

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of December 5, 2013
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chairman Dennis Fogue, Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, and Barbara L'Italien

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Finance and Administration, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, Nancy A. Duclos, and AHS Liaison Hugh Smith.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Fogue called the School Committee meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

II. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to the Flag

Chairman Fogue called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:02 P.M. Mrs. Gilbert asked for a moment of silence followed by a Salute to the Flag led by Anna and Lucas Bacchi from South School. The students were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

B. Recognition

South School Principal, Dr. McBride recognized the Physical Education Staff at South School, Dave Giribaldi, Meghan Matson and Donna McManus. The teachers have introduced 'Cup Stacking' as a new unit in the curriculum; an activity whose benefits include bilateral proficiency by working both sides of the brain, by crossing midline right to left-left to right through the use of patterns, sequencing, and tracking. All grade four and five students participated in the activity on November 14th along with over 30 countries, 2,600 schools, and over 556,000 students making the Guinness Book of Records Day. Four students from South School demonstrated the activity at the School Committee meeting. The funds to purchase the cups were made available through a grant from the Andover Fund for Education and the South School PTO provided the funds for the mats and timers.

Dr. McGrath announced that next week is National Computer Science Week and every student at the three middle schools, forty-five classes at Andover High School, and students from High Plain and West Elementary Schools will participate in a one hour experience on how to write code, with the assistance of the Digital Learning Specialists, AHS teachers Dan Downs and Minda Reidy, Director of Digital Learning Najarian, as well as others who will assist.

A group of Andover Principals and Program Advisors recently attended a 'Speak Easy' at the Andover Historical Society. The Andover Historical Society has always had a presence in the Andover Public Schools and we are looking into expanding our partnerships with them. The Speak Easy was an opportunity for the Historical Society to update us on where they are currently, and where they hope to be in the future. Our Town-wide PTO was asked if they would help to contribute to the Centennial

Walkway Project, and we are pleased to announce that a brick has been purchased through the Town-wide PTO for every school in Andover and the name of each school will be inscribed on the brick, with all proceeds for the walkway bricks going to support the mission, and archive projects at the Historical Society. Thank you to the School PTO's for their cooperation with this project. The gift will be presented to the Historical Society from our schools next week.

Nancy Duclos recognized the Andover Public School faculty members who will be facilitating a two hour presentation to their peers at the mini-technology conference scheduled for the December Release Day.

C. Public Input

AEA President, Kerry Costello said it is not the teachers' contract that prevents formation of specific classes at AHS, it is not a decision the educators make but a function of management and the School Committee.

AEA members Dan Brennan and Mary Robb recognized the work of the teachers to raise funds for the Scholarship in Memory of Colleen Ritzer.

D. Communications

1. Doherty MS Trip Request –France/Spain April 17 – 26, 2015

Jane Baldwin, a DMS Teacher and Outing Club Advisor, with the support of Robin Wilson, has proposed an outing club trip to France & Spain during the April Vacation Week in 2015 for the dates of April 17 to April 26, 2015. Students will not miss any school time since they will leave after school on Friday, April 17, 2015.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert and seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, the Andover School Committee vote 4-0 to approve the proposed extracurricular trip for Doherty Middle School to France and Spain on April 17-26, 2015 as presented and in accordance with the provisions set forth in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Andover School Committee entitled "School-sponsored trip and Student Travel Policy".

2. PARCC/MCAS Opt Out

Dr. McGrath reported on the PARCC test and the option to exempt students in grades 3-8 from MCAS testing in the same subject that they will be participating in the PARCC test. The decision on the option needs to be communicated to DESE by Friday, December 16th. Dr. McGrath is recommending to not double-test students as it would subject students to almost thirty days of testing to do both.

3. Communication Sub-Committee (Paula Colby-Clements and Annie Gilbert)

The Communication Sub-committee met with Katherine Wilkins, Merrimack College intern, to discuss district wide-blogging, and to incorporate Twitter account. They are pleased to report the Blog will launch next Monday and are investigating the creation of an App for the District.

4. Negotiation Committee

Dennis Forgue reported receipt of letters from two AEA groups, Food Services and the Custodial Unit, who are ready to actively begin contract negotiations. He asked the School Committee to consider which groups they would like to work with.

5. GLEC

Barbara L'Italien reported that she was assigned to the Communications Group for GLEC and they are looking for unused space. The Communications Group also talked about the training they offer for para-professionals. Nancy Duclos said they have contracted with CREST (new name for GLEC) to offer professional development opportunities to all of our instructional assistants on release days. Barbara L'Italien added that she remains concerned about the conflict of interest with David Birnbach as a School Committee member and his position on the STEAM Charter School and the ability to remain objective.

E. Old Business

1. Bancroft School Update

Tom Deso, Chair of the Bancroft School Building Committee, showed pictures of the progress made on the new school building and explained the status of each area. Dennis Forgue reported that the timing of the implementation of redistricting is driven by the construction schedule and the site work after the building is completed. Phase 2 of the building contract will be completed in May of 2014, but it is possible it will be finished in April offering the opportunity for students to move in after April vacation. If the building is finished by the end of May with students moving in September of 2014, the site work will stay as in until the end of June.

Mitigation and demolition of the current school could be done in July or August of 2014. The site work on the 'old school site' would be completed after the demolition. The open field area will not be ready for September, and final paving of the parking area occurring early fall. If the building is finished in April and students move in after April vacation, all site work would be completed over the summer, with final landscaping work done in the fall. The playground and bus loop would be complete, but the fields would still not be accessible. The project will not be complete in September; the new building will be, with contractors and workers on site until the end of October.

In either scenario, they will still be working on the site in some fashion. The road and site would not be completely done until September.

Comments:

If the building were finished in April, it would give the current 'known' school population the opportunity to move in with core people on site to assist with the transition. There has been some concern about drop off and pickup with increased population. Would provide an opportunity to see how the school works and result in a smoother opening in September.

Many unknowns about the razing of the old building and would make more sense to wait until fall to move the current population in, and hold off on the redistricting until 2015. It would also reduce anxiety by taking the pressure off. By the fall of 2015, all the work on the school site would be completed and redistricting done and ready for a full opening in September 2015.

The decision on redistricting will be made by the end of January or early February of 2014. It is suggested they don't implement the redistricting until the fall of 2015 and continue to work towards the April opening.

Better not to have the 'full' implementation of students move in the fall of 2014 and to delay the redistricting until September 2015. Reduces anxiety and takes some of the pressure off and we would know now that the current Bancroft population stays at Bancroft until June 2015 with the expanded 'redistricted' population scheduled for September 2015.

They still need to complete some safety transportation issues that include the access in/out, meet with public safety officials to review the logistics and traffic patterns to determine the best traffic flow.

Dr. McGrath said her preference would be to leave Shawsheen School on-line for Pre-K through Grade Two for another year and have the redistricting take effect in September 2015.

It was asked if parents could advocate keeping Shawsheen open as is, beyond the Bancroft opening.

Tom Deso explained that MSBA agreed to pay 44% of the cost of the building based on the building of a capacity school. Should we deviate from that, MSBA could hold back on the agreement. Dennis Forgue added that we have an agreement with the town as well and it would be a bad precedent with residents if we rescinded the agreement. Barbara L'Italien added that MSBA has investigated other schools to make sure a new school is being used for intended purposes.

Paula Colby-Clements motioned for the Andover School Committee to delay the implementation of full redistricting to the fall of 2015. The motion was seconded by Barbara L'Italien, and voted 4-0 to approve.

G. Consent Agenda

School Committee Minutes: November 8th Workshop & Nov 14 SC Business Meeting

Warrants: Expense Warrants: SW1411, SW1411A, SW1411B

Payroll Warrants: 14S021, 14S022, 14S023

Dennis Forgue said the School Committee has to review and vote on Executive Session Minutes and that the minutes are no longer relevant to upcoming negotiations. Some of the redactions are due to the Memo of Understanding. He is seeking a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes for 2010, 2011, and 2012.

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Annie Gilbert the School Committee voted 3-0-1 to approve the Executive Session Minutes of 2010. Barbara L'Italien abstained.

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Annie Gilbert the School Committee voted 3-0-1 to approve the Executive Session Minutes of 2011. Barbara L'Italien abstained.

Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Annie Gilbert the School Committee voted 4-0 to approve the Executive Session Minutes of 2013.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert and seconded by Barbara L'Italien, the Andover School Committee voted 4-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

H. Adjournment

At 9:25 P.M. on a motion by Annie Gilbert and seconded by Barbara L'Italien, the School Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary

Documents: School Warrants and Minutes