

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of December 14, 2009
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Debra Rahmin Silberstein, Richard J. Collins, Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, and David Birnbach.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Claudia L. Bach, Superintendent, Dr. Susan M. Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent, Bernie Tuttle, Interim Business Administrator

I. Regular meeting in the School Committee Room

A. Salute to the Flag

Chair Deb Silberstein reconvened the meeting at 7:13 P.M. Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bancroft School students, Luke, Mary and Sam Boshar. Mr. Collins presented the students with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

B. Recognition of Achievement

1. Best Practices – Engineering the Future by Design

Dr. Mary Jo Carabatsos, Science Program Advisor at Andover High School and Project Manager of the Stem Pipeline Grant explained the history of the Stem Pipeline Grant, where they are currently and what they hope to have moving forward with the Engineering Future by Design. The project goals include improving student attitudes and student achievement towards Engineering and Science, strengthening the current curriculum, and implementing and improving new Engineering Curriculum, supporting teaching of Engineering, and establishing a collaboration among consortium entities and making curricular connections with middle school science standards. Dr. Carabatsos also explained the National Science Foundation proposal for Innovative Technology Experience for Students and Teachers (ITEST) which is a three-year grant for \$1.2M.

Dr. Bach recognized Geraldine Fagen, High Plain Elementary Librarian/Media Specialist, who has been chosen as President of the Mass Association of School Librarians.

Dr. Bach said she and Dr. Nicholson attended the WHMS Grade 7 Exhibition on Afghanistan, which was a very impressive exhibition on the history and culture of that country. The students did an extraordinary job of presenting their learning targets. Annie Gilbert also recognized the students at WHMS and was very impressed with their efforts to communicate their exhibit information.

C. Communication

1. New Pre-school Class

Dr. Kathy Fink and Shawsheen School Principal Moira O'Brien announced that an additional pre-school class would be opening at Shawsheen School in January. Early Childhood Stimulus Funds will be used to pay for the staff. They estimate that by the time the new Bancroft School opens there will be nine pre-school classes.

C. Communication (Cont'd)

2. Update on Strategic Plan

Dr. Nicholson updated the Committee on the Strategic Plan stating that they are planning on bringing in an international speaker on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 to kick-off the Strategic Plan. The Pinpoint Committees are up and running and the Steering Committee will be holding a follow-up discussion on the timing of the vision.

Dr. Bach apologized to the community for the snow call of last Wednesday. The weather information received was not very accurate and had accurate information been received, she would have called school off.

Mr. Collins commended AHS student Margaret D'Innocenzo on winning two events (medley and free style) and Rachel Moore who also won two events (100 meter breaststroke and 100 meter butterfly) in the Division I State Swimming Championship. Congratulations to the students and the entire team on winning the Division I State Swimming Championship.

Deb Silberstein recognized and thanked Dr. Bach and Dr. Nicholson for the strength of their educational leadership of the district throughout this challenging year.

C. Citizen Input

Laura Hajdukiewicz, AHS Scuba Diving Club Advisor talked about the planned trip to Cozumel in February, the safeguards in place to ensure safety of the student divers, as well as the liability waivers and consent forms signed by parents and students.

E. Consent Agendas

1. Warrants: Mr. Tuttle said the Warrants are in order.

Motion: On a motion by Dennis Fogue with a second by Mr. Collins, it was voted 5-0-0 to approve the warrants as presented.

Field Trips: 1. AHS trip to Cozumel, Mexico, Grades 11-12; Feb 13-20, 2010 requested by Laura Hajdukiewicz, Scuba Club Advisor.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert with a second by Mr. Collins, it was voted 2-1-2 to not approve the AHS scuba diving trip to Cozumel, Mexico in February 2010 as presented.

The School Committee will revisit the request on Thursday, December 17th after review of the liability information requested.

2. AHS trip to Italy Grades 11-12, April 18-26, 2010 requested by Brian Shea.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert with a second by Dennis Fogue, it was voted 3-0-2 to approve the AHS Trip to Italy for Grades 11-12, in April 2010 presented.

E. Consent Agendas(Cont'd)

3. Minutes: Regular Minutes of November 10, and 24, 2009.

On a motion by Dennis Forgue and a second by Annie Gilbert, it was voted 5-0 to approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 10 and 24, 2009 as presented.

F. Facilities- Bancroft Feasibility Study

1. Approval of educational program and enrollment for the new Bancroft School

Annie Gilbert thanked everyone who has been involved and engaged in the process of determining the educational program and enrollment number for the new Bancroft School. The option being proposed for the new Bancroft School includes maxing out the enrollment at Bancroft providing an opportunity to explore closing Shawsheen, and using the Feasibility Study to determine the student population the Bancroft site can reasonably hold assuming for now all pre-school will be housed there, and expanding the K-5 student population (total school population of 650 or 700 students). The actual data obtained from the Feasibility Study would be presented at Town Meeting for funding approval. Apprehensions about a larger school population and the impact a larger school building would have on the site and in the neighborhood are concerns, but the architects and the Building Committee will be able to tell us what will and won't work.

Dennis Forgue presented an alternative proposal to build the new Bancroft similar in size to South and High Plain, which in his view would create parity among the elementary schools. The proposal also suggests increasing the student capacity at Bancroft by 100 students and redistricting across the town to rebalance school populations. He also suggests keeping Shawsheen open and capping the enrollment, and building free standing modular classrooms a Sanborn School if necessary. The proposal would present a modest-size project with greater potential to gain approval at Town Meeting.

A protracted discussion on the pros and cons of the two options and the enrollment for the new Bancroft School followed. It was noted that two projects are being presented (Bancroft and building modular classrooms at Sanborn), but only one would receive reimbursement from MSBA. It was also noted that the pre-school classes are half day (40 each session) and starting and ending times are different from the regular school day.

Annie Gilbert motioned to propose the option to build the new Bancroft School for a total of 680 students, which includes the pre-school. David Birnbach seconded the motion.

Discussion: Tom Deso, SBC member, said the difference between the two options is that one includes Pre-K and the other does not. Plant and Facilities Director, Joe Piantedosi said it Shawsheen would be fine to use for a short period of time but if used for a longer period would require extensive costs to bring the building up to code. Annie Gilbert suggests letting the Feasibility Study decide what the enrollment number should be.

No vote taken.

F. Facilities- Bancroft Feasibility Study (Cont'd)

1. Approval of educational program and enrollment for the new Bancroft School (cont'd)

Annie Gilbert motioned to propose the option to the new Bancroft School for a total of 620 students for K-5 and 80 pre-school students. David Birnbach seconded the motion.

Discussion: The School Committee discussed the student population they feel educationally comfortable with. If the school is built for 620 students in K-5 (plus pre-school of 80 students) then parity with other elementary schools is achieved.

The motion was voted 4-1 and approved.

G. Finances

1. FY-10 Budget Forecast

Interim Business Manager, Bernie Tuttle provided the School Committee Members with an outline of the budget forecast noting six areas that could require increases. The report shows salaries as level-funded and the addition of two contingency positions. He also reported that the biggest impact on the budget would be the reduction of circuit breaker funds. Mr. Tuttle also distributed an action plan to consider reducing the projected deficit for this year of approximately \$2M, which includes the impact of reduced funding from the circuit breaker. Dr. Bach reported that IDEA funds for FY2011 would not be available to backfill the loss of circuit breaker revenue. Deb Silberstein would like to see the Special Education costs as a Town fixed cost line item as done in previous years. She also suggested the School Committee set priorities for the upcoming budget cycle and then submitting them to Mr. Tuttle.

H. Policy

1. Student Activity Accounts Policy (JJF-R)

On a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Annie Gilbert, the School Committee voted to unanimously approve the Student Activity Accounts Policy (JJF-R) as presented.

D. Adjournment

On a motion to adjourn by Mr. Collins with a second by Dennis Forgue, it was voted to 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder