

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School Library
Sheffield, MA
October 20, 2016
Meeting #1516

School Committee Members: Art Batacchi, Carl Stewart, Bonnie Silvers, Kristin Sparhawk, Fran Lartigue, Vito Valentini, Maria Rundle, Dennis Sears

Absent: Marcella Bush, Charles Flynn

Administration: Superintendent Hastings, Christine Regan

Press: CTSB, Cory Willey - Berkshire Record,

Student Representatives: None present

Others: Karen Chamberland, Glenn DeVoti, Michael Buoniconti, Kerry Burke, Stephanie Graham

1. Call to Order: Mr. Stewart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Stewart informed the committee that we will have 3 new board members and hoped that Mr. Batacchi is re-elected. Robert Law is also running and he urged citizens to vote for Art and Robert Law. He also mentioned that Mike Farmer is running in Berkshire Hills.

Ballot Initiative #2: Mr. Stewart urged everyone to read the article in the Boston Globe by the Mayor of Boston. The Mayor strongly opposes a Yes vote expanding the number of charter schools. Our district adopted a resolution to oppose Ballot Initiative #2.

The next school committee meeting is November 17th, a reorganization meeting, at which time the chair and vice chair will be elected. Mr. Stewart stated that he had announced a long time ago that this will be his last term as Chair and will be happy to step down.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk to approve the minutes of meeting #1514, September 22, 2016, as submitted. It was so voted unanimously.

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Ms. Rundle, to approve the minutes of special meeting #1515, September 29, 2016, with the corrections as noted. It was so voted unanimously.

- *Kristin Sparhawk was not present*
- *Berkshire Eagle Reporter – Sheela Clary, correct spelling*
- *Under item 5. Business A. Discussion on 2016 MCAS, PARCC and Accountability Data. Paragraph 3, “Because we are small district we have a high needs subgroup (88% of our high need kids took the test)”.*
- *Paragraph 4: “Out of 11 districts in Berkshire County we were the only one dropped to Level 3.”*

Mr. Sears moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, to approve the correction to the minutes of meeting #1504 (February 25, 2016). Page 4, last paragraph, the date was changed to February 11th. It was so voted unanimously.

3. Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening’s Agenda Items

Student Representative Report: none

4. Update(s)/Presentations:

A. Massachusetts Rural Schools Coalition Rural Aid Proposal – Michael A. Buoniconti

Superintendent Hastings introduced Michael Buoniconti, Superintendent from Mohawk Trail Regional School.

Mr. Buoniconti thanked the School Committee for the opportunity to give the presentation.

Rural Massachusetts is facing a crisis with the combination of declining student enrollment, flat Chapter 70 funding and rising operating costs. In an attempt to address this problem proactively, a group of rural superintendents formed the Massachusetts Rural Schools Coalition in the spring of 2016. DESE has also been increasingly responsive. These educational leaders are proposing the creation of Rural School Aid within the Massachusetts Chapter 70 Education Aid Program as part of a comprehensive reform strategy essential to the long term survival of rural public schools and towns. Thirty-two states have already implemented weighted systems into their funding formulas to advantage rural school districts.

The Massachusetts Rural Schools Coalition is proposing a Rural School Aid Program based on four criteria: (1) enrollment; (2) density factor; (3) Chapter 70 and (4) per capita income. It is suggested that 15 years of data be used to determine eligibility. The combination of declining enrollment, flat state education aid and rising operating costs is causing spiking assessment increases to towns that cannot be sustained over time. This proposal is intended to avert both educational and financial disaster in rural Massachusetts by providing equitable and essential resources within the Commonwealth's Chapter 70 educational aid program. Chapter 70 – Massachusetts Foundation Budget - is designed for urban and suburban school districts and not rural school districts (copy of proposal to establish rural school aid is attached).

Mr. Buoniconti will also be speaking at the MASC Conference in November.

Question and answer session followed the presentation.

Ms. Rundle moved, seconded by Ms. Lartigue, that the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee join the Massachusetts Rural Schools Coalition and that the SBRSD School Committee support the creation of the Rural School Aid within the Chapter 70 program in the coming 2017-2018 fiscal year MA budget. It was so voted unanimously.

B. Presentation of the World Education Alliance Symposium and the Hong Kong Exchange – Stephanie Graham

Ms. Graham spoke to the school committee on the upcoming Global Ed program.

- Four students from Hong Kong will be here in December for 2 weeks.
- In March 2017 we will have 6 of our students going to Hong Kong (Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School) and 6 to Nanjing to attend the symposium on water resources. Both groups will meet up during their time in China.
- Ms. Graham also mentioned that 10 exchange students from Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School will visit Mt. Everett in April of 2017.

Ms. Graham was also seeking preliminary approval for the World Education Alliance – 2017-2018 Convention on Spoken World Poetry to be held here at SBRSD. She would like to propose this at the symposium this spring in Nanjing and is therefore seeking preliminary approval. Ms. Silvers asked Ms. Graham to write up a formal proposal to present to the School Committee.

There was further discussion on the students' financial ability to pay for this trip.

Ms. Sparhawk moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the Incoming Student Exchange in December 2016 (4 students from Confucius Hall Secondary School) and April 2017 (10 students from Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School). It was so voted unanimously.

C. Mount Everett Regional School Improvement Plan – Glenn DeVoti

Mr. Devoti was joined by Mr. Kurt DeGrenier to present the School Improvement Plan (copy attached). The plan was reviewed by the school council and department heads.

Ms. Rundle had a question on *II Management and Operations H. Revisit student government in regard to pressure releases as it relates to their academic, co-curricular and social lives*. Mr. Devoti explained that the students wanted to meet with him to discuss a number of issues. The students feel that they would like one break without homework. Trying to work with the students to listen to their concerns.

Ms. Lartigue asked Mr. Devoti about the racial incident from last year and what the school is doing this year. Mr. Devoti explained that this was a priority this year. There was a guest speaker who talked to the students about civility and respecting each other. This was brought about by the general donation of a donor. Mr. DeGrenier stated that Ms. Burke arranged for Title 9 training for the faculty and staff at the start of school.

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the Mt. Everett Regional School 2016-2017 School Improvement Plan as presented by Mr. Glenn Devoti. It was so voted unanimously.

D. Upcoming Changes to Public Records Law

Mr. Stewart informed the committee that with the new changes to Public Records Law the district will need to designate a Records Access Officer. The changes will go into effect January 1, 2017. Administration needs to determine how big a job this is, whether or not there will be a stipend or benefit that goes with this job, who will be designated the RAO. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. **Business:**

A. Preliminary Approval of Overnight Field Trip to Hong Kong, Nanjing, Hangzhou, China (March 16, 2017 to March 26, 2017)

Ms. Sparhawk moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to give preliminary approval of the Overnight Field Trip to Hong Kong, Nanjing, Hangzhou, China from March 16 to 26, 2017. It was voted unanimously.

B. FY18 Budget Development Calendar

There was a general discussion regarding the FY18 Budget Development Calendar. Mr. Valentini recommended that the Finance Committee meet after the reorganization meeting in November to determine the dates of the future meetings.

C. Vote to accept a PreK student, who is currently attending NMC, but the parents moved out of district to Sandisfield after the start of the school year. The parents would like their child to remain at New Marlborough Central.

Ms. Lartigue moved, Mr. Batacchi seconded, to accept the PreKindergarten student at New Marlborough Centra who was enrolled in district and then moved out of district.

There was discussion regarding this after which Ms. Lartigue rescinded her motion.

Ms. Lartigue moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, that the SBRSD allow the PreK student, who moved out of district during the school year, to remain enrolled at NMC without having to pay tuition for this school year. This student will have to apply for school choice when entering kindergarten. It was so voted unanimously.

D. Superintendent Report

1. **Community**

- a. **The Sheffield Kiwanis** delivered two boxes of school supplies which included spiral bound notebooks, two backpacks, pens, pencils, etc. Susan Happ manages the distribution as she comes across students who are in need.

- b. **Parent Internet Safety Presentation.** Wednesday, October 19th we had an evening Parent Internet Safety presentation in the Mount Everett library, presented by **Rob Kinzer, Second Assistant District Attorney at Berkshire County District Attorney's Office**. This was a great opportunity for parents to see and understand the dangers of the internet and to learn what you can do to guide your child to make good choices. The New Marlborough PTA provided light refreshments. Some of our Mount Everett students provided Child Care services. This presentation resulted from an inquiry by Jen Ganzle-Smith.
 - c. **Proposition 3 Public Forum.** Students at Mount Everett Regional School will be hosting a Town Hall Forum on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 at 6:00 pm in the Mount Everett Library to review the pros and cons of Proposition 3. Prop 3 will further restrict the sale of eggs, or meat from animals that have been thus restricted in Massachusetts, even though the animals were raised and/or slaughtered elsewhere. Prominent authorities on both sides of the issue are expected to be present to share their differing views on the issue. We invite interested voters to attend on Tuesday, October 25th at the Mount Everett Library.
 - d. **Proposition 3 Information Packet.** Jeff Lang and his Journalism Class have developed and reproduced an information packet on Prop 3, which will appear on the ballot in November. Since the actual proposition is lengthy, Jeff and his class hope to distribute the packets so that voters will have an understanding of the proposition before they enter the voting booth. I have distributed copies of the tri-fold to you this evening.
 - e. **Monday, November 14th is a half day for students. Parent Conferences** will be held at Undermountain Elementary, New Marlborough and South Egremont.
 - f. **Culinary Arts Support of New Marlborough Council on Aging.** This week, Suzanne Petrucci's Culinary Arts class is catering the New Marlborough Council on Aging luncheon in Southfield. The menu includes: Salad with Dressing, Brown Sugar Garlic Chicken with Rice, Mixed Vegetables, and Cherries with Vanilla Mousse.
 - g. **11 X 16 Sheds.** **Curtis Von Ruden's Building Structures Class** is able to construct two sheds per year, up to 11 feet by 16 feet, for sale to local residents for somewhere around \$2,000, delivered (depending on the cost of materials). The current project is located behind the shop, near the pellet silo. He has no order for his spring project yet, so anyone interested could contact him through Mount Everett.
 - h. **Carpentry Clinics.** On October 19th, our students attended all-day "Frame to Finish Carpentry Workshops" at Lindell's Hardware in Canaan. Approximately 75 contractors, carpenters and other professionals attended the workshops. Our attendees were lucky enough to win several door prizes for the school including two high-quality Makita cordless drills and an extendible level valued at well over \$100. The workshops included:
 - i. **Waterproof Windows**
 - ii. **Rood, Wall, and Siding Details**
 - iii. **Storm-Proofing Wall Penetrations**
 - iv. **Decks and Hardware**
2. **Staff.**
- a. **Jon Friedman** joined the administrative team on October 5th. His prior experience as a clinician, emergency planner, and administrator makes him extremely valuable to our district.
 - b. **Donors Choose Grant: Jaimi-Lyn Schieb** successfully raised \$500 through the **Donors Choose** web site to support her students. Donors included local people as well as those from New York, NY, Connecticut, Savannah, GA and various locations in Massachusetts.
 - c. **Visits to Community Schools.** Mary Turo and Jon Friedman have plans to visit the community schools weekly. I visit at least monthly.
 - d. **Sheffield Historical Society Living History Day.** The 5th grade participated in the annual Sheffield Historical Society's living history event on Tuesday, October 11th. Student groups moved through seven education stations, including laundry and candle making, kitchen tools and cooking, meat preservation

and smoke house, bee keeping, spinning yarn, antique tools and building, and genealogy. Paul O'Brien organized the event that was staffed by Historical Society volunteers.

- e. **Co-Teaching Training.** Carol Kosnitsky provided our regular education and special education teachers training in Co-Teaching. In co-teaching classes, both teachers are co-owners of the instruction, sharing in planning and teaching.

3. **Students**

- a. **Lunchtime TED Talks.** **Marya Makuc** worked with Michelle Raczkowski to organize "TED Talk Tuesdays" during lunchtime in the library. Though time is limited, the group has discussed the following:
 - i. **October 4:** Hugh Evens: What it means to be a citizen of the world.
 - ii. **October 11:** Courtney Martin: The New American Dream
 - iii. **October 18:** Maysoon Zayid: I got 99 problems. Palsey is just One
 - iv. **October 25:** What Adults learn about Kids.
- b. **BCC College Fair.** On October 6th, we sent 35 students to the College Fair at Berkshire Community College. Students had the chance to talk with regional admissions representatives from over 100 colleges and universities.
- c. During the half day on Friday, October 7, fifty-seven students visited the **SculptureNow Exhibit** at **The Mount in Lenox**. Led by exhibit director and founder Ann Jon and sculptor Matt Crane, students were able to explore, touch, photograph and sketch twenty-eight outdoor sculptures, practicing observational and synesthetic techniques. The annual visit is the midpoint of an English 9 unit on descriptive writing. Students were accompanied by **Dawn-Estes Daub, Stephanie Graham, and Kevin Wolgemuth.** **Funding** for the visit and other joint programs with SculptureNow has been provided by the **Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Big Yellow School Bus program.**
- d. **FFA Trip:** The following students will be attending the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN next week. Tuesday, Oct. 18th through Saturday, Oct. 22nd: Haley Barrett, Morgan Derby, Ashana LeGeyt, Kylie Ruane, Kelsey Netzer, Casandra Rodriguez

4. Financial Updates/Transfers (Handouts)

Budget transfer request from existing accounts.

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers to approve the transfers as per the sheet distributed (copy attached). It was so voted unanimously.

Donations: \$1,000 from an anonymous donor to support robotic summer and ongoing robotics
 \$1000 from Covestro for the robotics program leading towards the competition

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Sears, to approve the two donations. It was so voted unanimously.

Ms. Regan also mentioned that the Auditors performed some field work, they may come back in December. Everything went well. Ms. Regan also reported that the end of year report is due at the end of October. Reports will soon be submitted to DOR for E&D certification.

G. Subcommittee/Representative Reports

- 1. Transportation Subcommittee Meeting: Ms. Sparhawk reported that they have been going over the new bid process, as we will need to go out to bid for a new bus contract for 2017-18 year and beyond. Ormsbee Bus Co. will not be bidding. Christine Regan, Business Manager, has been meeting with other business managers in the county to see if perhaps there is the possibility of pooling our bid with other districts. The bid has to be released by January 2017.

Mr. Stewart mentioned that at the last Education Task Force meeting there was discussion regarding the Versa Trans program for bus scheduling/routes. There was further discussion regarding this.

2. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee:

Motion to establish the Superintendent Screening Committee:

Ms. Silvers thanked the Executive Subcommittee for their hard work. The district has hired a Jennifer Dowley as a consultant to help with the Superintendent search.

The Superintendent and press release should be ready by Monday, October 26th. There is another Executive Subcommittee meeting scheduled for next Thursday. MASC has been very helpful with this process. Part of the free service from MASC is vetting the resumes.

The School Committee has to vote on the Superintendent Screening Committee Procedures Motion (attached).

Ms. Lartigue questioned item F. Ms. Silvers explained that they were advised by MASC that in terms of continuity having a school committee member on the screening committee helps with decision making. The school committee member selected to be on the Screening Committee will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Mr. Koocher will be attending the Screening Committee orientation meeting on November 29th.

Following are the Superintendent Screening Committee Dates:

December 14, 2016 – will be screening the resumes.

Interviews are scheduled for: January 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 from 6-9:15 p.m.

Initial interviews will be held in executive session if requested.

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Rundle, to approve the Superintendent Screening Committee procedures as outlined and defined in the document included in the packet as amended (Wednesday, December 14, 2016). It was so voted unanimously.

Mr. Stewart asked for a school committee volunteer to be on the Superintendent Screening Committee. Ms. Lartigue volunteered to be on the Screening Committee as the School Committee Representative.

Ms. Silvers mentioned the Park of Honor for our veterans. Paul O'Brien is spear heading this event. The cost is \$30 per flag or \$100 for 4 flags. The money raised will go for scholarships for children of veterans in Berkshire County.

6. **Communication from the Public/Requests for Future Agenda Items:** Nothing to report

7. **Adjourn**

Mr. Valentini moved, seconded by Ms. Sparhawk, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. It was so voted unanimously.

Documents Presented at this Meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1516*
- *Mt Everett School Improvement Plan*
- *Public Records Law*
- *FY18 Budget Development Calendar*
- *Motion to establish Superintendent Screening Committee*