

**Minutes of Virtual School Committee Meeting  
July 13, 2020  
Blackstone-Millville Regional School District**

**Introduction of Members:**

Jane C. Reggio, Chairperson  
Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson  
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary  
Sarah E. Williams, Member  
Tammy A. Lemieux, Member  
Jack R. Keefe, Member

Caryn D. Vernon, District Treasurer and Wendy L. Greenstein, Member were absent.

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

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mr. Keefe and unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes Warrants and Minutes of June 25, 2020.

**Review of Superintendent data as evidence of his evaluation.**

End of the year Superintendent Evaluation.

Dr. DeFalco will walk the Committee and the community through the evidence that he submitted.

This is the 2nd part to a 3 part process. The evaluation evidence should be ongoing and this summarizes the work of the year. He did not resubmit all the March items to the Committee. He worked hard to be diligent about the evidence he submitted. He tried to outline the evidence he used. He thought deeply about the feedback and attempted to explain this on page 3 of the packet. There were 4 areas of feedback. Needing a stronger H.R. system and protocols. How his work impacts the leadership team and classroom. He did submit 6 new pieces of evidence to try and address the mid-cycle.

Regardless of what we are going through we have to stay true to our purpose and our strategy. We have stayed focused on the what, the how, the community and the whole child. We have taken our current situation and embedded it into our strategy.

1. Curriculum Instruction
2. Environment
3. Engagement of family and community
4. Commitment to high standards and shared vision.

### **Professional Practice Goal -**

By June 2020 Dr. DeFalco spent at least a full day in at least one of the classrooms at every grade level across the District. This was modified due to Covid.

Required him to pivot. Had an opportunity to do this with grades K-5. Wrote a 2 page reflection. We're moving in the direction we need to.

Understanding staff and students. Need for some different protocol.

### **Curriculum and Instruction-**

Evidence in this area - evidence of our blueprint in action through remote learning. Mantra of how do we do our improvement work and pivot to create a resource for our community and help all understand the focus of our work? Long term vision on how do we train our new staff in all of our new curriculum and core programs to be sure we are ready to launch?

Heard from Carrie Purcell at last meeting. Instructional leadership team retreats have begun. Work focused on instructional improvement. Instructional best practice work is continuing.

More expansive and extensive summer tutoring program than ever before. Tutoring for over 100 students and ESL summer programming. Looking for how the leadership team rated him compared to how he rated himself. How is his leadership impacting the leadership team and in the classrooms? He submitted the results of this to them. The ratings were spot on between them. That is very important to him. Happy to see direct alignment there.

PD day on May 22nd. Showed how they do PD in a remote fashion. The level of focus and detail and attention that went into the blueprint for improvement.

### **Community Outreach**

Modifications were made to this. Over 500 participants took the survey and 75% of responses were favorable on how we are moving forward in the District.

Questions on the survey:

How connected does your child feel?

How supported does your child feel as a learner?

How much improvement have you seen in the School System in the past year?

The results are fairly strong.

From March until June 30th he had 48 additional communications with families. He is trying hard to solve issues presented to him.

### **Fiscal Management**

Budget approved through both Towns. Did it in Town meetings in an unprecedented manner.

Through the partnership with the School Committee and union management we came to where we could absorb a 10% reduction in state aid.

Different projects in place to highlight. Different improvement projects at the school have been taken care of to improve our buildings.

There was a ton of work done around school safety with active shooter protocols.

**Student learning goals** - there is no new data here.

Mrs. Reggio - great to see the survey of the leadership team. They agreed with his self assessment and there really is a sense of team and the ability to change things and work on things. That stood out to her as a highlight. Looks like we really increased our survey responses this year. She feels 550 unique responses this year is phenomenal. These surveys really matter.

Mrs. Vinacco - What would you tell someone was your biggest take from your reflection?  
Dr. DeFalco stated he comes from a large urban background. Very different type of leadership with a small community. That speaks to the idea of relationships. He really cares about and likes our staff.

He is getting to know them personally and establish a good relationship with them.  
He enjoyed his time with the students. Had a chance to see what some of the challenges that the classroom teachers face. Relationship building is huge and he gets to see the learning dynamics and differences. More of the human side of the work.

Teachers need to spend their time adjusting the materials to be sure kids can access them and challenge them. We have so many resources placed in the hands of the teachers so they can do this.

There is a scientific data cycle in place. We need a lot of work in this area.

Mrs. Reggio asked School Committee members to complete their form based on the evidence. Send it to Mrs. Reggio and do an official assessment grading and then they will set the goals for next year.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

Mr. Ehrenworth gave a breakdown of what they go through for annual expenses. Let them know the series each function falls into. Different expenses fall into a different series. They will need to make transfers. School Committee authorization is needed. Transfer the shortfall in administration from the custodian field. Move some from benefits and insurance where there was a savings and move it to offset expenses from the instruction series. Those costs are directly related to student instruction. Transfer balances of special revenue funds into E & D.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Vernon and unanimously voted to move \$160,000 from Maintenance (4000) to Administration (1000) and \$45,000 from Benefits and Insurance (5000) to Instruction (2000).

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vernon, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to transfer \$129,467 from Medicaid and \$8,484 from Interest to E & D.

### **FY21 Update**

They are hearing good things and are under the impression Chapter 70 funds will not be cut as dramatically as they thought. We received Title Grants and we appear to be getting \$13,000 more than budgeted. They are trying to maintain funding education.

They are trying to apply for as many grants and reimbursement that we can.

Technology grant - match expenses for making sure we are providing students with technology for remote learning. Have a large purchase of chromebooks.

Cares Act grant went in and they are hoping to receive \$140,000.

Information should be coming out this week on the additional \$225 per pupil grant.

### **Covid-19 update**

Summer programming is off and running in the area of food service and is still serving about 650 families and 7000 meals per week.

They are doing work with families around devices and internet access. General summer work for all students has been sent out and on the website. Tutoring program is offered for all students grades 1 -12 with over 100 students enrolled. They had 70% attendance rate in the first week. Trying to work closely to keep gaps as narrow as possible.

ESY program started the week of July 6th. ELL program starting this week and support groups for students who have social/emotional needs.

Our sub groups are hard at work. Meeting results will be shared at the August 13th meeting.

We want to make sure BMR's voice is heard by the Dept. of Education.

Three plans for school re-opening:

In school model

Remote model

Hybrid model

We are waiting for information on this, activities and budget.

We will need to negotiate the three plans with our bargaining units. Dr. DeFalco asked the Committee for permission to enter into negotiations with Units A, B and C.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mr. Keefe and unanimously voted to approve entering into negotiations with Unit A, B and C regarding the re-opening plan models.

Mrs. Lemieux - Are we going to negotiate this before the submission to the Dept. of Education?

Dr. DeFalco stated this is very tricky. We also have negotiations happening at the state level with the units such as the school calendar and other pieces that will impact us at the local level. List of items we need to negotiate with the MTA. He feels the Commissioner of Education will be providing districts latitude to make changes to the plans they submit once they negotiate with the units. We can't do it all without a state aid number.

Mrs. Lemieux stated it will be a process that could be changing.

Mrs. Reggio stated it depends on the funding that comes through.

### **Central Office move**

Central office is moving to the Complex back wing. The nursing office needs to follow guidelines in order to operate. They will renovate the former Business Office to make a nursing suite for Mrs. Young. They will need to pull up the carpeting to follow guidelines. An assessment of all nurses suites was done and all were fine except at the high school. MES will convert the current mailroom into the isolation room. They need to be separate rooms.

Mrs. Lemieux - asked if all summer learning is virtual?

Dr. DeFalco stated it will all be virtual and maybe limited ESY in August but this will be very small.

### **School Committee Forum -**

Mrs. Vinacco - She asked Dr. DeFalco if when the plans come to the Committee will they include student to teacher ratios? Is that something he will have for them or talk about it separately.

Dr. DeFalco stated he surveyed families on returning in person. It looked like 70% would prefer some in person instruction. Currently 30% of families do not want to return (they will have this option for those who do not want to return). They surveyed before they had a plan. They will need to survey again now that they have the information. If they have 30 kids and they all want to come back they would take the class of 30 and spread it into 2 adjoining classrooms with 1 teacher and possibly more para-professionals. Students would be 3-6 ft. apart. Some classrooms can safely have 20 desks to a classroom.

Mrs. Reggio cautions it's also when neighboring plans go out. School choice may impact things. You may see families switch up as plans become available.

Dr. DeFalco stated that 2 charter families are coming back because of the model we have put in place. People may come back to BMR.

Mrs. Lemieux - if a family chooses one option and it doesn't work out can they switch it?  
Dr. DeFalco said yes but we have to be able to avoid too many changes causing real issues. There is so much that goes into this with transportation and food service we do need to plan somewhat. Constant fluidity is going to be a real challenge.

Mrs. Lemieux feels that learning gaps could be an issue with too many changes.

The Committee will need to make policies and procedures. They need to go into our manual even if they are temporary.

At the August 13th meeting the principals will be presenting handbooks with the pandemic included.

Dr. DeFalco stated that what we start with could change by October, January and March. We are in for a fluid year.

Upcoming meeting July 30th at 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Lemieux asked if the Committee can get school handbooks ahead of time so if they have questions they can be prepared on this.

They will do Dr. DeFalco's evaluation on July 30th.

August 13th will be an in person meeting.

There were no items for Public Forum.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Vinacco and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:   
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary