

***MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT***  
School Committee Meeting  
Nipmuc High School, Professional Development Room  
Monday, May 9, 2022

Committee Present:

Dorothy Scally, Erick Brown, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Phil DeZutter

Administration Present:

Maureen Cohen, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Jay Byer, Business/Finance  
Jenn Mannion, Principal, Miscoe Hill Middle School  
Janice Gallagher, Principal, Clough Memorial School

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Kerry Laurence.  
Pledge of Alliance was recited

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the agenda.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of the Open Session Minutes from April 11, 2022

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve Open Session minutes from April 11, 2022

VOTED: Unanimously approved

**II. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS**

Chairperson Kerry Laurence expressed thank you to the Mendon and Upton communities for their financial support of MURSD at the Town Meetings last week. Chairperson Laurence also commented last week was Teacher Appreciation week and on behalf of the School Committee members, thank you to all of the teachers in the district for their hard work. She also noted next week is recognition of the School Lunch Employee Day and thank you to all of those employees as well for their hard work.

**III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS - NA**

**IV. STUDENT'S COMMENTS**

*Clough Elementary School Student Presentation-Mr. Hayes, Physical Education Teacher and 4th Grade Project:*

Principal Janice Gallagher thanked the School Committee for having the 4<sup>th</sup> graders at their meeting to present their physical education project. She introduced Mr. Hayes, the physical education at Clough.

Mr. Hayes stated the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students have been working on a project over the last several months project. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students have created their own dodge ball game. Each student introduced themselves and the name of their dodge ball game. Mr. Hayes commented the students did an amazing job with the project. Students wrote

out the rules for their game, submitted the rules to Mr. Hayes to be reviewed and then the students were able to teach to their classmates. They also taught and played their game with 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes.

Mr. Hayes commented the project was optional and students could work as individuals or in a group. Other classmates who did not participate in the creation benefitted because they played the different dodge ball games. He stated all of the students were respectful when being taught the games. These 4<sup>th</sup> grade students provided motivation and inspiration to their fellow classmates and were role models to the younger students.

Students discussed their favorite part which included creating the game with the group; watching kids playing their game; playing the game with their classmates; teaching it and seeing how happy the students were

Students discussed the difficult part included fixing the problems; nervous other students would not like it; coming up with ideas for the game; creating all the rules; getting on stage

Slide show presented of the students playing as well as a short video clip.

*Nipmuc School Committee Student Representatives:*

Michel commented they went to Memorial School and visited students during lunches. It was a great opportunity to talk to students and there were lots of comments that science and math were favorite subject. Michel explained what the School Committee does. Other observations were students also liked the white boards and loved ST Math curriculum and there were no negative comments about it. They are looking to go to Clough and Miscoe.

Prom was last Friday night with lots of good food! Attendees could take a round trip on a lift where the view as incredible. DJ with lots of dancing. Positive feedback from the students as well as the after prom. Michel recognized the advisor and all the incredible the Prom Committee did.

This Thursday is international night at Nipmuc. Opportunity to embrace diversity and enjoy good food

AP exams started last week and continuing through this week.

Diya commented additional highlights for Memorial School included the positive feedback about the teachers at Memorial School; Students also asked how school 'worked' at Nipmuc.

Last week was Teacher Appreciation Week and students are grateful for the teachers at Nipmuc and their hard work. Students did thank you notes to the teachers.

FAST is happening is May 19. Fun event of the year. Each class will dress up in class colors and everyone is looking forward to it.

**V. SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS**

*School Audit Presentation-Mr. Tim Craven*

Tim Craven presented the audit of the district. Highlights included:

- Conducted single audit ending June 30, 2021 – 40 pages long
- 5 sections of the audits
- Opinions are based on laws and regulations
- Leases for Elementary Schools expired and need to be renewed.

- Financial Statements:
  - District wide statements
  - Discussion on OPEB; actuarial number and District funds current obligation with current expenses which is standard practice.
  - Reconciliation of government statements
  - Profit and Loss statement
- Footnotes are also included

Phil DeZutter asked about the long-term debt. This debt is due to Clough/Memorial and Green repair and will come of the books in 2024. Phil DeZutter commented School Committee will be looking at a capital repair soon.

*Finance and Operations Update: Mr. Jay Byer*

Jay Byer presented a recap of the facility work done during April vacation at each school:

Clough Elementary School:

- PFAS6 Filtration System is installed and waiting for DEP to inspect and approve.
- February Water Pump Leak – The fire suppression annunciator panel has been installed. The valve that broke has been repaired. We are still waiting for the replacement pumps to be installed. They are stuck in the supply chain abyss.
- Fire alarm system was inspected over April vacation and passed.
- The UV purification light was replaced over April vacation. This purifies the water after treatment.

Memorial Elementary School:

- Fire alarm system was inspected over April vacation and passed.
- Three trees were removed, and the concrete pad and walkway were installed through the Memorial PTO. This is in preparation of the new pavilion being funded by the PTO.

Miscoe Hill School

- Fire annunciator panel, strobes, and detectors were all replaced over April break. This was an insurance claim from water damage to the older panel.
- Fire alarm system was inspected and passed after new system was installed.
- The controls for the sewer ejections pumps for the septic system were replaced.
- A new door from the teacher's room to the courtyard was supposed to be installed over April break, but all the materials were delayed in the supply chain abyss.

Nipmuc Regional High School:

- The clock tower was replaced over April break. This was damaged around a year ago and was an insurance claim,
- Fire alarm system was inspected over April break and passes.
- A large compressor was replaced that runs the HVAC Pneumatic system.
- All irrigation systems are being activated in anticipation of the summer.
- Prep work and plan submittals are being reviews in anticipation of the demo of the old boilers is set to begin on June 6. The installation of the new boilers will take place over the summer.

District-wide:

- AC units are being inspected and activated in anticipation of the summer heat.
- The four new lawn tractors orders last fall are still awaiting delivery. A lot of our stuff in in that supply chain abyss!!

*Middle School Nature's Classroom Field Trip-Ms. Jennifer Mannion (vote)  
Mrs. Mannion presented Nature's Classroom with Lauren Lajoie.*

Ms. Lajoie is excited to get this project back for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Anderson Moore manages 6-7 different locations. There is a property in Ivoryton, CT and will give the potential to have the whole 5<sup>th</sup> grade there. The dates of Oct 17-19 (2 nights/3 days) have been reserved. It was noted it is about a 2-hour ride and it is out of state. Benefits of this location is it has full-time registered nurse on staff. It is estimated the per student costs is estimated at \$340 (\$70 increase due to bussing costs). Planning to have an informational night for parents. Ms. Lajoie stated 5<sup>th</sup> grade staff will be there for chaperoning purposes and thus there will be not expenses for staff at the property.

Ms. Mannion and Ms. Lajoie are still exploring options on how to make it up Nature's Classroom experience to the students who have missed it the last 2 years due to COVID.

Approval of the out of state field trip for Nature's Classroom

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve out of state field trip for Nature's Classroom to Ivoryton, CT.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

*District Updates/Announcements: Dr. Maureen Cohen  
Superintendent Goals*

Dr. Cohen updated the School Committee for the end of year cycle for Superintendent Goals. Highlights of the update follow:

- Focused on goals this year due to the circumstances
- District Goal Alignment based on the strategic plan
- Educator Evaluation Continuous Improvement Cycle
  
- Goal #1: Professional Practice Goal: develop skills in strategy development, data analysis, communications, board relations, budget development, equity, and instructional leadership by actively engaging in the first year of the M.A.S.S. New Superintendent Induction Program, as well as the AASA Aspiring Superintendent's Blended Learning Academy, and MASS/MASC Workshops. Dr. Cohen identified Key Actions and Benchmarks
- Professional Learning Impact and Outcome included Updated Budget Book with detailed information related to Chapter 70, Target Share, and Grants; Entry Plan Process; Focus on equity in analysis of management, operations and learning
  
- Goal #2: Student Learning Goal: By the end of the year, 75% of the students in grade K-8 will meet grade level expectations in ELA and Math as measured by the iReady diagnostic system. Dr. Cohen identified Key Actions and Benchmarks
- Student Learning Impact and Outcome included: New and interactive District Curriculum Accommodation Plan; MTSS Audit, Analysis, and Implementation plan for next year; Full implementation of academic, SEL, and Thrively assessments
  
- Goal #3: District Improvement Goal- Communication: By the end of the year, a communication plan will be developed and implemented to improve the frequency and clarity of district communications. Dr. Cohen identified Key Actions and Benchmarks
- District Goal- Communications Impact and Outcome included District Newsletter Created; Student Presentations and SC Representatives; District Facebook and Instagram created; Website Updates--Budget, Student Support, Civil Rights, Handbooks; Translations in Thrillshare, Newsletters, Powerschool

- Goal #4: District Improvement Goal-SEL: By the end of the year, a system will be in place to help teachers to reconnect with our students through established SEL curriculum modules, professional development in culturally responsive practices, and student SEL data. Dr. Cohen identified Key Actions and Benchmarks
- District Goal- SEL Impact and Outcome included Students experienced lessons in Thrively; Clearer connections to a portrait of a learner and learning experiences; Staff and administrators have tools to improve culturally responsive instruction; Systems created for comprehensive assessment

Dr. Cohen detailed the Superintendent Rubric Indicators Directly Related to Goals

*Recognition of Outgoing Member*

Dr. Cohen recognized Dorothy Scally after 7 years of service on the School Committee since this will be her last meeting. Dr. Cohen commented her comments were valuable to the conversation and it was much appreciated. Dr. Cohen thanked her for her true commitment for the students.

Dorothy Scally thanked everyone as well as prior committee members. She noted it has been a great experience. It was good to give back to the community and best of luck to the new members. School Committee members thanked her for her service.

**VI. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

*Policy Subcommittee*

Vikki Ludwigson stated there were first reading on policies at last meeting. There were some changes made to the original to bring in line to MASC policies. Members received the redlined document.

After some discussion it was determined to wait on BBA until legal counsel had a chance to review.

Approval of the of BBAA - School Committee Member Authority and JEB – Entrance to School

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Erick Brown, to approve BBAA - School Committee Member Authority and JEB – Entrance to School policies.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

*Golden Apple Subcommittee*

Golden Apple Award Timeline was reviewed by School Committee members.

- The deadline for submissions of the Golden Apple Award nominations is May 19th. We have received 35 nominations so far this year. The Golden Apple Awards will be presented at our June meeting.
- It was commented to send out a second reminder.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

*School Choice*

By June 1st of each year, the School Committee has to determine their status as a school choice district. Dr. Cohen is recommending to remain as a school choice district. There are currently 125 students for out of district with 13 seniors. There are 40 outgoing school choice students.

There was a discussion among members about the openings for school choice and how the openings are determined.

Approval of Affirmation as a School Choice District

MOTION: On a motion of Vikki Ludwigson, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to reaffirm Mendon Upton Regional School District as a school choice district.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Per *Policy JFBB- School Choice* (attached) and M.G.L. Ch. 76, S. 12B, we should do a public accounting of how many openings there are for the successive school year at every school and grade level. Dr. Cohen read the following School Choice openings for the next school year:

| CLOUGH /# of Openings | MEMORIAL/# of Openings | MISCOE/# of Openings | NIPMUC/# of Openings |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| K 6                   | K 0                    | 5 0                  | 9 5                  |
| K SI 0                | K SI 0                 | 6 7                  | 10 0                 |
| 1 0                   | 1 0                    | 7 8                  | 11 0                 |
| 2 0                   | 2 0                    | 8 8                  | 12 0                 |
| 3 0                   | 3 0                    |                      |                      |
| 4 0                   | 4 0                    |                      |                      |

*Fair Share Amendment Discussion*

Dr. Cohen noted MURTA has requested the School Committee pass a resolution drafted by the MTA in support of the Fair Share amendment that will be on the ballot in November of this year. Dr. Cohen verified with legal counsel the School Committee could take a position but not expend any public funds on promoting this question.

Phil DeZutter posed the question how this resolution is going to benefit MURSD since it is difficult for district to even get full funding of regional transportation.

Erick Brown stated he is not a fan of targeted taxes and after reviewing the language he is concerned what this tax impact could have on the State. He supports funding education but is unsure this bill could help with that.

Phil DeZutter reiterated how does this benefits the district because he feels it may not affect education since there is also a commitment to roads and bridges and other expenses. It could trickle down but is unsure. He would like to have regional transportation funded and does not see the State increasing MURSD Chapter 70 funding.

Kerry Laurence wants to like this amendment because it supports education funding but needs to do more research on the topic.

Phil DeZutter commented this bill will create a pool of funding and however there is no commitment to how the State will distribute this additional funding.

It was determined each School Committee member to do more research in order to discuss at another meeting.

*Superintendent Contract*

Phil DeZutter commented each School Committee member has had the opportunity to review the contract. He noted the contract states a salary of \$180,000 which is a midpoint salary in the Blackstone Valley.

Approval of School Superintendent Contract

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Vikki Ludwigson, to approve the School Superintendent contract.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

**VIII. Other Matters Not Anticipated by The Committee Within 48 Hours of the Posted Meeting**

**IX. CORRESPONDENCE**

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- District Action Plan update-May 23
- Golden Apple Awards-June

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Sean Nicholson to adjourn

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.  
Minutes by Kelly McElreath