

Southern Berkshire Regional School District
Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain
provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A sec. 20,
the meeting was held via an online Zoom
conference under meeting ID 95710740989
Thursday, June 18, 2020
Meeting #1584

School Committee Members: Art Batacchi, Jane Burke, Bonnie Silvers, Jon Bruno, Marcella Bush,
Maryellen Brown, Jeffrey Blaugrund, Dennis Sears, David Travis

Absent: Danile Kelly – Joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Administration: Beth Regulbuto, Judy Houle, Amy Lyn, Jesse Carpenter, Sandi Hubbard

Others: Lynette Gagnon, Michelle Razle, Kerry Ann Petric, Kari Giordano, Lynn Webster, Dan Weston,
Martin Mitsoff, S. Graham

1. **Call to Order**

Jane Burke, Chair, called meeting #1584 to order at 6:01 p.m.

Ms. Burke was seeking a motion to reorganize the agenda to address the following items out of order.

Motion to move the Superintendent's report to follow item 8 and the Curriculum Report to follow the Superintendent's report and then circle back to the Subcommittee Reports

By: Jeffrey Blaugrund

Second: Dennis Sears

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes

2. **Standing Reports**

a. Approval of School Committee Minutes #1582 of May 21, 2020

Motion to approve the school committee meeting minutes #1582 of May 21, 2020 as presented.

By: Dennis Sears

Second: Bonnie Silvers

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes

b. Miscellaneous Correspondence - None

3. **Student Representative Report** - None

4. **Student Spotlight** - None

5. **Public Comment** - None

6. **New Business**

- a. School Committee Summer Meeting (Proposed date: July 16, 2020)
Motion to approve the school committee meeting date of July 16, 2020 at 6 p.m.
By: Jeffrey Blaugrund
Second: Dennis Sears
Discussion: Brief discussion ensued.
Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes

- b. Proposed School Committee Meeting Calendar for the 20-21 School Year
Motion to approve the School Committee Meeting Calendar for the 20-21 school year as presented.
By: Dennis Sears
Second: Bonnie Silvers
Discussion: None
Ms. Silvers called the question; Dennis Sears seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes

- c. Racism and Anti-Racism, A Summer Exploration by Mt. Everett Students - Kari Giordano
Kari Giordano, Art Department and Michelle Raszl, Library, both gave a presentation on the Racism and Anti-Racism summer exploration project. This is an Arts and Secondary Library collaboration. Ms. Giordano reported that historically the arts department has done a good job on delivering a diverse curriculum. The recent events prompted this full school and community summer enrichment project. Its divided into 3 components, Visual Arts, Music and Reading. Each component takes the students through resources and creative projects that will enable them to learn more about this topic and be creative through it. The main component is teaching the students through storytelling, to encourage empathy. In an effort to delve deeper into our country's history and to create unity within our community, Michelle Raszl hopes that you will join faculty and Mt Everett HS students in reading the timely and National Book Award-winning book Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi or the teen version co-authored by Jason Reynolds this summer.
Discussion and question and answer session followed.

- d. Report on the Remote Learning Surveys
Superintendent Regulbuto reported that we received feedback from 3 different stakeholder groups (Parents and Caregivers, MS/HS Students and Faculty and Staff).
Dr. Amy Lyn gave a power point presentation on the results of the Remote Learning Surveys that were recently conducted. Surveys were done by Parents and Caregivers (72); MS/HS Students (84) and Faculty and Staff (97). What will be covered tonight are the Parents and Caregivers survey results. 13% of families had a device on loan from the district. Meeting the needs is a unique challenge for our district, basically split 50/50. Parents of high school felt that it was not connected enough, elementary seemed to be adequate.
The teachers were surveyed to see if they would be interested in joining CANVAS as a platform to support online and remote learning. The Berkshire County Education Task Force is promoting the creation of Berkshire Educational Resource Center. The first goal of BEREC is to launch a county-wide learning management system called CANVAS.

Superintendent Regulbuto reported that there is a lot of data here. The district is proposing the creation of a reopening task force which will be made up of school committee members, administrators, teachers, faculty and staff, parents, community members, so that we can dig through what is going to be handed to us at the end of June and work on different aspects of reopening. Because of the abundance of information part of this task force work will be to dig into some of this data and help us inform what these plans will look like.

Question and answer session followed.

7. **Unfinished Business - None**

8. **Business with District Member Towns**

a. **Update on Regional School District Planning Board**

Jane Burke reported out on the recent meeting that was held. Work is referred to as a study group. Introduced to the facilitator, Chris Hazzard. Survey has been done to see who has various strengths and when we come together on July 1 a selection will be made for 4 subcommittees which will be assigned to various aspects. Five people will be on each subcommittee with 3 alternates. Stockbridge will be participating as well. We need to be active participants. We are moving forward judiciously and open mindedly at this point. There is a scheduled weekly meeting with the Superintendents.

11. **Superintendent's Report**

- **Return to school in the Fall**

Superintendent Regulbuto reported that the district is still waiting to receive guidance from the Commissioner on what school will look like in the fall. Final summer guidance will be issued on June 22nd and the final fall guidance is to be received by Districts in late June or early July.

- **Re-Opening Task Force to help work through the process of implementing the state requirements around the re-opening of schools in the fall. Will be asking for volunteers to begin the work in July.**

- **New Deadline for SOA Plan – this has been extended to August 18, 2020.**

- **Appointment of Town Representative to the Negotiations Subcommittee – there will be a joint meeting on July 8th at 5 p.m. with the Boards of Selectmen of the five towns to discuss this. We thank Mr. Nat Yohalem from New Marlborough for his service during the past 4 years.**

- **FY21 Budget**

There is some confusion regarding the process and warrant articles look like. The numbers on the warrant are the numbers voted at the March 12th meeting by the School Committee (details on the website). If 4 of the 5 towns do not pass the budget, we would have to operate on a 1/12th budget which is based on the current year FY20 funding. This means we will need to look at making reductions to account for the difference between current year funding and any increases that would be accounted for in the FY21 budget. We also do not know how much our COVID related expenses are going to be.

- **Superintendent Regulbuto read the following statement:**

Staying True to Our Vision-

Over the last few weeks, we have been challenged to re-examine the District's vision of "embracing the challenges of an ever-changing world through a commitment to our core values of opportunity, excellence, character, and community", and what our promise to honor those core values means.

The District immediately acted on the allegations made regarding racist posts on social media by a student and school personnel. The investigations began within 48 hours of the initial report to the school, have been thoroughly vetted, and are completed. If warranted,

any remedial action will be taken. The District is limited by law in the amount of information that can be shared in order to protect the privacy rights of students and personnel involved and it will not comment on this further.

I want to take a moment to address concerns raised about the rights of our staff on social media. We need to be mindful of District employees' First Amendment rights even when they publish content that we may not agree with or find offensive. As a public employer, the District does not monitor social media and may only take action in certain limited circumstances in accordance with First Amendment principles and the law.

Notwithstanding this, this incident is a reminder that there are race and class issues within our community that we need to continue working on. To that end, I also want to reiterate that the District has been actively engaged in this work throughout the school year. Our students had been part of the peer training work with the ADL in collaboration with other South County Districts. The entire faculty and staff was scheduled to have training by the ADL as part of our professional development plan on the day schools closed down in response to the pandemic, which will be rescheduled for next school year. We have engaged in conversations with Multicultural Bridge about resources available, and actively participate with Railroad Street Youth Project initiatives. We can always do more and get better, and that is our plan.

I encourage us all to continue to find positive ways to impact our communities by working diligently to identify and address biases in our own work, look at our practices through multiple lenses including race and class, and engage in difficult conversations within the District and the community. This is another example of how we all can continue to be lifelong learners and continue to be better. This is an opportunity to work in partnership as a School Committee, Administration, Faculty & Staff, Students, Families, and members of our towns to come together in public forums, through book studies, in classrooms, to keep the conversations going, to listen and to improve.

Bonnie Silvers asked Martin Mitsoff to explain the Sheffield warrant item #3 that both the finance and select board recommend passing over our budget.

Martin confirmed that they are not recommending passage to our voters. That this would mean a no to the FY21 budget.

12. **Curriculum & Professional Development Coordinator's Report**

Dr. Amy Lyn gave a power point presentation. Following is an outline of the Curriculum Review Process.

Stage 1: Research and Review

- Develop and train team for curriculum review process
- Review evaluation from Stage 5
- Create or redefine a vision for the curricular area
- Identify potential programs and assess programs
- Report outcomes to School Committee

Stage 2: Plan Development

- Complete field study of program(s) materials
- Recommend instructional practices and common formative & summative assessments
- Design implementation Plan
- Present program, approach, and plan to School Committee

Stage 3: Implementation

- Follow through on Implementation Plan: Professional development and curriculum development

- Report progress on Implementation Plan to School Committee

Stage 4: Implementation – Monitor and Adjust

- Survey teachers for further guidance on improving implementation
- Continue to monitor and adjust practice
- Targeted professional development (as needed)
- Report new insights, adjustments, or PD to School Committee

Stage 5: Evaluation & Report

- Conduct program evaluation of curricular area: feedback and assessments (report outcomes to school committee in stage 1)

13. **Director of Student Services Report**

Sandra Hubbard thanked everyone for their commitment to providing the most comprehensive instructional, social-emotional and behavioral supports during this time. Department members have participated in a vast number of district-guided professional development opportunities and trainings, conducted virtual IEP and transition meetings, completed required paperwork, written and amended Individual Remote Learning Plans.

Extended School Year (ESY-Summer Services) will begin on July 6, 2020. These will largely be delivered remotely, if feasible.

Our nurses are looking at the health and safety guidance for school reopening and will assist in developing the required training for staff who might work face to face with students this summer. Also, DESE just announced a Summer/Vacation Learning Program Grant to help local school districts.

The District qualified to receive additional funds for the 2019-2020 school year through the Circuit Breaker Extraordinary Relief claim.

On Friday, July 19, 2020 our School Adjustment Counselors, Guidance Counselors, School Psychologist and consultants will meet to look at the guidance for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel related to social emotional and behavioral student needs.

9. **Subcommittee Reports**

a. Finance Subcommittee – D. Sears

Mr. Sears reported that the Finance Subcommittee had met, but the bottom line is there is not enough information at this time to make any plans.

b. Policy Subcommittee – D. Sears – No meeting

c. Building, Grounds & Technology – A. Batacchi – No meeting

d. Curriculum Subcommittee – D. Travis – No meeting

e. Executive Evaluation Subcommittee – D. Travis

Mr. Travis reported that the Executive Evaluation Subcommittee had met to go over the Superintendent's goals. The full school committee is required to complete the evaluation of the Superintendent. Surveys are done in mid-June and includes commentary. Will be using the State common rubric to evaluate the Superintendent. The Superintendent will be evaluated on six specific goals. Hope to have the evaluation completed by mid-July to present to the full school committee at the next meeting.

f. Community Outreach and Input Subcommittee – B. Silvers – No meeting

g. Negotiation Subcommittee – B. Silvers – No meeting

h. Executive Minute Review Subcommittee – J. Blaugrund – No meeting

i. MASC Update – D. Sears

Mr. Sears presented the following two MASC resolutions for approval:

RESOLUTION: COVID-19 STATE FUNDING

WHEREAS, if schools are to re-open this fall in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the responsibility of each school district to do so safely and responsibly; and
WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that each school district is able to pay for the enormous additional staffing, transportation and material expenses required to do this; and

WHEREAS, the state cannot expect mandatory COVID-19 safety guidelines to be followed without also ensuring that each school district has the funds required to implement these guidelines; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED: that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates.

We must ensure a statewide school re-opening that is safe, responsible and equitable.

THERE CAN BE NO UNFUNDED MANDATES FOR COVID-19.

Motion: To adopt the above Resolution regarding Full State Funding for COVID Related Expenses

By: Jonathan Bruno

Second: Jeffrey Blaugrund

Roll Call: Mr. Batacchi – Yes; Ms. Burke – Yes; Ms. Silvers – Yes; Mr. Bruno – Yes;

Ms. Bush – Yes; Ms. Brown – Yes; Mr. Blaugrund – Yes; Mr. Sears – Yes; Ms. Kelly – Yes;

Mr. Travis - Yes

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, as schools have the responsibility to equip students with their civil right of obtaining a free and appropriate public education, it is the responsibility of each school to ensure we create a welcoming community for ALL students; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility that every district provides to all district staff, including School Committee members annual professional development on diversity, equity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, every district will commit to recruiting and retaining a diverse and culturally responsive teaching workforce; and

WHEREAS, every district will examine their policies for institutional and systemic racialized practices and implement change with sustainable policies that are evidence based; and

WHEREAS, every district will incorporate into their curriculum the history of racial oppression and works by black authors and works from diverse perspectives; and

WHEREAS, we as school district leaders can no longer remain silent to the issues of racism and hate that continue to plague our public and private institutions;

RESOLVED: that Southern Berkshire Regional School District and all the school districts in the Commonwealth must guarantee that racist practices are eradicated, and diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty and staff. We must ensure our own school culture and that of every district in the Commonwealth is anti-racist, that acknowledges that all lives cannot matter until black lives matter.

Motion: To adopt the above Resolution regarding Social, Economic & Racial Justice in Our Communities

By: Bonnie Silvers

Second: Jonathan Bruno

Roll Call: Mr. Batacchi – Yes; Ms. Burke – Yes; Ms. Silvers – Yes; Mr. Bruno – Yes;

Ms. Bush – Yes; Ms. Brown – Yes; Mr. Blaugrund – Yes; Mr. Sears – Yes; Ms. Kelly –

Yes; Mr. Travis - Yes

10. **Chairman's Report**

Jane Burke thanked everyone for all the effort put into planning and executing graduation. She also mentioned that there will be a few seats open for school committee. David Travis, New Marlborough representative, will not be seeking reelection; Maryellen Brown, Monterey, will not be seeking reelection; Marcella Bush, Egremont, will not be seeking reelection. Art Batacchi and Jonathan Bruno, Sheffield, are both running again. Ms. Burke will send out some dates to the school committee members to try to schedule a special workshop.

14. **Business Manager's Report**

a. Approval of Warrants

Motion to approve the Payroll warrant of 6/4/20 in the amount of \$355,414.00

By: Bonnie Silvers

Second: Jeffrey Blaugrund

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes; Danile Kelly - Yes

Motion to approve the Accounts Payable warrant in the amount of \$226,731.83

By: Jeffrey Blaugrund

Second: Dennis Sears

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes; Danile Kelly - Yes

b. Vote to Accept Grants and Gifts – None

c. Budget Transfers

Motion to approve the budget transfers of \$293,438.92

By: Dennis Sears

Second: Jeffrey Blaugrund

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes; Danile Kelly - Yes

d. Authorization to Make Year-End Budget Transfers

Judy Houle reported that they will be wrapping up the end of the year before the next meeting and require a motion.

Motion to authorize the business manager to make any additional end of the year transfers.

By: Bonnie Silvers

Second: Maryellen Brown

Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes; Danile Kelly - Yes

Ms. Silvers thanked everyone who organized the high school graduation.

15. **Future Agenda Items**

Students who may be home schooling because of the pandemic.

16. **Executive Session - None**

17. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

By: Bonnie Silvers

Second: Jeffrey Blaugrund

Roll Call Vote: Art Batacchi - Yes, Jane Burke-Yes, Bonnie Silvers-Yes, Jon Bruno-Yes, Marcella Bush - Yes, Maryellen Brown – Yes, Jeffrey Blaugrund - Yes, Dennis Sears-Yes, David Travis-Yes; Danile Kelly - Yes

Documents presented at this meeting:

- *Agenda #1584*
- *Minutes of meeting #1582*
- *Proposed School Committee Meeting Calendar for FY20-21*
- *Remote Learning Survey*
- *MASC Update - Resolutions*
- *Curriculum & Professional Development Coordinator's Report*
- *Director of Student Services Report*
- *Warrant Report*
- *Budget Transfer Report*