

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School**  
**Media Center**  
**January 9, 2020**  
**6:00 p.m.**

The Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee met in the media center of the Hartnett Middle School at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Jane C. Regio, Chairperson  
Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson  
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary  
Caryn D. Vernon, District Treasurer  
Jack R. Keefe, Member  
Tammy A. Lemieux, Member  
Wendy L. Greenstein, Member

Mrs. Williams was absent from the meeting.

Also in attendance was Superintendent, Jason DeFalco, EdD. and Assistant Superintendent, Matthew J. Ehrenworth.

**Report of the Student Representatives**

The National Honor Society Empty Bowl fundraiser will be held on March 2nd. D.E.C.A. goes to the DCU Center in Worcester tomorrow. Seniors were fitted for caps and gowns.

There were no items for Public Forum -

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Greenstein an unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes warrants and minutes of December 12, 2019.

The Budget Workshops will be held at 5:30 p.m. at the Hartnett Middle School as follows:

January 30th

February 4th, 11th and 25th

March 3rd

Policy sub-committee will be held on 1/23 @ 5:30 p.m.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the request to put together a bargaining team for Unit C and Unit B. Mrs. Vinacco and Mrs. Lemieux will represent the School Committee for Unit C and Mr. Keefe and Mrs. Reggio for Unit B.

The Committee reviewed a request from a parent about the Kindergarten regulations. The child's birthday is September 5th. Our policy is that they must be 5 by the 1st day of school. School begins on Sept. 2nd or 3rd. He would be five by the time Kindergarten begins and he has been to Pre-School. They don't want to lose kids due to a private school age requirement. It is at the discretion of the School Committee.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to allow the request for this particular student to enter Kindergarten with the birthday of September 5th.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

There is discussion around mixed grade classrooms at the Millville Elementary School. Dr. DeFalco stated that it can be done incredibly well. Teachers have been trying to support the kids and make this model work. These classrooms do have a lot of merit.

Mrs. Shafer stated it was done to even out class sizes. Based on the population in each grade they are not all proportionate. Math was broken up by grade level last year. This year they tweaked the Math model. Social Studies and Science are on a 2 year cycle.

In December they surveyed staff, students and parents as well as all classroom and homeroom teachers. It was clear they do not really want to continue with the mixed grade classrooms the way they are. The concerns are teaching two curriculums and the consensus that they need more background and training in this model.

The students surveyed were split 50/50. They liked meeting kids from different grades, challenges teachers gave, how they cooperated well and having older or younger friends.

They didn't like switching classes, doing different things than other kids in their grades, leaving class for content and not being with kids their own age.

They received 47 parent responses. The largest chunk was not in favor. They didn't like having older students with younger ones. They did not like that they take different field trips than the kids their own age and a large grade 2 math class.

They will explore two options for next year -  
1st option - same type as this year

Mixed grades - K17-20 1 (18), Grade 2 (23) Grade  $\frac{2}{3}$  (3/19), Grade  $\frac{3}{4}$  ( 15/8), Grade 4 (23), Grade 5 (2 X 20)

2nd option - single grade classrooms with 1 floating teacher to support the larger class sizes.

Next steps:

End of current cycle

Regional Agreement amendment committee

Determine next steps

Mrs. Greenstein asks for more information on floating teaching and what the role will look like and look at it side by side with the Complex numbers to make an informed decision.

Mrs. Reggio feels we will not see an increase in funds so we cannot create scenarios to have 15, 16, 17 in one school. We need to get creative.

Dr. DeFalco stated that they will create a scenario to have 2 certified teachers working in the classroom with the students.

Mrs. Reggio stated that having 2 second graders and 19, 3rd graders is not a mixed class. This does not work and alternatives are needed.

Dr. DeFalco does not want another 2 year cycle of mixed grades that does not meet our needs.

### **Deeper look at FY21 Budget -**

Dr. DeFalco forecasted Phase 2 to discuss what is different now and has shifted and changed.

Mr. Ehrenworth will give preliminary budget projections. The documents are linked on our facebook page.

Massachusetts will invest an additional \$1.5 billion in K-12 public education over the next seven years after Gov. Charlie Baker signed a funding reform bill.

Dr. DeFalco stated they will lobby for additional resources for BMR.

The Governors numbers have not come out.

We can expect a decrease in foundation enrollment - 1730 for FY21.

Chapter 70 money will only be seeing minimum increases to aid - 30 dollars per student.

Basis of Chapter 70 - \$11,037,139.

Regional Transportation may go up to 85% - \$590,000

School Choice Receipts - \$275,652 and sending out (711,111)

Charter school tuition (457,622)  
Charter reimbursement 241,592  
Sub-total - **\$10,975,650**

### **Grants**

IDEA - Special Education Preschool - this ended in 2020  
IDEA - Special education entitlement grant - 444,548  
Student Support and academic enrichment - 10,000  
Title I - 160,000  
Title IIA Building systems of support for excellent teaching and leading - 36,000  
Sub-total - **\$650,548**

Circuit Breaker - **\$500,000**

Mr. Ehrenworth reviewed the preliminary FY 21 budget comparison  
The FY21 level services budget would be a 1.81% increase  
The FY21 Phase Two budget would be a 3.12% increase

Level services budget - need from towns - \$12,752,611.89  
Phase 2 services - need from towns - \$13,092,611.89

Assessment to Blackstone - Capital 74.07% Level - 9,445,859.63 and Phase 2 - 9,697,697.63  
Assessment to Millville - Capital 25.93% Level - 3,306,752.26 and Phase 2 - 3,394,914.26

FY21 with Level services - Blackstone Increase 3.12% and Millville increase 4.92%  
FY21 with Phase Two - Blackstone increase 5.87% and Millville 7.71%

Mrs. Reggio can't understand that there is still a major issue in the formula and is fearful of what this means for our community.

The Governor has his state of the state address on the 22nd. The House numbers should be out on the 23rd.

Mr. Ehrenworth wants to get out any FY19 adjustments by February.

### **StemScopes - Elementary science curriculum**

Dr DeFalco hoped to launch a new set of curriculum units in September but decided to pilot more programs. Dr. DeFalco wants to go with StemScopes.  
We need to make decisions and wrap up the program now.

Toolbox - Resources Scope lists and lessons planning document.

Scopes - Engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate.  
Each scope introduced with an essential explanation,  
Also intervention for special needs students  
Work toward the goal to figure out why and how something happened.  
Students can watch videos.

Professional Development - further knowledge on each scope

Teacher comments were shared with the Committee.

Concerns: training, a lot of information to take in and digest. Substantial amount of f material to move through. All material is online. Vocabulary concern - they have pictures to go with it. Supplies concern. Need to introduce the subject with students ahead of time. Assume they knew things they may not know.

Mrs. Chan-Remka has experience with StemScopes and Mrs. Reggio stated that several schools in the area use it.

Paying for kits that go along with each scope, There are no workbooks, they give tubs which are the explore. There are 3 different readings, vocabulary models and use of technology piece. The experiment is not technology. \$18,000 to replenish the tubs when needed. The goal is to have Chromebooks 1 to 1 for grades 3 through 5.

Teachers should not be in charge of making their own kits. It takes out the guesswork for the teachers.

The cost of this is **\$45,716** and covers some professional development.

Teachers at Complex prefer StemScopes to Mystery Science. Mystery Science had a lot of gaps and you were missing things.

The question was asked what is the alternative if we don't move forward with something soon. We need to focus on literacy next year. We need to decide on science this year.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Vernon and unanimously voted to purchase StemScopes science curriculum at a cost of \$45,716 with Professional Development on January 17th.

## **Report of the Assistant Superintendent**

There are no Revenue issues with any of the lines at this time.  
Expenditures were discussed.

## **Facilities Update**

MES elementary boiler update: Moving forward with project - boiler room and tank area were surveyed on January 3rd.

JFK Complex Roof - New repair estimates have been sent to the insurance company MIIA. We are waiting for their updated total on the claim.

BMR High School Secure Vestibule: This is still in the design phase. We expect the work to go out to bid before the end of January.

Sewage Pumping station at Early Village The new pump was ordered mid-November. There is an 8-9 week delivery time on it.

Septic System at JFK/AFM Complex- Electrical issues have been repaired and septic is functioning right now.

Leak in pipe at JFK/AFM Complex - there were three leak locations in a main pipe at the Complex. This needed to be addressed immediately and was taken care of during the break for a cost of \$10,400.

Capital Planning RFP- Five firms submitted proposals. Mr. Ehrenworth has been checking references and will be setting up interviews with top candidates.

3 firms will be coming back on Wednesday.

## **School Committee Members**

**Mrs. Vinacco** - Thank Representative Soter for bringing marching band to the State House on January 8th,

Mrs. Vinacco sent a heartfelt thank you to him. He represented them as champions. They took an in-depth tour of the State House. All recieved a State House pin and had their picture taken and will get a personal copy from him. There was lunch for all with a cake and purple and gold table cloths.

Representative Soter recognized the band directors and all students and all left with a personal certificate.

**Mrs. Larkin** - hockey is going well with games played on Wednesdays and Saturdays. There is a game on Wednesday at the Franklin Rink at 4:00 p.m.

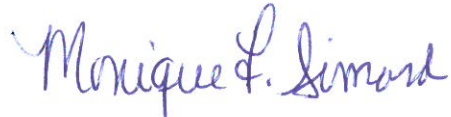
We have great booster groups and many things could not happen without their hard work.

**Mrs. Lemieux** - stated that her daughter, Alexa Lemieux won the Worcester County president award. She thanked Dr. DeFalco and Mr. Dudek for taking her to lunch.

There is a joint meeting to be held on Wednesday, January 22nd at 6:00 p.m.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Greenstein and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:   
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary