

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
April 7, 2016
Meeting #1506

School Committee Members: Mr. Stewart, Ms. Silvers, Mr. Valentini, Mr. Batacchi, Ms. Bush, Mr. Sears, Ms. Sparhawk, Ms. Lartigue, Mr. Flynn, Ms. Rundle

Administration: Superintendent Hastings, Ms. Regan

Press: CTSB, Reporter – Berkshire Edge

Student Representatives: Maya Neski, Lauren Edwards

Others: Karen Chamberland, Karen Frighetto, Chris Thompson, Charlie Ketchen-Alford Select Board, Nadine Hawver - Sheffield Select Board, Ms. Sanzone, Ms. Doherty, Patrick Barrett, Sarah Siket, Ava Garrett, Lauren Scapin, Maya Neiski, Mr. Foster, Glenn Devoti, Danielle Melino, Lynette Gagnon

1. Mr. Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** *Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the minutes of School Committee Meeting #1505, as amended, and the special meeting on March 22, 2016.*
Ms. Sparhawk noted that it was Ms. Lartigue who made the comment under Item C regarding the vending machine purchase.
Mr. Flynn also made note that he was just receiving the complaint contained in the March 22nd meeting minutes (2 weeks after the accusation took place).
Vote: Mr. Flynn abstained, all others voted yes. Motion carries.

Ms. Sparhawk moved, seconded by Ms. Rundle, to amend the agenda so that Item M, under Business, is moved to after item 4. B. Voted unanimous

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Mr. Flynn, to amend the agenda so that Item 4. L, under Business, is moved up on the agenda and addressed after Item 4.B, the Opt Out discussion. Voted unanimous.

3. **Communications from the audience:**

A. Student Representative Report:

Maya Neski, Junior Class and All School President, introduced herself to the committee. She gave updates on all the school fundraisers and also mentioned that next week was the Junior Class Field Trip to RPI and the College of St. Rose. On a School Wide Level they are setting up the coordination with Monument Mountain on a Diversity Awareness project.

Cheerleader Presentation: Ava Garrett and Lauren Scapine gave a presentation on the Cheerleading team. They have competed in 5 competitions. They also addressed some of the dangers of the sport and that they have been doing a lot of fundraising. There was a discussion regarding the cost of the sport and funding.

Ms. Lartigue suggested that the cheerleading team put together a cost analysis of the sport and bring it forward to the school committee. Ms. Silvers mentioned that the Eagle Fund had paid for some items and was given to understand that they were going to apply for funds to purchase a large mat.

4. **Updates/Presentations:** There was nothing to report.

5. **Business:**

A. Approval to establish an Activities Account for the Class of 2019

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the establishment of an Activities Account for the class of 2019. Voted Unanimous.

B. Approval of an Overnight Field Trip, April 10-12, 2016 – Hiking the Appalachian Trail – Patrick Barrett

Mr. Barrett apologized for the short notice on the request. He gave a brief background on how this group got started and showed the school committee some of the items purchased with the funds that were raised and donated. Mr. Rundle stated that this was an awesome project, but objects to the name of the group “Man and his Environment” and suggests that they consider renaming the group.

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to approve the Overnight Field Trip, April 10-12, 2016, to hike the Appalachian Trail. Voted Unanimous.

K. Discussion on the “Opt-Out” Issue (MCAS/PARCC)

Ms. Lartigue read a statement explaining the SBRSD’s decision to administer the PARCC versus the MCAS this year (MCAS will still be administered to the High School Students).

Mr. Stewart clarified that what Ms. Lartigue presented to the School Committee was her personal view on the issue and is not subject to a vote. Also, stated that anyone has the right to advocate and that it was not illegal to opt out. There was further discussion regarding this.

Ms. Rundle moved that the Policy Subcommittee create a recommendation for the School Committee regarding the process for parents who opt their children out of the PARCC, MCAS, MCAS 2.0 or any other high states standardized test. Seconded by Ms. Lartigue.

Ms Rundle recused herself. Rest of school committee voted yes. Motion carries.

Ms. Kristin Sanzone introduced herself to the School Committee and thanked them for addressing this important issue. She is a parent of two children in Grades 1 and 4. She expressed her concerns regarding standardized testing and stated that the bottom line as parents, teachers and administrators, is to do what is best for our children.

Ms. Nancy Doherty, a parent and teacher also spoke regarding standardized testing, especially the MCAS Alt which is used to assess students with special needs.

Ms. Rundle moved, seconded by Mr. Sparhawk, the following Resolution:

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) School Committee resolves that neither parents who choose to opt their children out of the PARCC, MCAS, MCAS2.0, or any other high stakes standardized test nor students will be subject to any negative consequences from the SBRSD administration or the SBRSD School Committee.

Additionally, SBRSD teachers and staff members who choose to discuss this issue with students and parents, whether in class, in apparent-teacher conferences, in community meetings, or in other special and professional settings shall not be subject to any negative consequences from the SBRSD and administration or the SBRSD School Committee.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Lartigue then read the following resolution:

The Right to Advocate Resolution (Copy attached):

In accordance with rights granted in the Constitution, students in consultation with their families, have the right to opt out of statewide standardized testing such as the MCAS or PARCC.

In maintaining a district held belief to a family’s right to advocate for their children and a student’s right to advocate for him or herself, families and students will not be subject to any form of negative consequences from the school district for choosing to opt out of such tests.

Furthermore, opting out will not have implications of grades or class placement of any individual student. High school students should be made aware that a passing score on the 10th grade level MCAS is a graduation requirement set forth by the State of Massachusetts.

Educators who choose to discuss opting out of such tests in a family or student initiated conversation shall not be subject to any form of retribution by anyone in the SBRSD.

It is acknowledged that the SBRSD administrators have a duty and right to inform district families of the possible state imposed consequences that may, but are not guaranteed, to occur in the event of low participation on the statewide standardized tests.

We are pleased to reaffirm that free speech and advocating for one’s child is a fundamental right of the SBRSD educational community.

Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Sparhawk motioned, seconded by Ms. Rundle, to amend the resolution as follows:

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) School Committee resolves that neither parents who choose to opt their children out of the PARCC, MCAS, MCAS2.0, or any other high stakes standardized test nor students will be subject to any negative consequences from the SBRSD administration or the SBRSD School Committee.

Educators who choose to discuss opting out of such tests in a family or student initiated conversation shall not be subject to any form of retribution by anyone in the SBRSD.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Rundle recused herself

<i>Mr. Batacchi</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Ms. Silvers</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Mr. Valentini</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Mr. Flynn</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Ms. Lartigue</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Ms. Sparhawk</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Ms. Bush</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Sears</i>	<i>Yes</i>

J. Possible Use of E&D Funds to reduce the Town Of Sheffield’s under-assessment:

Superintendent Hastings explained that the goal was to bring this to the table for tonight’s meeting, but until Ms. Regan has had time to look over the budget he would like to table this item to another meeting. Superintendent Hastings and Mr. Turner had met with Ms. Hawver, Town of Sheffield, and indicated that there may be funds available in E&D. Mr. Valentini explained that there is an existing motion reducing the existing assessment to the 5 towns. There was further discussion regarding this. Recommendation is that the finance subcommittee meet before the April 28th regular school committee meeting at which time Ms. Regan would make recommendations to Superintendent Hastings to bring forward to the Finance Subcommittee.

C. Request for Approval of Mt. Everett Regional High School 2016-2017 Program of Studies – Glenn Devoti

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Rundle, to approve the Mt. Everett Regional High School 2016-2017 Program of Studies, with the suggested changes as submitted. Voted Unanimous.

Mr. Valentini motioned to table the item to the next meeting, because Mr. Devoti was not in the room. No second, motion withdrawn.

Mr. Devoti returned to the room and explained the changes in the program of studies to the committee. There was a discussion regarding the on-line courses.

Mr. Devoti also mentioned that Mt. Everett just finalized a deal with Berkshire Community College and that there is a \$25,000 annual scholarship available.

D. Review/Approval of the 2016-2017 School Calendar

Mr. Flynn motioned, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to approve the 2016-2017 academic school calendar. Voted unanimous.

Mr. Batacchi moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to have Superintendent Hastings try to have the last day of school on Friday, June 10th versus Monday, June 13th.

Mr. Flynn voted No. Other members voted yes. Motion carries.

E. Approval of the Xerox Copier contracts – Chris Thompson

Mr. Flynn motioned, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve the Xerox copier contracts. Voted unanimous.

Approval of the Business Administrator Contract: Mr. Stewart explained that the contract is similar to the prior business administrator and has been reviewed by our Attorneys and Ms. Regan. Mr. Flynn is against the increase in the pay.

Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to approve the business administrator's contract. Roll call Vote:

Mr. Flynn No Mr. Batacchi Yes Ms. Lartigue Yes Ms. Sparhawk Yes

Ms. Silvers Yes Ms. Rundle Yes Ms. Bush Yes Mr. Sears Yes

Mr. Valentini Yes

Motion carries.

F. Vote to Appoint Christine Regan as the Primary Berkshire Health Group Board Representative:

Mr. Valentini motioned, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to appoint Christine Regan as the Primary BHG Board Representative. Voted unanimous.

G. Vote to Appoint Christine Regan as the Chief Procurement Officer:

Ms. Lartigue motioned, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to appoint Christine Regan as the Chief Procurement Officer for the SBRSD. Voted unanimous.

H. Vote to Appoint Christine Regan to be the Project Governmental Officer for the Roof/Boiler Project (MSBA):

Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to appoint Christine Regan, Business Manager, to be the Project Governmental Officer for the roof and boiler project. Voted Unanimous.

I. Vote to Consider a New Contract for the SPED Director – Sandi Hubbard.

Mr. Stewart stated that the one year extension ends on June 30, 2016 and as such Ms. Hubbard has requested a new contract. Further, the School Committee has to vote on whether or not to extend a new 3 year contract to Sandi Hubbard.

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to extend a new contract for 3 years to Sandi Hubbard. Mr. Flynn voted No. Rest of School Committee Members voted Yes. Motion Carries.

Mr. Flynn would like to see the current and proposed contract. Mr. Stewart will request our attorney to email the contract to the school committee members.

Mr. Jamie Foster addressed the School Committee regarding the need of having a SPED Director and if we could share a SPED Director with another district. Mr. Stewart suggest that Mr. Foster submit a letter or statement to the School Committee as to why we don't need to have a SPED Director.

Mr. Flynn left the meeting at 8:46 pm

J. School Committee's Approval of Chris Clark's Request for a Leave of Absence for the 2016-2017 School Year

Ms. Silvers motioned, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to approve Chris Clark's request for a Leave of Absence for the 2016-2017 school year.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Valentini left the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Mr. Batacchi suggested that this be discussed at a Finance Subcommittee meeting. There was further discussion on pay and benefits while on a leave of absence.

Ms. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, that the School Committee grant Mr. Chris Clark's one year leave of absence with no provision for pay or health insurance. Voted Unanimous.

N. Superintendent's Report (Copy Attached)

O. Subcommittee Reports:

1. Finance Subcommittee – nothing to report
2. Building, Grounds and Technology Subcommittee
3. Transportation- no report have not met since last meeting Robert miller is planning on retiring and will not be bidding on the next contract. There is one year left on the current contract.
4. Food Subcommittee – nothing to report
5. Executive Evaluation – nothing to report. The next meeting is scheduled for April 28th
6. Policy Subcommittee – nothing to report

Mr. Stewart mentioned that he had attended the Berkshire Task Force meeting and will forward copies of the minutes when he has received them.

P. Financial Updates and Transfers as needed: Ms. Regan is currently analyzing the books and had nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Sears gave an update on the FRRSD/SBRSD Regional Planning Board. The Farmington River Regional School members visited the Middle and High School. Mr. Devoti and Mr. Carpenter gave a tour of the facilities. The feedback has been wonderful and they are very impressed by what they saw as far as opportunities for their students at SBRSD.

Motion to adjourn: Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. It was so voted. Meeting adjourned.