

Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee
Mt. Everett Regional School
Sheffield, MA
January 9, 2014
Meeting #1,469

School Committee: Mr. Stewart, Ms. Silvers, Mr. Sears, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Batacchi, Ms. Sparhawk, Ms. Fields, Mr. Valentini, Ms. Sahn, Ms. Rundle

Absent:

Administrators: Mr. Hastings, Mr. Turner, Mr. Devoti, Ms. Woodsome, Ms. Hubbard

Press: CTSB Television

Student Representative(s): Erica Sullivan,

Others: Ms. Jo-ellen Height; Ms. Susan Tomich; Ms. Jessica Tomich; Ms. Kelly Milan; Ms. Ramona Bauer; Ms. Denise Foss; Mr. Thomas Masters; Ms. Amy Carpenter; Ms. Francine Groener; Mr. Daniel Weston; Ms. Linda Higgins

1. Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He wished everyone a happy and productive new year.

Mr. Valentini moved that the agenda for the meeting be amended to the following order: Item 5G2 (Non-Unit Personnel Salary System Overview), be moved and reset to Item 3C, following Item 3B (Other). (Old Business). Also Item 4-C (Early Childhood Education Taskforce – S. Hubbard) be moved and reset to new Item 4-A and to follow new item 3-C. (Old Business). Ms. Silvers Seconded the Motion. Following discussion, the motion was approved, 8-1, with Mr. Sears voting in opposition.

2. **Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Sahn noted two typographical errors in the open session minutes of Meeting #1,468. Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Silvers, to approve the minutes of Meeting 1,468, open session, as amended, executive session, as presented, and the minutes of the School Committee Workshop of December 4, 2013, as presented. It was so voted, unanimously.

3. **Communications from the Audience Pertaining to this Evening's Agenda**

A. Student Representative Erica Sullivan introduced fellow representatives Maria Makuc and Lauren Edwards. The students distributed copies of the on-line survey that they recently completed. They said that they will be compiling the results and will report the top ten concerns of the student body, when the tallies are completed. They also invited everyone to a chili cook-off on January 17.

B. There were no further communications from the audience.

C. Mr. Valentini moved to establish a method of compensation increases for payroll personnel (any employee in the employ of SBRSD who is not represented by a bargaining unit or a contract employee) we adopt a formula of having increases commensurate with increases established by the Unit A bargaining unit. These increases will continue until the employee reaches the maximum salary for the position. These increases will be subject to change as the Unit A agreement changes.

Continuing

To establish the maximum for the position, the highest paid position in the Unit A agreed pay schedule will be used as the “reference value”. The Superintendent, with the approval of the School Committee, will establish a maximum compensation ratio for each position, both present and future. This ratio will be used to calculate the maximum compensation for each position. The maximum salary can increase as the Unit A “reference value” increases. The position ratio will remain unchanged unless revised by the Superintendent, with the approval of the School Committee.

Continuing

Any future employee falling into this category (payroll personnel) will be subject to the provisions of this motion.

Continuing

This motion is specific to the two areas discussed (increases and maximum) and has no impact whatsoever on any other provisions in the employees’ contracts.

Continuing

At the time of this motion, the following positions are defined as payroll personnel: Secondary Principal, Elementary Principal, Director of Student Services, Elementary Assistant Principal, Technology director, Curriculum and Professional Development Coordinator, Business Manager, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, PR/HR/AP, Assistant to the Business Manager and Grant Coordinator, Treasurer, School Psychologist, Food Services Director.”

Mr. Valentini also moved that such increases will continue until each reaches the max on the scale, and that the Superintendent, with the approval of the SC, will develop a ratio for each position to the max on the Unit A salary schedule. Any future employee will be subject to this motion. The motion will be subject to areas discussed only. At time of this motion, personnel included are the Principals, Director of Student Services, Assistant Elementary Principal, Technology Director, Curriculum & Professional Development Coordinator, Business Manager, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, PR/HR/AP/ Assistant to the Business Manager and Grant Coordinator, Treasurer, School Psychologist, Food Services Director.

Mr. Flynn seconded the motion.

Mr. Valentini clarified that the reference to Unit A was specific only to the salaries of those included, and to no other aspect of their contracts.

Following lengthy discussion, Mr. Valentini moved to call the question. Ms. Fields seconded the motion, and it was so voted. (Mr. Sears voted in opposition.)

Chairman Stewart then conducted a roll call vote on the full motion. The vote:

Mr. Valentini	yes	Ms. Sparhawk	yes	Ms. Fields	yes
Ms. Sahn	yes	Ms. Silvers	yes	Mr. Sears	yes
Mr. Batacchi	yes	Mr. Flynn	yes	Ms. Rundle	yes

Mr. Valentini then distributed a paper depicting the specifics of the motion's impact on each person's salary. He explained that the vote did not set the salaries. He then moved that the School Committee accept the ratios as presented by the Superintendent to establish maximum salaries. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion.

Following a brief question and answer session, it was so voted, unanimously.

Mr. Valentini then moved to apply the method of payment to those involved. Ms. Silvers amended the motion to include that the February 1 payroll will reflect the salaries, as proposed for FY'14.

Mr. Flynn moved to amend the motion to adopt Line O (of the accepted chart), and make it retroactive to July 1, 2013. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion. (Mr. Valentini accepted the amendment.)

Ms. Silvers withdrew her motion.

The motion, as amended, was then approved, unanimously.

4. **Updates/Presentations:**

- A. Early Childhood Task Force Report: Ms. Hubbard introduced Task Force Members Amy Truax, Francine Groener, Jo-ellen Height, Denise Foss, Amy Carpenter, Kari Giordano, and Erin Woodsome, who were in attendance, and also noted the efforts of Elaine Hunter, Sofia Hughes, Kim Bleau, Shana Stalker, and Mari Enoch, who were unable to attend the meeting.

Members then provided an overview of the process they had followed in developing their report and recommendations. They reported that the following were the recommendations of the Task Force:

- Change date of Kindergarten entrance to 5 by October 1
- Change dates for enrollment in EK to 5 years old between October 1 and March 1
- Change the title of the Early Kindergarten program
- Remove the tuition charge from the PreKindergarten program
- Invite families to activities in order to promote the programs
- Initiate public relations/marketing initiatives

Ms. Hubbard reported that they are working on registration forms for each program, which will be available on the Web site for easy access. She thanked all the members for their hard work over the past few months.

A question and answer session then took place.

Ms. Hubbard explained that no additional teachers would be needed in order to make the changes in the programs. She said that they anticipate between eight and twelve additional students overall in September of 2014.

Regarding the cost of the additional prekindergarten services, Mr. Valentini stated that the lost revenue would equal approximately \$6,000 total. He said that the Finance Subcommittee is working on the cost of transportation, which will overlay with the services the District already provides.

Mr. Flynn moved that the School Committee tentatively adopt the recommendations of the Early Childhood Task Force and refer to the Finance Subcommittee for inclusion in the FY'15 budget, and that the Finance Subcommittee return to the full School Committee with their recommendation and tentative budget at their first meeting in February. The motion was duly seconded.

Ms. Silvers asked to amend the motion to have both the Business Manager and the superintendent be included in the Finance Subcommittee for determining the implementation of the recommendations. Mr. Flynn seconded the amendment.

Following clarification that the recommendations would hopefully go into effect for the fall of 2014, it was so voted, unanimously.

The Committee applauded the members of the Early Childhood Task Force and formally thanked them for their work.

- B. July Trip to Italy: Mr. Hastings noted that the clear itinerary and the insurance certificate were both included in the packet. Ms. Silvers moved to approve the trip to Italy, as presented, with the itinerary and necessary insurance. Ms. Sparhawk seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.
- C. District Fitness and Wellness Goals: Ms. Susan Tomich and Ms. Jessica Tomich reported on the Wellness Program in the District. She said that the superintendent has made a goal to have the District's children be the happiest, healthiest, and safest in America. They gave a brief presentation on what each teaches, and noted that they have tied their Smart goals with the fitness program. They invited School Committee members to check out the link on the Web site for Wellness.

Mr. Devoti added that the fitness center is now open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, staffed with volunteers. He invited all to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony for the fitness center and the new playgrounds, along with the rededication of the UME gymnasium on January 14.

- D. **K-4 Everyday Math Program:** Ms. Woodsome explained the reasons the program had been chosen. She distributed information from Ms. Kelly MacDonald regarding the program and a letter that is sent home to the families. Mr. Masters and Mr. Weston showed the Committee games and other materials that they use with the students in the classrooms. They noted that every lesson relates back to the Common Core standards. Mr. Weston explained that in addition to the regular classroom lesson, each lesson plan includes a component for English Language Learners, a written component, a take-home component, a review component, and an activity to do with students who need additional challenge. Ms. Woodsome invited the Committee members to call to arrange a time to stop in and see the program in action.

- 5A. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Hastings introduced Kerry Burke, Curriculum & Professional Development Coordinator. He noted that she was already helping teachers and giving great advice.

Mr. Hastings thanked the Committee for their great support. He stated that many of the innovations are due to the support of the Committee.

Mr. Hastings reported the following:

- The gym floors were re-done over the break and came out great. He reported that although the Committee had voted to expend up to \$8,000, the actual cost was \$4,230.
- The students of the Theater Arts Class will perform a play called "Spitfire Grills" on January 22 and 23, 7:00 p.m.
- The Winter Carnival will take place on February 5 & 6
- There will be a grades 3-4 concert on January 16 at 6:00 p.m.
- Mt. Everett's annual Cabaret will take place on January 31 – February 1.
- The girls and boys basketball teams are doing well.
- Two students will attend the Hugh O'Brien conference in June.

- Michaela White will participate in an oration competition sponsored by the American Legion on January 26.
- About one-third of the Mt. Everett seniors have been accepted into colleges thus far.
- The Mt. Everett Guidance Office will send out a guidance newsletter in the near future.

Mr. Flynn noted that this District is small, but does not need to join with another school, as it offers a significant number of services to students. He commended the School Committee, administrators and faculty for providing such a large variety of services.

- B. Mr. Farmer reported that as a result of the reorganization of the grade 7 classes, the team is able to do unique things for and with the class this year. He said that they have put together an overnight field trip to NYC which dovetails with four different curriculum areas. He presented an itinerary, and he said that they hope to take the entire 7th grade, with nine faculty members, plus two parents. He said that there will be some fundraising activities conducted in order to help with expenses and that students whose families cannot pay will not be denied access. Mr. Valentini moved to approve the trip. Ms. Silvers seconded the motion, and it was so voted, unanimously.
- C. Report on MASC/MASS Conference: Ms. Silvers presented a report on the annual MASC/MASS conference that she, along with Mr. Stewart, Mr. Sears, and Superintendent Hastings had attended in November. She said that the most important recommendation she came away with was to establish a District-wide advisory board. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to schedule this as a discussion item at the next meeting.
- D. Insurance for Volunteer Drivers: Mr. Turner introduced Mr. Scott Rote, Executive Vice President of Wheeler & Taylor Insurance Co. Mr. Rote informed the Committee that although he was aware that the Committee wished to have information regarding insurance coverage for volunteer drivers in writing, the carrier will not put in writing because the insurance policy is a legal document, written and understood by lawyers. He said that the carriers always refer back to the policy. He presented an opinion from Sally Carlson, claims manager, who had done an analysis (copy on file with these minutes). He advised the Committee to seek legal counsel if they need further information.

Mr. Rote said that an employee driving a school's vehicle would be taken care of by the school's policy (school is covered up to \$11,000,000). Further, if an employee were to use his/her own vehicle, worker's compensation would cover any injuries, and the employee's insurance would cover any damage to the vehicle, but would then seek to recover from the school's insurance. If the employee were found to be at fault, there would be points added to his/her own insurance.

He said that if a volunteer took students under the direction of the school in his/her own car, the school's insurance would kick in, as long as the trip is under the direction of the school. Mr. Rote advised that school should get a CORI, copy of the volunteer driver's license and registration as a precaution.

Mr. Rote said that if a volunteer or employee takes students without the school's directive, his/her own insurance would have to cover any damages and injuries.

Mr. Turner informed the Committee of the procedures the District currently uses.

Ms. Fields left the meeting at 9:49 p.m.

Mr. Valentini recommended that the Superintendent and Business Administrator develop a procedure with a paper trail and documentation for all volunteer and employee drivers to meet the requirement of the trip being an approved trip.

Following a question and answer session, the Committee expressed appreciation to Mr. Rote for clarifying the issues.

- E. Subcommittee/Representative Reports:
- 1) Finance Subcommittee: Mr. Valentini requested that the School Committee meeting scheduled for January 16 be changed to a Finance Subcommittee meeting. He said that the Subcommittee would be unable to present a budget to the towns' finance committees on the 16th, as the state budget figures are not available as yet. Committee members were generally in agreement with his request.
 - 2) Policy: The School Committee observed the first reading of Policy IHBG, Homeschooling; Policy JFAB, Admission of Nonresident Students; and Policy DBI, Budget Implementation.
- F. Financial updates/Transfer Requests: There were no financial updates or requests for transfers.
- G. Collective Bargaining: Approval of the Unit D Contract will appear on the next School Committee meeting agenda.
6. **Communication from the Public/Requests for Future Agenda Items:** There were no communications or requests from the audience.

Mr. Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Valentini, to adjourn the meeting. It was so voted, and the meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda, School Committee Meeting #1,469*
- *Minutes of Meeting #1,468, Open and Executive Sessions; Minutes of School Committee Workshop of December 4, 2013*
- *Overnight Field Trip Request – Grade 7 to New York, NY, 5/21-5/22/2014*
- *Overnight Field Trip information – Trip to Italy, Summer, 2014*
- *Early Childhood Task Force Report dated January 9, 2014*
- *Student Government Survey*
- *Letter from Julie M. Hannum, Chairman, Sheffield Board of Selectmen, and David J. Steindler, Chairman, Sheffield Finance Committee*
- *Non-Unit Personnel proposed salary increases*
- *Letter from MA School Building Authority dated January 6, 2014*
- *Memo to School Committee Members from E. Bonnie Silvers, Re: MASC/MASS Annual Conference November 6-9, 2013*
- *Information Re: Everyday Math program*
- *Policy Drafts: IHBG, Homeschooling; JFAB, Admission of Nonresident Students; DBI, Budget Implementation*