

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of March 15, 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, and AHS Liaison Colin Johnson.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos, and Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent, Finance & Administration,

I. Executive Session

At 6:53 P.M. Annie Gilbert called the School Committee Meeting to order in the School Committee Meeting Room. On a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Dick Collins, the School Committee entered into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy with the Food Services, Custodians and Secretaries Bargaining Units and to return to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, R. Collins-Y, and D. Birnbach-Y. At 7:05 P.M. on a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and a second by Dennis Forgue, 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 7:12 P.M. Chairwoman Gilbert.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Katherine Burns, who is a Grade 7 student at West Middle School. On behalf of the School Committee Mr. Collins presented Katherine with a certificate of appreciation.

C. Recognition

Superintendent McGrath introduced and recognized WMS Principal Steve Murray, Assistant Principal Deborah Downes, and Program Head Rebecca Franks on the success of the Excel Program at West Middle School. The Administrators explained how important it is to have the students in the Excel Program as part of WMS Community with students and mentors' working together; this program is a model that other communities should emulate. Deb Downes talked about how the program empowers students to affect change and make a difference; it is sustainable learning that builds growth. In the WEB Program (Where Everyone Belongs) 8th Grade students mentor Grade 6th students creating leadership opportunities especially in the Excel Program. The benefits are realized through the quality of relationship building, understanding of others, and an awareness of what you can give and get back.

Program Head Becky Franks shared the conversations with parents of students in the Excel Program and their desire for educational experiences for their children that are authentic, meaningful, and inclusive. Connected classes are filled with students from the Excel Program along with their peers and mentors, and co-taught providing a mixed, diverse population that is a unique and wonderful opportunity for everyone. Two students from WMS talked about their experiences as Excel mentors, the friendships formed, and what a great learning experience it has been.

Parents of two children in the Excel Program offered their perspective on the program. Their children have the best of both worlds within the WMS Community. Their children are involved in after-school

activities and clubs, attend classes with their mentors, and are active members of the community. They belong. The WMS Leadership has been phenomenal in promoting the school culture to support and include Excel students within the community and it has meant so much to everyone. The parents encourage the School Committee to support the Excel Program throughout all of the Andover Schools.

Mr. Collins recognized the West Elementary School students, Principal Roos and her staff on the wonderful and successful WERARC Program held last week.

Colin Johnson recognized the AHS Girls' Basketball Team who will be competing in the Division I Finals at the Worcester Centrum on Saturday, March 17th at 5:45 P.M.

Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos recognized and congratulated:

Shawsheen School Physical Education Teacher, Kevin Tiller who has a published lesson plan in PE Central.

The Drama Guild students under the direction of Susan Choquette who advanced to the State Finals being held the weekend of March 23rd at the Back Bay Events Center. The following students won awards in the preliminary competition:

Excellence in Action Awards: Emily Byrne, Amy Jurek, Alex Mellin, Conor Richardson

Excellence in Set Design & Stage Managing: Matilda Sabal

Excellence in Props Construction: Nick Solimini and Courtney Plati

Students who participated in the All State Music Festival on February 23rd: Nicholas Renton, Rebecca Long, and Clara Kim, and students in Music Choir who participated in a competition in Somerset, Massachusetts winning three medals.

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, which is the longest running and most prestigious program for creative teens, honored the following students:

Photography Gold Key: Rachel Aldrich, Benjamin Harris

Photography Honorable Mention: Melanie Nesteruk, Emma Cammann, Emily Ishihara, and Katja Grober; Ceramics/Glass Honorable Mention: Melanie Tornatore, Jacob Phan, Emily Appleton, and Matilda Sabal; Drawing Gold Key, Drawing Honorable Mention: Colin Johnson; Drawing Silver Key: George Zhou; Drawing Honorable Mention: Jianna Christopher, Mary Kuan, Reina Ono; Painting Silver Key: Arun Padykula; Painting Honorable Mention: Melanie Long; Portfolio Gold Key, Film & Animation Silver Key, Sculpture Silver Key: John Lincoln Vogel; and Conor Pauley, Sculpture Honorable Mention.

D. Communications

AHS Liaison Colin Johnson said most students at AHS prefer the current block schedule. Personally, he would like to have shorter blocks.

David Birnbach cited the findings of a new study of thirty-five charter schools led by a team from Harvard which found that traditionally collected measures viewed as sacred in education circles to not be correlated with school effectiveness. What they did conclude as effective: frequent teacher feedback, data driven instruction, high-dosage tutoring, increased instructional time, and a relentless focus on academic achievement. To read more about the study, press CNTL & Click to follow the link: http://articles.businessinsider.com/2011-12-06/strategy/30480500_1_class-size-charter-school-effectiveness

E. Citizen Input

Ten teachers from the Andover Educators' Association and two students asked to speak about the high school schedule and the AEA contract. Matt Champa, a senior at AHS likes the current block schedule especially for AP Classes. Michael Hansom a junior at AHS also supports the current block schedules because it allows for more course selections; should a new schedule be identified he suggests it be phased in.

Jennifer Kane, AHS English Teacher, please consider new teachers who chose to work in Andover. Moira Chapman, AHS Math Teacher (14 years) is proud of the education provided to the students and is very worried about the community, students, and her job. Reducing high school teachers will reduce the quality of education. Please keep the current block schedule. Brian Shea, AHS English Teacher, responded to the remarks David Birnbach shared about the Harvard Study and would be happy to take on tutoring time with students if the time is given to them. Mary Robb, AHS Social Studies Teacher, said the schedule has been deemed too expensive – but the Town's AAA rating speaks otherwise; the Town can afford the schedule.

F. Old Business

1. Public Hearing – FY-13 Proposed Budget

The Public Hearing of the FY-13 Proposed Budget opened at 8:20 P.M. Superintendent McGrath provided a review of Warrant Article 4 – the FY-13 Proposed School Budget which included information on the process, drivers of the budget, and the budget timeline leading up to Town Meeting. She also read the Mission and Vision Statements, our reason for being.

The proposed budget of \$66,263,983 is a 4.7% increase of \$2,979,406 over last year; however, it still leaves a budget gap of \$(867,584). Should the Town approve the \$772,481 in additional funding for the expiration of the Education Jobs Grant and the PEP Federal Grant funds, the budget gap would be reduced to \$(95,103). The Proposed Budget was presented at the Triboard Meeting on March 7th. The Budget Drivers include the salary increase/adjustments and 2% COLA, increases in the Evaluation and Therapy Account, Transportation increases for Regular Ed Students and \$25,000 for transporting Homeless Students, and the obligation for Medicare expense. Staff additions amount to a net increase of 13.0 FTE's. The FY-13 Budget supports the Strategic Plan Initiatives at all levels.

Joyce Laundre', Director of Student Services presented information on the EXCEL Program which provides educational services to students until age 22. There are 35 students in the current K-12 program, six of which matriculated to AHS in September 2012. Additional teachers and support staff are needed at AHS to support the program; if students go out-of-district the costs for those tuitions would be in the neighborhood of \$68,172 to \$90,414 per student, per year for tuition and transportation. The Transition Opportunity Program (TOP) for students age 18-22 is a natural extension to keep students in-district, providing functional academics, vocational and continued life skills, at a cost of \$62,262; with the opportunity to tuition in students from other communities. The LEAP Program, a significant language-based program for elementary students in Grades 3-5, provides extensive mediation sooner, rather than waiting until students reach middle school or go to out-of-district schools. The FY-13 Budget Out-of-District Expenses is a reduction of 4.6% for tuition and 5.4% in transportation. The best thing for kids is to keep them in-district ~ no dollar amount can be attached to the benefits students receive through education in-house as opposed to going out-of-district. Creating in-house programs stabilizes per pupil costs, reduces reliance on OUD placements,

potentially creates an opportunity to tuition in students from other districts, and reduces large fluctuations in OUD expenses.

CIP Requests

Dr. McGrath reported that the CIP - SCH-3 Textbook request in the amount of \$375,950 is to purchase French books for Grade 6 and Grade 7 students.

Interim Plant & Facilities Director Maria Maggio reported on the following School CIP requests:

SCH-1-	\$210,000	General Maintenance for all schools
SCH-2-	\$792,000	Specific projects by building
SCH-5-	\$2,700,000	*Major school projects
SCH-6-	\$333,000	Additional improvements to the WW II Memorial Auditorium

*SCH-5 was approved for \$1M. The School Site Master Plan for Year 2 includes the Andover High School central freezer, the copy center, and receiving area which are three separate projects that will go out to bid.

Warrant Article P-26 Technology, Infrastructure, Connectivity, and Telecommunications Equipment

The FY-13 School and Town Technology Infrastructure upgrade in the amount of \$2.5M is a \$1.5M direct investment into digital classrooms and infrastructure improvements for wireless classrooms. The cost of this request is fully funded through the Cable Franchise Fees with no additional cost to the Town residents.

Discussion:

Jen Meagher, AHS Social Studies Teacher suggests residents be asked to approve the current level of staffing at all schools. Programs won't happen if staff is cut.

Kerry Costello, AEA President echoed Jen's comments. She asked how many positions of attritions are built into the budget. *None are built in; they have notice of three possible retirements.* Kerry asked if the retirement number were increased how that would impact the budget. *We have to wait and see if more retirements come in.* Could you provide clarity on the positions that will be lost? *The positions funded by the Ed Jobs Grant, Peps Grant, and stimulus funds would be lost unless the budget gap is covered.*

Please give clarification of the High School Resource Officer, what does that position mean? *The Resource Officer will be a member of the local police department and a school employee who will report to the high school principal and the Superintendent whose role will be to help with drug and alcohol abuse at AHS and provide security and safety. The Resource Officer will report to the Chief of Police during summer and school vacations. The cost of the position to the School Department is \$36,000.*

Dan Kowalski, Enfield Drive congratulated Paul Puzanghera on his vision for the IT infrastructure changes that will give employees the tools needed to do their job at no new net cost to taxpayers.

Jenn Meagher asked if one of the goals of the high school schedule is to reduce teachers. *It is not a goal~ they are investing other ways to reduce budget expenses, to improve academic performance, and for teachers to spend more time providing instruction to students while addressing class size.*

2. Bancroft School Project Update – Tabled

3. Financials: Monthly Report – Tabled

G. New Business

1. Vehicle Policy Revision Approval -Tabled

2. Warrant Article P-37, Lease of Land at 100 Lovejoy Road for Solar Facilities

The School Committee may table the discussion on the Warrant Article to conduct a feasibility study on installation of Solar Fields on some portion of the Sanborn School property to the March 22nd meeting. There are two pieces of land under consideration, the Sanborn School property and land on Tewksbury Street that is town-owned. Because the School Committee has jurisdiction over the use of the Sanborn School property, they would be required to vote their approval to release the land for the Warrant Article to move forward.

Many residents from the Sanborn School neighborhood were present and encouraged the School Committee to reject supporting using the Sanborn School property for this purpose. The School Committee was asked about the process, and if the article would come back to Town Meeting again after the feasibility study is conducted. The School Committee said the Warrant Article could be amended requiring the decision go back to Town Meeting, but as it stands now it would not come back for a future vote. The residents contended that there are many serious issues to be considered. Clear-cutting the land would change the terrain resulting in watershed concerns if such a large area of trees and vegetation were desecrated. Keeping the vegetation from re-growing under the solar panels would require the use of chemicals, the effects of which would be harmful to the environment. Residents urged the School Committee to oppose the Warrant Article citing concerns about the best use of the land, effects on animal life, losing control of the property for twenty years, and once the trees are gone, they're gone. The benefactor of the property did not donate the land for this purpose. The financial gain is not equal to the loss of the land. The School Committee will resume deliberations on this Warrant Article at their March 22nd meeting.

H. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes: January 26, 2012, February 9, 2012, March 1, 2012 School Committee Minutes

2. Warrants: Paul Szymanski said the Warrants are in order: Expense WA# SW1216 in the amount of \$681,861.24; Payroll WA# 12S036 in the amount of \$2,039,586.19; and Payroll WA# 12S037 in the amount of \$104,091.61.

Motion: On a motion by Dennis Forgue and seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

I. Adjournment

On a motion by Dennis Forgue and seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, the Andover School Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents: FY-13 Proposed School Budget
Warrants
Minutes of January 26, February 19, and March 1, 2012