

**Andover School Committee Regular Meeting
Minutes of February 12, 2015**

Members in Attendance: Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, David Birnbach, Joel Blumstein, and interim School Committee Member Don Robb.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Finance and Administration, and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Nancy A. Duclos.

I. Regular Meeting

At 7:08 P.M. School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert called the School Committee Meeting to order.

A. Opening Ceremonies

School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert led the meeting in a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag.

B. Recognition / Communications

1. Floyd Greenwood WMS student, National Science Fair Winner

Dr. McGrath introduced Floyd Greenwood, a WMS Student and National Science Fair Winner. The finalists were brought to Washington, D.C. to present their projects and to compete in a team hands-on STEM challenge to demonstrate their skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. The finalists also met with President Obama.

WMS Interim Principal Becky Franks read the official letter announcing Floyd as one of 30 students nationwide as a finalist in the Broadcom Masters National Science Fair. As part of the award, West Middle School will receive \$1,000 to be used to develop excellence in Science, Math and Technology along with a plaque recognizing Floyd as a 2014 National Finalist in Technology, Engineering, and Math, and includes the name of his Science Teacher, Sheila Harrington.

Floyd showed the School Committee a presentation of his project, *Selectively Breeding Nannochloropsis Microalgae to Become a Healthier Feed Stock for Freshwater Rotifers*, and included pictures from the competition and their meeting with President Obama.

As a follow-up from the last meeting regarding the situation with the AHS Principal, Joel Blumstein said he drafted a short statement asking for consensus from the School Committee to adopt a statement.

Don Rob said there is a lot of misunderstanding in the Community regarding who the appointing authority is, which used to be the School Committee until Ed Reform came into play that changed the authority from the School Committee to the Superintendent. Personnel issues are private and not for public record. The statement will provide clarification on questions. David Birnbach said the feedback on Steve Murray as Interim Principal has been stellar.

Bob Pokress, Cherrywood Circle, asked if the School Committee has been provided the agreement entered into with the permission of the principal by the Superintendent. Annie Gilbert said they were not provided an agreement; it is a personnel issue with no budgetary impact. Personnel matters are not public matters.

The statement from the School Committee will be available on the School website.

Joel Blumstein recommended the School Committee discuss having a State of the Schools Report for the Community at a future meeting. He would be happy to help with drafting the document which could be used as a communications tool.

As a liaison to SEPAC, Mr. Blumstein attended their meeting today. He said they had a good open discussion on lots of issues to work on together such as, the status of the corrective action plan, and a presentation on the Walker Report (which Joel feels is not a good use of time).

David Birnbach said tonight's presentation by the students was fantastic. He has requested that one of the middle schools be used as a dedicated school for STEM initiatives rather than having these initiatives happening in Clubs after school, but to engage in a daily environment to encourage these initiatives and act as a hub to disperse information out to other schools.

Annie Gilbert referred to an editorial in the *Boston Globe* relative to schools changing to one school vacation week in March instead of February and April and the idea is worth looking into in tandem with other public schools. Annie reached out to the Chair of the North Andover School Committee and will reach out to other Merrimack Valley towns to begin a dialogue on this issue.

Dr. McGrath will be putting a communication to again consider having a half-day of school on Good Friday or using a Saturday so we do not have to have school the last week of June. DESE is considering a 'Blizzard' pilot with Wayland and Burlington Public Schools. Governor Baker suggestion is to add hours to the school day.

C. Public Input

Joe Ponti, 10 Marian Avenue, said that 47 citizens have signed a petition asking that the Town bring a budget to Town Meeting that does not increase property taxes. Mr. Ponti said citizens are suffering from sticker shock from recent property tax bills and listening to the Town and School talk about additional projects that would continue to increase their tax bills, if left unchecked. Young families are struggling to pay and seniors face being pushed out of their homes. There has been a huge increase in property taxes over the last ten years due to the signing of personnel contracts that are unsustainable. Please work smarter to bring budgets to Town Meeting that doesn't increase taxes.

D. Education

1. Student Presentation – Robotics

The AHS Robotic Club members advanced to the State Championship this year with two Andover teams competing in the FIRST Robotics Tech Challenge. AHS Robotics Club Advisor, Minda Reidy introduced the members of the Robotic Club here this evening and invited the students to explain and demonstrate their projects. Students in the Robotic Club won two awards at the Lego Championships and worked with the National STEM League this year on a number of challenges dealing with the challenge of movement. The students developed a remote car that was optimized for particular challenges and they have been invited to the First Robotics Technical Challenge State Championship on February 28th, where twenty teams from across the State will compete. Dr. McGrath recognized Minda Reidy who has been named as a finalist for the Einstein Fellowship. Should she win, she would spend a year in Washington, D.C. conducting research for the Department of Science and work with organizations to bring more STEM into education. AHS Interim Principal Steve Murray said the passion, effort, and work behind the scenes that Minda Reidy and Sheila Harrington possess is what makes Andover great.

2. AHS Schedule Implementation

Members of the AHS Schedule Implementation Team, Steve Murray, Rebecca D'Alise, Karen Waters, Minda Reidy, Brian Shea, and Katherine Richard, were introduced by Dr. Duclos. The group has met several times to discuss what it will take to implement a schedule, looked at the entire scope of the project, and collaborated on the best way to approach all of the tasks involved. Dr. McGrath said their promise to the community was to look at the schedule change in a very thoughtful way and to make sure everything is in place for a successful implementation.

Thoughts from a few of the members:

Brian Shea: Another year of preparation could only be more beneficial to staff and students to have the best practical rollout possible. Everyone agreed that the goal is to make it as positive an experience as they can for the students, and that they educate students and faculty on the benefits of a new schedule.

Rebecca D'Alise: Coordination is important to meet all the bulleted deadlines for the transition into a new culture at AHS. It is a very important endeavor and they want to make sure they are doing this thoughtfully to have a well-coordinated start in 2016.

Karen Waters: The Personalization Program was one of the recommendations from the NEASC visit. The H-Block Model we built our own model on was initially seen at an NEASC Showcase; it helps kids at all levels and all spectrums. It is not realistic to roll this out for September 2015.

David Birnbach said the intent was to start the new schedule in September 2015 and feels that 140 days plus the summer should be enough time to prepare for the new schedule and he is disappointed they will not be ready.

Katherine Richard: Changing sequence of two math courses, would leave 174 students that we promised could get to calculus next year unable to. There is no way to do that as two courses cannot happen in one year with the way the schedule is – they will lose a semester of one course. If we wait a year we can set up kids next year to be in the right sequence.

Steve Sanborn: It takes a while to get everyone students and staff on the bus. We have to offer professional development to staff and to have the group working together so everyone understands why we are doing this – if they understand why, and students too, they will jump on the bus. David Birnbach feels they have had ample time to implement and is concerned about the impact to students.

Brian Shea: We could but we shouldn't do it – bad for kids, bad for teachers. They (the High School Implementation Team) are the professionals and architects of the schedule.

Steve Sanborn: It does seem that David has a sense from living the experience of working across the district of when this work can be done. One of the things done in the process was to list every single faculty meeting, in-service and department meeting available which came up to four hours per month. Teachers need time to figure out if you stretch a course out over a year what we gain. Can we incorporate more engineering, can we incorporate more of the ecology curriculum back into biology. It takes time to do this work. Between now and June (unless teachers volunteer in summer) teachers are out straight. It would be great if had a release day a couple of times a month but the worst possible thing to do is to roll it out and be half ready. Yes, some kids will lose the opportunity for a year, Steve is more concerned with rolling in out and not having the plan in place.

Dr. McGrath explained that there were two parts to this; bargaining and implementation to be September 2015 or September 2016. All departments met in December and January and put out items to be considered and worked from there. Paula Colby-Clements clearly recalls the concern about the process and that it was possible the implementation would take two years to craft and the concern about H-Block becoming a glorified study.

David Birnbach continued his debate about the timeframe of the HS implementation Schedule. There was a spirited discussion on the implementation of H-Block and beginning the new schedule in September 2016. Joel Blumstein is not surprised but fully supportive of the recommendation to the teachers are coming forward with this recommendation considering all the challenges faced to implement the schedule in 2015.

3. Development of District-Determined Measures

Dr. Duclos reported on the District Determined Measures which is part of the Mass Educator Evaluation Framework per the Department of Massachusetts Elementary and Secondary Education. DDM's provide feedback to the teachers about student learning across all content areas. The impact of the assessment system is to measure student learning, growth and achievement relative to the Mass State Frameworks, not just student proficiency or achievement. The purpose of having positive assessments creates a solid assessment system and teachers will layout the foundation of what this means. Meetings with teachers will be held across all grade levels to discuss what this means to them, and to avoid assessments for assessment sake. As we develop our Assessment System teachers will be clear what this information will provide and how it will affect instruction. We have been given control by the State to develop our own assessments. We need to understand if what we value is being assessed and determine how we will collect and analyze data. The State has given us control over the parameters of what low, moderate and high growth is. DESE is looking for two years of data where every student has two years of growth. Dr. Duclos explained the connection of the DDM's to the Educator Evaluation System; most teachers are on a two year self-directed evaluation plan. Year One is a formative evaluation and Year Two a summative evaluation, and looks at the teacher impact rating and student growth. The DDM's are currently in the development stage and DESE has final approval. There is also a collective bargaining impact and in the end, there will be a bargaining aspect thru the use of DDM's by law.

The School Committee will be updated on where we are in the process of developing the DDMs which we must pilot this year. Teachers who are involved in the DDM development were provided training through Teachers21. We have worked collaboratively with the AEA as the regulations require that the DDMs must be locally bargained to the extent outlined by the law and in accordance with the bargained Article 28 of the Educator Evaluation Language ratified by the teachers and approved by you on June 27, 2013 (MOA– ASC/AEA Article 28 Educator Evaluation Language).

4. Mid-Year Update: Superintendent Goals

Superintendent McGrath provided a Mid-year report on her goals. There are two main goals and two learning goals and professional practice goals which are self-directed.

Goal 1: Innovation and Collaboration:

Innovation and collaboration goal falls under rubric of district improvement goals

Satellite school program: Dr. McGrath has been leading the study on a satellite school program at the Dundee Park site and conducted a walk-thru of the site with the School Committee last fall. There have

been six meetings with the Andover teachers and with consultant David Stevens to date, in addition to workshops with the School Committee. Paul Szymanski has completed the draft RFP and awaiting the last piece of the final narrative. Additional meetings are scheduled for February 25th and March 9th and will have the conceptual piece and vision piece with learning goals at that time. There have been several meetings on what will be a multi-disciplinary design process. There will be an update on the progress to ensure we have everything in place for next year's budget. She is also working with David Stevens about the vision for the AHS Library renovation and what the function of the area will be.

In addition, they are Developing plans for renovating existing instructional spaces to address needs of students and incorporating both into FY-16 and FY-17 budget. The first is the renovation of the Media Center at AHS. Meetings were held in June and August of 2014 with teachers and the School Committee. She also accompanied Jeannie Moffitt, Finance Committee Liaison to the School Committee, on a walk thru of the AHS Library to get a better sense of the renovation plan which is one of the FY-16 CIP Articles.

In addition, Dr. McGrath has been working with teachers on the creation of a minimum of 1 maker space at the elementary level and middle school level to look at what we have in place and the content of the strategic plan and vision, and has met with ACE members who are partnering with us in this endeavor. Steve Sanborn has done a lot of work on this starting without with science and engineering with the idea to be more multi-disciplinary in the design process so it is not limited to Engineering, Science and Math only. There is also a creative process involved to include students in the Arts and Humanities so the space has to be identified for their work space too. Steve Sanborn has done a great deal of research with a museum in Providence, Rhode Island and through RISDI Design Projects and talking with ACE as well about grant funds from the Horne Family Foundation, ACE, etc.

The RFP for the Satellite Space will go out by March 9 and she is working on a draft with David Stevens for the February 25th agenda and looking at best practices, what we have in place and areas we have holes and looking at the concept of the Strategic Plan, our vision and what our mission has been. We will work with teachers to brainstorm about what our present strengths and challenges are as well as opportunities and goals. We will look at not only the satellite site but the main school as well to determine how will the programs complement each other and how does that all work, and what needs to be done to take it to the next level.

Partnerships:

Superintendent McGrath has been working with Steve Ives, from the YMCA since November and others at all different levels of their organization about locating the Shawsheen Preschool at the YMCA. Representatives from the YMCA also visited Shawsheen School to see the Preschool Program in action. We are waiting on an update from Mr. Ives and what the next steps will be and hope to have a recommendation on the relocation as soon as possible. Additionally, they talked about our principals rethinking our partnership with the YMCA for outdoor education making it more of a day long experience, an extended day offering in other areas beyond pre-school, high school level offerings in the areas of Social Sciences, Social Studies, Civics, and General Government, and opportunities through the Science Grant they have with Merrimack College. In addition, since many Andover children go to the YMCA, they would like to talk about possibly housing some of their programs in our schools.

The Student Learning Goal is tied into Dr. McGrath's supervision work with principals and in collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Student Services. There are four areas of focus: literacy and the Reading Program, IAndover and the 1:1 Pilot Program, the High School Schedule Implementation, and the opportunity for multi-disciplinary learning in Project Based Learning (PBL).

At the Principal Meetings, they discuss strategies for students in high need groups who are under-performing. Principals have specific goals in place and our administrators have been working with them and their teachers looking at a cohort of students and changes to the intervention; specifically, what the goal will be. . Our job is to ensure that we to support, supervise and provide resources where needed. Principals discuss progress made in student learning and strategies used at the Principals Meetings.

Prof Learning Goal:

Last year the School Committee asked her to focus more on educational leadership aspects and move away from operational areas. Dr. McGrath designed a plan to ensure she had more opportunities to work with the High School Implementation Group, working with Steve Sanborn on Makerspace, interacting with Town-wide and School PTOs, the League of Women Voters and she attends arts & athletic activities whenever possible.

DESE Related Goals

Dr. McGrath makes sure the Department of Education Goals are moved through the district. Some of which are the successful implementing plan for local and state initiatives, PARCC, RETELL courses for teachers taken offsite and offered by DESE, how we deliver the strategy for ELL students, and digital learning. The parent portal is open but we still have work to do on elementary level, The ALICE Program is in place and headed by Paul Szymanski who oversaw training programs across the district beginning with an overview in August, and the CIP Warrant Article for updated security systems as part of student safety.

Annie Gilbert said the goals, in large degree, focus on innovation and at their last budget workshop they talked about adding contracted services monies in order to move some of these initiatives forward. Is that something we can look at either as a contracted service or as an actual person in our administrative staff? Dr. McGrath said that based on the January 20th budget workshop the funds for an innovation position have been placed in contracted services a placeholder for now. David Birnbach said we should look at making it a permanent Central Office position because our initiatives are large and multi-dimensional and there is value in having one person overseeing this as their sole mission. Innovators are very externally focused, connecting to other organizations, traveling to best practices to bring information back to Andover. The window of opportunity to capture a candidate is now; people are in high-demand and there are not a lot of them available. Superintendent McGrath has been overseeing all of the innovation pieces but to implement them is not her job.

E. New Business

1. AHS Travel Request: The Netherlands-Leadership Summit--Human Rights- June 22-July 2, 2016
Don Robb moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the proposed extra-curricular trip for Andover High School students to the Netherlands on June 22 to July 2, 2016 as presented and in accordance with the provision set forth in the Andover School Committee Policy entitled "APS School-sponsored trip and Student Travel Policy. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein and voted 4-0 to approve.

F. Consent Agenda

1. Warrants: Expense SW1517 and Payroll 15S033

2. Minutes: *Executive Session Minutes: January-March 2014

*The School Committee was unable to vote on Executive Session Minutes because they did not have a quorum. Paula Colby-Clements left the meeting early and Don Robb has to abstain.

On a motion by and seconded by David Birnbach the Andover School Committee voted 3-0-1 to approve the Warrants as presented. Don Robb abstained.

G. Adjournment

At 10:07 P.M. on a motion by Joel Blumstein and seconded by Don Robb, the Andover School Committee voted to adjourn. Roll call: J. Blumstein-Y, D. Birnbach-Y, D. Robb-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo

Recording Secretary