

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of January 12, 2012
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chairwoman Annie Gilbert, Vice- Chair Paula Colby-Clements, Secretary, Dennis Forgue, David Birnbach, and Richard Collins

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

I. Executive Session

At 6:05 P.M. the School Committee entered into Executive Session on a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Paula Colby-Clements for the purpose of discussing matters relative to collective bargaining strategy and to return to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, and R. Collins-Y. David Birnbach arrived after the meeting opened. At 6:55 P.M. on a motion by Dennis Forgue and a second by Dick Collins, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn from Executive Session and to move to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, Richard Collins-Y, and David Birnbach-Y.

II. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:05 P.M. by Chairwoman Gilbert.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Katelyn McLaren and Arthur Baillargeon, Grade 5 students from Sanborn School. On behalf of the School Committee Mr. Collins presented the students with a certificate of appreciation.

C. Recognition

Superintendent McGrath introduced Susan Choquette, AHS Drama Director and members of the cast of *"Fiddler on the Roof"*. Dr. McGrath congratulated the students on their theatrical-musical performance this past season. The students performed one of the songs from the musical for the School Committee and School Administrators. Their performance was exceptional and well received by all.

Dr. McGrath also introduced Mark Mercer and the members of the Show Choir congratulating them on receiving an award of \$25,000 for the two-minute video clip submitted by the students to the "Glee Give a Note" campaign, sponsored by Twentieth Century Fox Television and the National Association for Music Education (NAFME). Mark Mercer said the \$25,000 will be dedicated to the Music Program at AHS to enhance the classroom experience to benefit music students — including band and orchestra — by purchasing technology and other materials the department wouldn't have been able to purchase otherwise.

On Monday, January 9th over three-hundred parents attended a presentation on "Helping our Children Develop Resiliency as They Face a Complicated World", by Maria Trozzi, M.Ed., who is an assistant professor of pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine, Director of the nationally renowned Good Grief Program at Boston Medical Center, and a consultant to the Child Development Unit at Children's Hospital. After the presentation, breakout sessions were facilitated by school principals, assistant principals, social workers, and adjustment counselors. The data collected from the responses to

the two questions in the breakout sessions (1.) What did you hear that will help you think differently about your children and what they need and (2.) how do we join forces to help your children), will be put on the school website, an action plan developed and worked into the Strategic Plan. Dr. McGrath recognized Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos and Adjustment Counselor Janet Yedinak for organizing the event and designing the framework for the break-out sessions.

Paula Colby-Clements announced that Senator John Kerry recognized the Andover Food Services Program as a model for the entire nation. Congratulations to the Food Service Director and her staff.

Dick Collins congratulated the Girls' and Boys' Track Team for the tremendous season and said they have a track meet against Phillips Academy on Saturday.

Annie Gilbert thanked the Sanborn students and teachers for the artwork on display in the School Committee Room and hallways of the School Administration building.

D. Communications

On Wednesday, January 18th the School Committee will hold a special meeting in the DMS Auditorium at 7:00 P.M. A presentation will be given by the Ballardvale Fire Station Building Committee on the options under consideration for the location of the new Ballardvale Fire Station. There will be an opportunity for community input after the presentation; however, the School Committee will not be deliberating or voting as this is an informational session only.

It was reported that the Technology-CIP requests for FY-13 which included upgrading all School and Town offices for wireless capabilities over a few years time and funded over several years, will now be completed and funded at the same time. The funds will be borrowed for the one-time implementation and paid through the cable franchise fee fund and will be cost/budget neutral. The expansion and completion of the server network will be completed by the fall of 2012. Thank you to Finance Chair Jon Stumpf and Board of Selectman Chair Brian Major for their work in this endeavor.

The School Committee received notice from their School Attorney that the AEA submitted a counter-proposal to the teacher contract. The School Committee will meet next week to discuss the proposal received.

E. Citizen Input

Mary Robb, 168 Lowell Street and an AHS teacher, talked about the benefits of the high school schedule. She stated that Andover has historically under-funded the schools and the town residents can afford to pay more. It was evident by the vote at the December Special Town Meeting for the Youth Center – a place for kids to “hang-out” is more important than education. Where’s the campaign to raise money for education? Brian Parker of Tewksbury Street and a teacher at AHS shared his thoughts on the state of the schools. He is alarmed by the rapid demise of the schools, the rising class sizes, and the need to support teachers who feel unappreciated and overburdened. The 3 x 3 teaching block being proposed by the School Committee is academically unsound. Paula Parker a teacher at DMS commented on the Alert Now message sent out by the District relative to the Work to Rule status of the teachers, and how it would have little impact on students. The message conveyed that the extra time teachers give, outside the contract day, is of little value.

Andover resident, Bill Pennington, a former Town-wide PTO Moderator and PAC fundraiser, is concerned with the leadership of the AEA, who seem to be drifting away from the true reason of why they

become involved in teaching children.

Michael Day, a parent of three students in the Andover Public Schools, thanked the School Committee, teachers, and administrators for all the great work they do; however, he is starting to see the impact of Work to Rule. He understands the teachers at AHS are concerned that a 3 x 3 schedule could result in teacher layoffs, and is concerned about class size at AHS. The priority of the School Committee should be to reduce class size –the high school is deteriorating and he hopes there is a way to remove some of the impact from other areas and focus on the high school schedule, since this seems to be the crux of the contract stalemate. Bill Berger, 22 Stinson Road talked about the unsustainable 2 x 3 schedule. High school teachers spend less time in the classroom than other teachers; he implores the teachers to look inward – excellence is not synonymous with exceptionalism, the time for a contract is now.

Peter Otis, ESL Teacher at High Plain Elementary talked about the contract crisis which has reached 498 days without an agreement. Settlement of the agreement is long overdue and the main motivation should be quality education, not cost. When the contract is settled they will need to have team building to restore trust and communication. AHS Physical Education Teacher Wayne Puglisi said a major part of their program is to develop significant relationships with students. Increased class sizes make it more difficult to maintain significant relationships and provide creative innovative programs.

Annie Gilbert said the School Committee proposal looks to increase the instructional teaching time at AHS, using the same amount of dollars to provide more teachers – not less; however, the building has capacity limitations. They want to build capacity with a different schedule.

Denise Martin a parent of four children does not feel enough information on contract negotiations is being provided publicly and they do not feel included in the discussion. Bill Wall, also a parent with four children, is concerned about the poisonous atmosphere due to contract negotiations and Work-to-Rule decision by the AEA. It is important to make the facts about class size and the schedule at AHS public. The block schedule could be improved; it is a luxury we can no longer afford.

AEA President Kerry Costello talked about the lack of data and the different configurations of school districts. The data cannot be taken at face value; individual factors need to be looked at. The Schedule Task Force Committee has never met, the data never analyzed. She urges the School Committee to work with the AEA and start a task force to look a real solid data.

David Birnbach provided information on a study by Babson College who benchmarked the measurements on academic performance of high schools. When Mr. Birnbach was on the School Committee over ten years ago, AHS was ranked 10th of the top 20 high school in Massachusetts, since then, they went to the block-schedule and are now ranked 27th on the list of high schools in Massachusetts. He contacted all of the top ten high schools in the State of Massachusetts as well as the top ten high schools across the country. In all of the top high schools a modified block system consisting of short and longer blocks was employed and, in every case, teachers taught more minutes during the day than Andover teachers teach under our current block schedule. David held up a graph showing that in Andover, elementary teachers teach 68% of the day, middle school teachers 61%, and high school teachers 48%.

F. Education

1. Grant opportunities

- a. Intel - Assistant Superintendent, Nancy Duclos announced that Andover was invited by Intel to attend the Educator Academy (the only school in Massachusetts invited to attend). Every year Intel

supports the National Science Fair Convention and at the same time sponsors an Educator Academy. Andover was selected as part of the Educator's Academy to further student interest on scientific research resulting in a science fair.

b. DESE – Regional Grant Submissions – Andover along with North Andover and Northern Essex Community College will provide a program for 18-22 year old special education students to give them life skills, working skills and a college experience. The Grant is a collaboration to broaden their social network and provide students an opportunity to transition and become familiar with different experiences and develop work/life skills. The grant will allow them to purchase a van to transport the students to work and to NECCO who is designing a program specific to these students.

Andover, in conjunction with Bedford and Burlington, will continue to work on technology initiatives, including one-to-one, paperless curriculum writing and integrating technology as an instructional tool, and to work to promote and support the use of technology in the classroom.

c. National Science Foundation Grant-Partner –Andover will partner with Bedford in writing a course in Astro-Physics and moving forward in this arena.

G. Old Business

1. Bancroft School Update - Annie Gilbert stated that the order of conditions was upheld in their favor by the courts and the DEP has a hearing scheduled in March. The pre-hearing testimony to rule if abutters had any standing, was ruled to have no standing and recommended for dismissal and to have no hearing in March. The decisions can however be appealed. They hope that a settlement can be resolved and we can move forward on the school project.

2. Financials – Paul Szymanski provided information on the Quarterly Financial Review and gave a status of the Out of District Special Education tuitions, pending costs for evaluation and therapy, transportation (summer and in-district), and stated that assessments will be made to see what programs can be brought in-house to save money. The fund balances are running very tight but being managed. Homeless transportation will be included as a line item in FY-13 at \$20,000 plus.

H. New Business

1. Athletic Concussion Policy – First Reading

Athletic Director Chris Bergeron and Rita Casper, Director of Nursing were present to explain the Athletic Concussion Policy and talked about the increase and seriousness of concussions, along with the requirements student athletes who suffer a concussion must meet before returning to play. All coaches have been provided with the information and parents will be educated on the policy. The policy also includes students in the Marching Band. Baseline tests will be given to freshmen and juniors.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the new policy as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, entitled "Concussion Policy" as presented. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 5-0 to approve.

2. Restricting Activities on Town Meeting/Town Election Dates

Town Moderator Sheila Doherty and Town Clerk Larry Murphy have asked that activities on the dates for Town Meetings and elections be restricted. Superintendent McGrath has discussed this with the Town Clerk and noted that it presents a problem with the school calendar, and some of the scheduling is out of our control but we will try to make accommodations where possible. A first-draft of the 2012-

2013 School Calendar will be presented at the next meeting.

3. Gift to Bancroft School

Motion: Dennis Forgue motioned for the School Committee to accept the anonymous gift of \$7,500 for the purchase of an interactive white board, laptop, and classroom supplies for the Bancroft School. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 5-0 to approve.

4. Gift to Andover High School

Motion: Dennis Forgue motioned for the School Committee to accept the anonymous gift of \$5,000 to be used for the purpose of programming and classroom materials for the Andover High School. The motion was seconded by Dick Collins and voted 5-0 to approve.

5. Disposal of Surplus School Materials

The process of disposing of surplus school materials was explained by Paul Szymanski and a comprehensive list of textbooks and equipment to be disposed was provided. After the School Committee votes to dispose of the items, the Board of Selectmen votes, and then the items go out to bid. If no bids are received, the items are disposed of.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the disposal of the school surplus property as presented. The motion was seconded by Dick Collins and voted 5-0 to approve.

I Consent Agenda

1. Minutes: School Committee Minutes of December 5, 2011, December 8, 2011 and Triboard Minutes of December 12, 2011.
2. Warrants: Paul Szymanski said the Warrants are in order and provided the information for the Warrants SW1212, SW1212A and Payroll Warrants 12S025, 12S026, 12S07, and 12S08.

Motion: On a motion by Dennis Forgue and seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, the Consent Agenda Items were voted 5-0 to approve with a revision to School Committee Minutes of December 8, 2011.

J. Adjournment

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Richard Collins, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents: School Warrants
Minutes of December 5, 8, and Triboard Minutes of December 12, 2011
Year to Date Budget Report
General Fund Financial Summary
Memo from Town Clerk, Larry Murphy: Re: Election and Town Meeting Schedules
Athletic Concussion Policy
Surplus Textbook and Supply Disposal Inventory Form