Due to the rainy conditions the new roofs are being put to the test and any leaks are being addressed.

The Millville roof is in the final completion phase.

The High School roof project is complete. The documentation for asbestos abatement has been filed and done.

Superintendent Himmelberger received an alert from Mr. Cameron. There was a small fire caused by an overheating fish aquarium heater in the Media Center of the Hartnett Middle School. This will be cleaned and repaired.

Phil Toupin has resigned his position in the Technology Department. He is being replaced by Osiris Gonzalez from Newport Rhode Island Public Schools. Osiris will continue to assess technology in our District and plan for the future. He is knowledgeable in PARCC and knows what needs to be done. There is nervousness around accountability to use PARCC.

The School Committee will discuss the needs of the District. They will meet on Thursdays in January to make sure the Towns understand the budget process. The process will be done in a timely and thorough manner. We will reduce our liability to layoff. They need consistency of effort, expand the loyalty, as well as train and offer professional development. They need a plan to improve for everyone.

They still are cognizant that the Towns have a limit and be aware that not everything can be projected and paid for. They will prioritize their needs in the proper sequence. We are experiencing decreasing enrollment which reduces the Chapter 70 funding. They want to increase rigor and to make BMR a choice district. We have a bit of work to do to make our facility function for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The communities will make their own decision on what they want for their school district. They need communication that is clear, backup data and thoughtful analysis.

The committee wants to have more of a plan to re-coop some of the people they lost last year and come up with a budget based on their needs.

Superintendent Himmelberger would like to have a business manager next year. They will also need funds for NEASC and have technology increases. Early intervention students have social and emotional complications in their behaviors with costs that will need to be managed.

They need to look at the total picture and see what the need is. They will look at everything individually. They know that the High School needs will be more due to NEASC recommendations.

Student Services may be able to re-allocate staff. To achieve a balance they will start with a blank canvas and see how they can balance everything else to get what they need.

The Unit C (support staff) contract was negotiated and signed. It is a fair contract that has been placed in the School Committee packets for their review. It will need ratification by the Committee. The diversity of the group was a stumbling block. He thanked Mr. Tringali and Mrs. Robin for their efforts. It was negotiated in good faith and they settled on what was best for both sides.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Reggio, seconded by Mrs. Robin (Mrs. Greenstein and Mr. Chaplin abstain – 6 in favor) to approve the Unit C Contract from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017.

A new Bi-County Collaborative agreement that matches all of the new regulations with minor changes has been proposed.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Faulkner, seconded by Mrs. Robin and unanimously voted to reapprove the Bi-County Collaborative bi-laws with minor changes.

Superintendent Himmelberger wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and safe and happy holidays.

### **Report of the Assistant Superintendent**

Dr. Thomson is proud to bring forward the MCAS improvement plan.

They are looking for common themes and actions. He praised the work of our teaching staff to develop the improvement efforts.

He thanked Mrs. Desai and Mrs. Brown and the teachers involved in the process of the MCAS improvement plan.

The Kindergarten through grade 2 piece meets the grade level benchmarks. The Foundations program was started last year. They will continue with the consistent instruction. They have a wide range of learners in the Kindergarten classrooms. They are working on an action plan to increase home to school education and identify specific areas of need and tailor interventions to their needs and are trying to do a better job of seeing the early warning indicators. They look at attendance, discipline and social emotional needs of students. They are in need of non fiction and lower level books for the struggling reader.

Grades 3 and 5 teachers will do more with open response reading and writing where making inferences is a struggle. They will implement curriculum mapping where they group students that have the same needs and offer targeted instruction.

Math fluency makes it easier and more efficient for students to build upon math and develop their critical thinking skills. Math fluency will come with practice. They need to build the foundation or they will not progress into the critical thinking.

Mrs. Greenstein asked if there is a place for students who need to be challenged and if we are addressing their needs. With RTI (Response to Intervention) blocks they are creating more enrichment for students and they are being challenged. This is seen more in the upper grades.

They will need to get more technology in the classrooms in the coming years.

### **Mr. Cameron on the HMS and Mr. Dudek for the HS**

#### **Mr. Cameron –**

The first focus for Middle School is the improvement plan – literacy and building wide approach to short essay questions. Mr. Cameron did site visits with Dr. Thomson to Bridgewater and Medway. The teachers at the Middle School received training on how to teach students on how to authentically answer open response questions. They are promoting literacy skills and the professional learning communities are meeting. They have hired two new para-educators in Math and ELA. They are more focused on Edwin Analytics and high risk students.

Mr. Chaplin thinks this is a good beginning but feels they need to see something in the area of Science.

Teachers are embracing this. They are ready and willing for more collaboration.

#### **Mr. Dudek –**

The High School focus is helping students struggling with what the question is asking, persevering through a multi-step question and providing enough evidence to support their claims. They are using common assessments, guided matrix, rigor elements and increased rigor.

PARCC gets more in depth with the level of higher thinking.

The Math department focus in on a simple practice where students need to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. They are struggling with inequalities. They are looking at rigor relevance matrix and having teachers look at the common assessments. They are looking for a common theme throughout the District – multiple step process on how to increase higher level thinking and learning.

Dr. Thomson stated that the staff exceeded his expectations. MCAS does count and it gets students on track to be college and career ready with the skills that go across subject areas and skills that they need to have. The PARCC test will do a much better job of measuring than MCAS.

Students need to unpack the question and be taught the how and the why. When this is done they understand and have ownership.

They are focusing on curriculum. They focus on how a child is inferring, not just the program but the curriculum. They are heading in the right direction. Having someone focused on curriculum is the best thing. We cannot go back to where the Superintendent does it all.

There were no items for Public Forum.

### **School Committee Forum**

Mr. Tringali – Merry Christmas to all.

Mr. Faulkner – Toys for Tots drive – donated 7,000 from the policemen’s association and community-

Mrs. Robin – feels the drama program is great – thank you for the wonderful Footloose presentation.

Mrs. Greenstein – Regional Agreement survey has been sent out- they will compile the surveys and sharing them during the budget conversations.

Mr. Chaplin – went to Footloose - great show – looks forward to getting into the nitty gritty of budget season and moving forward.

The next School Committee meeting will be held on January 8<sup>th</sup>.


**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Robin, seconded by Mrs. Reggio and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

  
Erin P. Vinacco, District Secretary