

**Andover School Committee  
Business Meeting  
Minutes of October 6, 2016**

**Members in Attendance:** Chair, Joel Blumstein, Vice-Chair, Susan McCready, Ted Teichert, Shannon Scully, and Paul Murphy

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Dr. Sheldon Berman, and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration, Paul Szymanski.

**1. Regular Meeting:**

**A. Call to Order – Opening Ceremonies**

Chair Blumstein called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The meeting began with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag by Bancroft students Logan Gabriel, Jacob Duval, and Sarah Duval. On behalf of the School Committee, the students were presented with certificates of appreciation.

**B. Recognitions/Communications**

**1. Highlights from the District:**

Dr. Berman reported that the opening of the school year continues to go well. He shared a draft survey developed by Joe Connelly, Director of Community Services, to gather community interest in offering after school programs. Mr. Connelly would like the survey sent out on Connect 5 next week. Dr. Berman asked the School Committee to send him their comments

**2. Preliminary Oct. 1 Enrollment Report:**

Dr. Berman presented the preliminary October 1 enrollment report which will be submitted to DESE at the end of the month. The Slate, a new apartment development on Lowell Street has just recently opened is only 60% filled; future leases will continue to impact Sanborn School before the end of the year. Bancroft enrollment is higher than projected, while High Plain and South School are both slightly lower than projections while enrollment at West Elementary is on target. Middle Schools have similar enrollments as last year, and AHS is slightly lower than projected.

A bar graph analysis of the K-12 Growth in the ELL population was provided and Dr. Berman reported that the increase in ELL students was predicted to be 20% higher; however, the increase is actually 40% higher and additional staffing may be required. In addition, almost 10% of our students are on reduced and free lunch which is significantly higher than 5 years ago.

Shannon Scully asked to be provided the location of the additional 5 teachers funded in this year's budget.

Paul Szymanski gave a brief update on activities of the past few days which included a 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Out of District meeting yesterday (copies of the documents shared will be posted on Friday), a meeting with the Chiefs of Police and Fire regarding safety protocols as required by law, and a meeting he and Dr. Berman participated in with the Town Manager to review the FY-2018 CIP.

Susan McCready announced that the annual ACE Scarecrow Festival is coming up this month and the School Committee will be assembling their scarecrow on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. The

Communications Taskforce met yesterday and Joanne Najarian gave an update on the status of the website which is projected to go live in January and the Parentlink App which will be available towards the end of November. Although we will have new tools, we don't have the resources to keep the information updated on a timely basis. A print brochure is being put together, funded by a grant from ACE, which hopefully will be virtual in the future.

Ted Teichert attended a SEPAC meeting last month and reported that they are also working on their website to be more user-friendly. Upcoming events include speakers and a possible parent social. They are reaching out to other SEPAC groups across the state to work collaboratively with them.

Joel Blumstein said the next steps for the master facility plan includes scheduling three public forums over the next few weeks: West Elementary on October 13th; DMS on October 17th; and AHS on October 18<sup>th</sup>, all at 7:00 P.M. A tour of all three schools will be held at 6:00 P.M. prior to the forums so residents can view the conditions of the buildings. Separate forums will be scheduled for teachers and staff.

As the School Committee liaison to CREST Collaborative, Joel Blumstein reported that CREST has had a turnover of personnel to better deliver services and noted that there are many districts behind in their payments to CREST. Paul indicated that Andover is up-to-date on their invoices from CREST.

### **C. Opportunity for Public Comment**

Chuck Fittz, 34 Chandler Road, found it to be unethical of the AEA Leadership to be lobbying against Question 2-Charter Schools at the Open Houses. He would like to know how many children of teachers who live out of town attend Andover Schools. He is also concerned with the decrease in Andover's MCAS Advanced scores in Science.

Ruth Ann McDougall, 60 Woburn Street, is thankful that the discontinuation of Saturday transportation to the Landmark School has been resolved and that students will continue to be bussed on Saturdays, but was concerned about communications concerning this issue.

Krystal Solimine, Surrey Lane, read the letter she received from the State Ethics Commission on their decision not to pursue her complaint regarding Dr. Berman's affiliation with outside entities. They have conducted a careful review and have determined that the matter does not warrant further action. She spoke to the person at the Ethics Commission who wrote the letter concerning the School Committee's "exemption" of Dr. Berman's activities. She is also concerned with the abundance of items on tonight's agenda and that the public will not have enough time to process the information.

Jeanne Teichert, Dufton Road, has concerns regarding the independent comprehensive review of the LEAP program conducted last year; specifically relating to who wrote and edited the report submitted by Eleni Steadman.

Erica Nichols, 26 Rock O'Dundee Road, voiced her concern regarding communication to families in Andover about transportation for out-of-district placements. They have been told that the late bus is being phased out, not receiving transportation daily, or on Saturdays. The

law is clear that transportation must be provided for out-of-district students. She would like to see a process that does the right thing for the children.

John Zhuang, 2 Wyncrest Drive, inquired about the survey for after-school programs and when it would be available. He appreciates that the School Department is considering this program.

Kerry Costello, President of the AEA, provided a letter to the School Committee Chair as the formal notice to begin the process of bargaining all contract units. She is also aware of some misunderstanding with the signs posted at open house and has explained the process to the membership internally through the AEA newsletter. No permission is needed to exercise civil rights.

Mike Roli, 2 College Circle, feels the posting of signs against Question 2 was a gross negligent act and he would like the School Committee to provide an independent analysis on Charter Schools and how they could positively / negatively affect not only enrollment but the cost to taxpayers.

#### **D. Response to Public Input**

Dr. Berman clarified that he does not remember saying that they would not look at the report of the LEAP Program before it was sent out publically. As a matter of fact, they found two pieces missing – the Middle School information and the parent survey information; which were later added by Eleni Steadman. There were no conclusions or findings that were influenced or changed in the report. We wanted a comprehensive, thorough study and feel that the findings were quite powerful and telling; there are areas that need to be improved upon. The comprehensive review was influential in helping us to open up areas of improvement with dyslexia across the whole school district.

Joel Blumstein said the School Committee discussed Charter School issues last spring and will provide a copy of the resolution to Mr. Roli. Regarding the Ethics Commission statement by Ms. Solimine, Mr. Blumstein said the School Committee did not provide an exemption of any type; it issued a letter almost identical to one issued last year which indicated that there was no basis to conclude that Dr. Berman's affiliations would compromise his service as Superintendent.

Ted Teichert was personally affected by the Transportation comment. The Landmark School handbook states that it is mandatory to go to school on Saturdays and that bussing was allowed last year. We need to do a better job of communicating the correct information to the parents. Dr. Berman said we are complying with legal requirements. Ted requested a copy of all settlement agreements so they can be sure that all families are being treated fairly. Additionally, he commented on the AEA's actions on open school night and takes offense to what is stated in Kerry Costello's letter. He does not want to see our schools politicized in any way.

Shannon Scully has significant concerns with the financial cost of sending children to charter schools and will reach out directly to Mr. Roli.

Vishvesh said they should remember that when decisions are made not everyone can be satisfied. Everyone is trying to do what is best for the town, if you don't agree, don't resolve with tension.

## **E. Education:**

### **1. PARCC/MCAS Data Presentation:**

Program Coordinators, Katherine Richard, Steve Sanborn, Patricia Whalen, and Jennifer Barresi, presented information on the 2016 MCAS and PARCC student test results. With only 2 years of data for PARCC they have a limited ability to make an analysis. The State is not releasing a lot of items, just the 'bigger picture' results. PARCC test results are much more consistent grade to grade than MCAS data. In 2015 the test was given on computer and in 2016 pen/pencil.

Jen Barresi, PreK-Gr 5 Literacy Program Coordinator reported that there were minor gains across all levels in Elementary ELA. She is confident the new curriculum in place will help students in the future because it is tailored to meet the needs of all students, and uses a workshop approach.

Pat Whalen, Gr 6-12 ELA Coordinator is pleased with all the results for Grades 6-12 and said the teachers did a wonderful job preparing the students at the middle and elementary levels. Grade 10 scores are strong and include all students even those outplaced.

Steve Sanborn, Science Program Coordinator, noted they have work to do but the work has been in progress and he is optimistic that, with the implementation of the new elementary science program, student scores will increase. It will take some time for teachers to learn the new program. Going forward there will be great resources for students to use for problem solving which is very exciting, and the revision of the elementary report card will ask teachers to evaluate against some of the new standards and to mediate what is going on at that time. More MCAS style questions will be incorporated into the FOSS Program going forward.

The Middle Schools also experienced the same downward trends in Science proficient scores, but there were little resources provided to teachers. This fall we are implementing a new set of science programs with consumable textbooks and apps, rolling out a digital piece, putting together district wide assessments at the middle school level, and unpacking new standards, and new district-wide assessments developed. Physics: The start of the new High School schedule will allow for remediation during the school day and provide consistent course offerings throughout the school year.

Jeanne Teichert is disappointed that the comparison to other towns was not part of the presentation or information on results for children with disabilities, levels of the district/school, etc. and finds it troubling to see a drop in scores at Sanborn.

### **2. Technology for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade PARCC Testing**

CIO of Technology, Paul Puzzanghera and Joanne Najarian, Director of Digital Learning presented information on technology needs for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade PARCC Testing. DESE will be requiring computer-based testing this year in 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We need to find a way to meet the needs of all grades that will require computerized testing that will include expanding the 1:1 program for 4<sup>th</sup> grade in addition to the planned 5<sup>th</sup> grade program. It is estimated they will need an additional \$60K in funding. Dr. Berman said they are investigating areas of funding towards this cost outside of the operating budget if possible (AFE funds, leasing, etc.). They will need 21 devices for Grade 4 across the district.

Technology is offering to fund both sets of devices up to \$400,000; but funds are not available for leasing. Funds requested are for carts and cases. Dr. Berman will keep the School Committee apprised of the funding.

### 3. Literacy Plan Update

Sara Stetson presented information on a Literacy Plan – which is not just a Dyslexia Plan - it is a program to look at all students. In October they will review and evaluate students through universal screening and progress monitoring and continue to implement DIBELS K-5 progress monitoring. An Update of Year 1 of the Literacy Program that includes a timeline of proposed actions was distributed. Education components include a workshop with Landmark Outreach, 54 teachers have enrolled in the “Understanding Dyslexia” professional development course she and Nancy Duclos are offering; 28 teachers are attending “Dyslexia & Literacy: Early Identification in Educational Programming” at Harvard; and 15 teachers from Grades 3-5 are receiving year-long Wilson Training.

They have meet with Landmark Outreach, to prepare professional development programs for LEAP teachers, initiating vertical team meetings to establish progression between levels and establishing clear learning routines through committee work. They will also offer guest lectures for Parents. On October 18<sup>th</sup> at WMS a forum for teachers and staff will begin at 3:30 P.M. with two guest speakers from Tufts, followed by a parent forum at 6:30 P.M. also at the WMS auditorium.

### 4. AHS Schedule:

Principal, Philip Conrad updated the School Committee on the status of the AHS 7+ H schedule proposal for next year beginning with a brief overview of the 7+H HS schedule, history and timeline. Sample schedules for students and teachers were provided. This year the steps include meeting with AHS PAC parents to review pros and cons of schedule and compare the schedule to those of our competition and to prepare for parent forums. Staff will be preparing students for course selection, rotation, and personalization. Teachers will practice the H1 and H2 Blocks, discuss how to move forward together, and prepare their program of studies.

## F. New Business

### 1. Policy Review Process:

Subcommittee members, Joel Blumstein and Susan McCready updated the Committee on the task of updating the School Committee Policy Handbook. The Subcommittee has been meeting with Mike Gilbert of MASC for the past few months reviewing section by section of the current handbook. They have completed a review through Section F and, at this point, it is time to start bringing the policies to the other School Committee members. The Subcommittee has created a red-line document to show where the changes have been made, and a document that summarizes the changes. The members like the format the sub-committee is using and is acceptable to them as a Committee. Joel Blumstein said they hope to have a first reading of Section A in November. The changes to existing policies need to have a first and second reading prior to a vote. The end result will be an up to date policy manual that will be online and user-friendly. Mike Gilbert is providing counsel and advice based on changes in laws, statutes, and what they have done. It also provides us an opportunity to see if we are following the policy.

## 2. Preliminary Discussion of Superintendent Goals/Performance Review Process

Joel Blumstein provided a brief introduction of the preliminary draft of eight goals for the Superintendent. The School Committee will put the goals in a state-approved format, and discuss the individual goals. The final product should be what the School Committee thinks are the most important items. Communications will be an important goal that includes updating our website and sending out communications to parents and the community. The School budget only allows us to have a data person one day a week and we could use additional resources. Dr. Berman said it is his responsibility to show how having good data with good communication moves us forward. The School Committee pointed out some of the wording changes they would like to see corrected.

### G. Old Business

#### 1. CIP for FY-18

The Town Manager will be posting some of the FY-18 CIP before the end of October; the greatest concern is putting forward curriculum needs separate from School 1 and 2. We need to keep School 3 open until we have added that into our operating budget, and the other issue is the media center and what happens if AHS becomes a priority with MSBA. The cost of the media center needs to be determined along with options/ideas that could be done. A vote on the CIP items will be scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup> as part of the business meeting.

The Town Manager publishes the CIP at the end of October and a score sheet used on the whole process of voting on the articles. The CIP plan for next year will sufficiently take care of all the facilities problems; it is the FY-19 CIP that will be affected by the decision on which school becomes the priority. School 3 textbooks should be a separate item from School 1 and 2 in the CIP.

#### 2. FY16 End of Year Financials:

Paul Szymanski provided information on questions submitted by the School Committee and explained that when we start the FY-18 budget we look at last year's budget to see areas where we can 'tighten' up. Paul reported on causes that left remaining balances in some budget line items, special projects accomplished with remaining dollars, and also line items that had overruns. Out of District changes is always a best guess estimate – the budget is in constant change with many moving pieces.

Building Operations – Energy Utilities: Due to a warm winter, it was a good year resulting in savings in the utility budget. Janet Nicosia is involved with negotiating contracts for utilities and was able to negotiate some contracts lower than expected. The remaining balance in the Maintenance and Equipment Account allowed us to reach out to custodians for a list of items needed.

### H. Consent Agenda

#### 1. Surplus Textbooks Disposal of Textbooks request by Adrienne Bock.

The Social Studies books are outdated ones that have now been determined as surplus.

#### 2. Warrants Paul Szymanski reported that the warrants are in order.

Expense: SW1708 and Payroll: 17S014 and 17S013

On a motion by Paul Murphy and seconded by Susan McCready the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**I. Adjournment**

At 10:45 P.M. on a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Paul Murphy, the School Committee voted to adjourn. Roll call: T. Teichert-Y, S. Scully-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, and J. Blumstein-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary

Documents: Surplus Textbook Disposal Inventory Form  
CIP FY-2018-2022  
ELL Analysis of Growth FY2012-FY2017  
Draft of APS Policy Manual Recommended Revisions Summary  
Draft of Superintendent Goals for 2016-2017  
AHS 7+H Schedule Presentation  
Letter from AEA for formal request to Demand Bargain successor agreements  
Literacy Program Update Presentation