

School Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
Monday, March 8, 2021

Members attending: SusanMary Redinger, Sharlene Cronin, Suzanne Allen, Abby Besse, Shannon Molloy and Maureen Babcock

Others in attendance: Linda Dwight, Nick Thornton, Brooke Caroom, and Taylor Caroom.

Call to Order and Read the Vision Statement

SusanMary Redinger called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Taylor Caroom read the Vision Statement.

Public Commentary

Jen Manell, Stow Road, Harvard – Dress Code

Student Report – Nick Thornton reported that a few weeks ago, a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion workshop was held. The workshop brought to students all of the work that the administration is doing against racism. Taylor Caroom explained that the workshop for high school students was held on the first parent teacher conference day and during the second parent teacher conference day the workshop will be held for middle school students. Taylor Caroom reported that the Civic Cup was held this weekend. There were thirteen student teams and it was super fun and everyone had a great time together.

Brooke Caroom reported that the Junior Class held a community service event on Saturday allowed for class bonding and contributed to community service hours.

The School Committee will be meeting with the Student Advisory Council on Wednesday, April 7th at 1:00 p.m. Topics for discussion included:

*How do students feel about the possibility of having student representatives to the School Committee as voting members.

*Spend time getting to know our student representatives and why they wanted this role, how it might help them in the future, and how we can help them get the most out of it.

*Student check in about coming back to in-person school for 5 days a week.

*Student check in on the remote students to see how things are going and check in on the latest round of survey feedback.

*Student thoughts about spacing and lunch

*Student feedback on how the DEI day went and the take away from it.

Superintendent Report Update – Attached

Learning Model Plan Update

Dr. Dwight presented the Learning Model Changes for HES and TBS that will happen on April 5th.

*Hildreth Elementary students will return to a full-day schedule for 5 days a week.

*The Bromfield middle school and high school student will attend 5 mornings a week with both cohorts and then attend afternoon remote classes. Office hours will continue 4 days a week.

*Consideration for another phase for Bromfield will be under consideration when we receive further guidance from Commission Riley. We are looking at all options including whether we can separate middle school students from the high school students despite the combined busing and some combined specialist and classes.

Start Time Advisory Update

Dr. Dwight proposed adjusting the start time at The Bromfield school from 7:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. with an ending time of 2:50 p.m. to provide our middle and high school students with a half hour longer in the morning to sleep and prepare for their school day. This adjustment to the Bromfield schedule will require a slight shift for the elementary students from a school start time of 8:50 a.m. to 9:10 a.m. and an ending time of 3:28 p.m. The new schedule of one school impacts the other because we share the busses and consultation with Dee Bus Company, 40 – 45 minutes are needed between the two bus runs. The shift would be a one-year pilot so that we could evaluate the impact and either continue with the change or shift back to the original times depending on the feedback. This evaluation would be done in the spring of 2022. Dr. Dwight will bring back information on how this change will impact sports and time frames to get team to away games. The Committee will vote on this change at their next meeting.

Policy Review (Model)

*Suzanne Allen did the first read of policy “Spacing Between Students and Teachers and Staff – COVID 19 Policy”. The policy will be brought back at the next meeting for approval.

*Abby Besse did the first read of policy “Mask Policy” – File EBDFA. The policy will be brought back at the next meeting for approval.

*Abby Besse reviewed the changes to the “Learning Model Decision Points” Policy. The change was made to accommodate class size and will require families to request a change in learning model. The principal will then make the decision based on class size. The April re-entry date was changed from April 12th to April 5th.

SusanMary Redinger made a motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to approve the changes to the Learning Model Decision Points policy as presented.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Grade Comparison Summary Presentation

Dr. Dwight shared with the Committee the grade evaluation findings. The Bromfield Principals and the counselors have been tracking the engagement of students during this COVID impacted year. Every at-risk student is brought before the team of counselors, nurses, administrators, and teachers to track progress and plan interventions. Counselors have also instituted a collaboration time with teachers. Parent communication is also part of the process. One of the new developments has been the addition of M(medical) and N (not enough evidence) grading categories this year. These distinctions capture evidence of medical or mental health issues.

Based on the 2nd marking period grades, nine more students were invited to attend school 4 mornings a week. This additional structure and availability enable more non-special education interventions for students. The change to 5 mornings a week on April 5th will also help these students and the students overall.

Choice Student Slot Allocations (VOTE)

Dr. Dwight presented the leadership teams recommendation for School Choice openings for the 2021-2022 school year.

5th grade – 5 openings

6th grade – 2 openings

7th grade – 2 openings

9th grade – 1 opening

The Committee will bring back the information for a vote at the next meeting.

Covid Screening Fundraising Report

Liz Ruark reported the following regarding COVID Safe Schools

Overview

*Seven weeks of screening

*91% of eligible educators/staff, 83% of eligible students screened at least 1time

*Average 70% staff/week

*Average 74% in person students/week

Results

*Last four weeks: 0 positives

*Highest # of positives in a week: 3 (week of 1/25)

*Covid mitigation strategies are working

Funding

*Fully funded through remainder of school year

*Individual donations, grants (PTO, HTA), DESE program

*Thank you to Harvard Schools Trust!

Additional Benefits

*Offering testing to remote students

*Increased Trust membership

*Mentoring other Mass. Districts

*A model for the nation

SusanMary Redinger expressed the utmost appreciation to the Covid Safe Schools group. The town, the school district and the School Committee thank you. It has taken everyone pulling together in the same direction to make the project a success.

Disposition Preference for Bromfield House

SusanMary Redinger presented an update on the work the Bromfield House Committee has completed as it relates to the disposition of the Bromfield House and property. The options were to sell both the land and the house or sell the house and keep the land. The Board of Selectman are in favor of keeping the land and using it for an athletic field. SusanMary Redinger would like to see if the Committee would support a particular direction and present a School Committee recommendation. The Committee is aligned with the keeping the land and having the land used

for an educational purpose. SusanMary Redinger will present the recommendation to the Bromfield House Committee and keep the School Committee informed going forward.

Grant Approval (VOTE)

The following gifts were presented for approval from the PTO.

Roundhouse Theatre – Kristina Lazaro - \$600.00

Acton Discovery Museum for Grade 3 – Amy Bassage - \$1,125.00

Suzanne Allen made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to approve the grants as presented.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)

Future Meeting Dates

March 22nd

Student Advisory – April 7th

Agenda Items

Policy

Choice

Calendar

Minutes

Without objection SusanMary Redinger approved the minutes as presented.

School Committee Liaison/Subcommittee Reports

Abby Besse was unable to attend the last Bromfield School Council meeting.

Abby Besse reported that she attended the Parks & Rec meeting. There was some discussion on Anne Lees Softball field not being taken care of in accordance with the MOU but that issue has been corrected and Parks and Rec will be maintaining that field. Parks and Rec has been working on ways to maintain the athletic fields so they are safe and in good playing condition. They have come up with a rotating field schedule where one field per week will be rested. They are working on details to rent a field from Devens. This could create trouble with our athletic budget due to the cost of transportation to Devens and the rental fee. As a School Committee we will need to meet with Parks and Rec and work out the details of these changes. The change could start as early as the next spring season. Parks and Rec is talking about creating an MOU with the Bromfield Trust for taking over the maintenance of the field in front of the school. Additional question came up about the maintenance of the field at the new HES property. It will be helpful to have a conversation with Parks and Rec so that we are all of the same page.

Suzanne Allen reported: Policy has been discussed.

Suzanne Allen reported: Wellness needs to schedule a meeting

Suzanne Allen reported: HES School Council meets this week.

Sharlene Cronin reported that she attended both budget meeting for the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectman. Fincom presented and finalized the town budget. If there is a COLA it will need to be paid through our budget. The Selectboard understands that there is are structural budget issues. There was discussion about what is needed as well as long term goals. This is something we can think about as part of our own strategic plan. Going forward Sharlene Cronin said she will make more of an effort to go to those meeting.

Sharlene Cronin reported that the HTA negotiations are on-going.

Sharlene Cronin reported that the Athletic Advisory will be meeting next week.

Shannon Molloy reported that SEPAC met on February 25th. DESE presented on a “Tier Focused Monitoring review that is a Special Education review that happens on a three-year cycle. SEPAC members were able to identify an area that needed immediate attention and a work around was created to correct the issue. The presenter reminded us that Harvard is a Tier 1 school. The final evaluation will be made public. The next SEPAC workshop is scheduled for Thursday, May 6, and will be a workshop on Effective Communitation. SEPAC is happy that they have been able to move forward and are making progress in a pandemic year.

Maureen Babcock reported that DEAC hasn’t met. They are sending out a parent survey in the next few weeks. Maureen will report back when she has some data results. SusanMary Redinger thanked Maureen Babcock for putting together the ski club and offering such a great opportunity for our kids. It was really well done and much appreciated.

SusanMary Redinger reported that HEAC is considering a conversion of the tennis court lights to LED as part of the grant funding and also continuing to move through with the electric vehicle charging stations that will be submitted to the grant as well.

SusanMary Redinger reported that CPIC reviewed a request from the Council on Aging for \$45,000 to send out an RFP to move the Council on Aging out of the Hildreth House to another property in town. The proposed building is behind post office. CPIC approved the \$45,000 for plans and to go out with an RFP. The cost to move would be much less that the cost of Phase 2 of the project. If the Council on Aging were to move, the town would then need to decide how to use the Hildred House.

SusanMary Redinger reported that the HES building project is on the verge of being done. So much is getting done. The project is on budget and on time for a May move in. SusanMary Redinger will bring pictures to share at the next meeting.

SusanMary Redinger reported that an easement was granted by the Selectboard for Verizon to move forward with pole work to be able to operate an elevator that will assist with moving into the new building. The use of the elevator will allow for a savings of approximately \$4,000 per day. The School Building Committee is meeting again on March 25th. The Committee will be looking at how to celebrate the school opening.

Public Commentary –

Marisa Khurana, Warren Avenue – School Choice

School Committee Commentary

Suzanne Allen – met a parent this weekend who was so happy that her child was able to get additional services and come in person to Bromfield two additional days per week.

SusanMary Redinger thanked Shannon Malloy for all of her work on the Civics Cup. It is such a great event and your hard work and passion are evident.

Shannon Molloy thanked everyone on her team for all the help and all the wonderful students who competed.

Adjourn

SusanMary Redinger made the motion and Sharlene Cronin seconded to move to adjourn into executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A section 2 for the following purposes: To discuss strategy with respect to an in preparation for collective bargaining with Harvard Teachers' Association because an open discussion may have detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee.

Allen (Aye), Besse (Aye), Cronin (Aye), Molloy (Aye), Redinger (Aye)