

School Committee Meeting Minutes  
Virtual Meeting  
December 12, 2022  
6:15 PM

Members attending: Suzanne Allen, Abigail Besse, Sharlene Cronin, Heather Knowles, Shannon Molloy, and SusanMary Redinger.

Others in attendance: Linda Dwight, Caitlin Lelievre, and Ingrid Nilsson.

Ms. Besse called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

**Vision Statement:**

Asha Khurana read the vision statement.

**Student Update:**

Asha Khurana reported that the winter music concerts were held last week and they all had great attendance. Beauty and the Beast auditions will take place the week of December 12th. She also shared that it has been a really stressful time for seniors while they wait to hear back on their college admissions applications and teachers have been very accommodating.

**Public Commentary:**

None.

**Out of State and Overnight Field Trip Approval:**

Cynthia Fontaine, TBS Digital Arts Teacher, was present to request approval from the Committee to attend the Business Professionals of America State Leadership Conference. She discussed the number of students planning to attend and the costs associated with the trip. The BPA hopes to hold a fundraiser to offset some of the cost in addition to submitting for a grant from the Harvard Schools Trust.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the District's BPA group to attend the BPA State Leadership Conference. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Cronin    Second: Ms. Allen    Status: Passed*

Kristin McManus, TBS Social Studies Teacher, was present to request approval from the Committee to attend the Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference. They are seeking preliminary approval as this event is so close to the State Conference and this will allow more time to plan. Again, the District BPA group plans to raise funds to help offset some of the cost of attending.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the District's BPA group to attend the BPA National Leadership Conference. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Allen      Second: Ms. Redinger      Status: Passed*

### **MCAS Results Presentation:**

Ms. Robin Benoit, Director of Instructional Design, shared a presentation outlining the MCAS results from Spring 2022. The presentation reviewed the testing history from 2019 through 2022, achievement categories and their meaning, and an overview of the student growth percentile. Additionally, Ms. Benoit discussed the Harvard Public Schools achievement in ELA, math, and science and provided a district comparison with demographic peers and the surrounding communities.

### **FY24 Budget Discussion and Finalization:**

Dr. Dwight explained why the budget looks a little different than the last time it was shared with School Committee. The major changes are due to the corrected salary of a staff member, a reinstated position at the elementary school as a result of recalculating the number of students and where they fall within each grade level, and increasing the number of Choice students at the Bromfield School. Dr. Dwight clarified that there is one position in kindergarten that is still being considered, but this is a decision that will need to be made closer to the start of the 2023-24 school year. Committee members were able to ask questions throughout this discussion.

Ms. Nilsson discussed the Food Services budget and Dr. Dwight shared the Athletics budget with the Committee. Members were given an opportunity to ask questions regarding each of these cost centers.

Ms. Cronin shared the prepared budget narrative with the Committee and received feedback from members. A version of this will be included with the final budget books.

Ms. Besse expressed concern that the Committee will not know the outcome of the latest negotiations meeting before voting on the budget and suggested the Committee meet again this week once they have had a chance to discuss negotiations in Executive Session. The other

members agreed and the Committee will meet on December 15th at 6 PM in order to vote on the budget.

### **Superintendent Update:**

- Title IX Review Update: The District has found someone to come in and perform a review of the entire athletic program. Dr. Dwight is in communication with an outside vendor and is waiting on a quote before moving forward.
- MA Webinar Series: Dr. Dwight presented as part of a panel in a webinar series which discussed the intersection of the strategic plan and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Harvard was being used as an example for other districts to follow.
- Pathways Between Middle School and High School: Recommendations will be brought forward before a course of study is released.
- Teacher Leadership Team Meetings: These monthly meetings are being led by Ms. Benoit and the budget was reviewed in the most recent meeting so teachers understand the constraints. A lot of good questions came out of this meeting and a public forum will be planned for January to keep the community informed before they ultimately vote on this budget.

### **Policy Review:**

Ms. Allen started by sharing that the concussion policy which was already approved by the Committee needs to be added to the handbooks for HES and TBS.

A motion was made and seconded to make an addendum to each handbook and include the updated concussion policy. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Cronin    Second: Ms. Allen    Status: Passed*

Ms. Allen presented the proposed changes to policies: JJIF-R and JKAA. Committee members decided to vote on the policies individually.

A motion was made and seconded to approve policy JJIF-R as presented. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Allen    Second: Ms. Redinger    Status: Passed*

A motion was made and seconded to approve policy JKAA as presented. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Cronin    Second: Ms. Allen    Status: Passed*

**Grants/Club/Field Trip Approval:**

Dr. Dwight shared the grants pending School Committee approval and answered questions from members regarding details of specific grants.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the grants as outlined in the memo from the Harvard Schools Trust in addition to the PTO grant in the amount of \$4,275.50. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Redinger                      Second: Ms. Allen                      Status: Passed*

**Future Meeting Dates:**

The next meeting will be held on December 15, 2022 at 6 PM and will be remote via Zoom. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 9, 2023 at 6:15 PM.

**Agenda Items:**

The vote for the FY24 budget will occur on December 15th and the annual report is scheduled to be reviewed on January 9th. If members have other items that should be included on the agenda, they will forward them to Ms. Besse.

**Minutes:**

Ms Besse approved the November 28th meeting minutes as amended with no objection.

**SC Liaison and Subcommittee Reports:**

Ms. Redinger shared that the School Building Committee presented to the Historical Commission the week of December 5th and the stonewall project was approved. Beyond Construction is able to continue their work on the wall and it is expected that this should take about a month.

Ms. Cronin said that the Best Practices Subcommittee is continuing their work on the self-evaluation and is hoping to bring it forward to a meeting in January or February. She also shared that the member library has been migrated to the shared drive and asked members to check to make sure they have access. CPIC will meet this week to review capital requests.

Ms. Allen shared that Policy Subcommittee is continuing to work on the I and J policies and will have more for the Committee to review in the new year. She also discussed the structural changes with the Transportation Advisory Committee and said the group is trying to determine the best way to move forward as a committee.

Ms. Molloy said she was recently referred to a liaison at the Executive Office of Finance regarding the recent 14% increase in special education costs. She's hoping to get some insight into the process and she plans to draft an advocacy letter for members to review in January.

Ms. Besse said that HES School Council recently met and shared that they raised over \$2K in the coin challenge which will benefit schools and the Animal Protection League in Florida after the recent hurricane. Additionally, HES had their second all school meeting which focused on compassion. There is also a pajama drive going on this week at HES. The new vendor for the book fair received positive feedback. Ms. Besse also shared that the fields at Ann Lees and Ryan Land look great.

Ms. Knowles reported that two people attended the recent DEAC meeting who are planning to run for DEAC in addition to Ms. Knowles. She also said that she has received some questions about the Bridges program being understaffed and families being waitlisted. Dr. Dwight said that she thought the staffing issues had been resolved, but she would look into it and follow up with Ms. Knowles.

**Public Commentary:**

None.

**School Committee Commentary:**

None.

At 9:03 PM, members entered into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the HEA because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the school committee. The motion was passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

*Move: Ms. Redinger*

*Second: Ms. Cronin*

*Status: Passed*