

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2013**

The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, December 9, 2013, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street, Bristol, RI. Chairman Silva called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM.

Present: Paul Silva, Chairman; John Bento, Vice-Chairman (7:07 p.m.); Karen Lynch, Secretary; Susan Rancourt, Treasurer; Diana Campbell, Marjorie McBride, William O'Dell, John Saviano, Lynn Wainwright, Melinda L. Thies, Superintendent; Mario Andrade, Assistant Superintendent; Pauline A. Silva, Director of Administration and Finance; Mary N. Almeida, Director of Literacy and Title I; Leslie Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Andrew Henneous, Esq., District Solicitor

OPENING BUSINESS

All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman Silva stated for the record that Mr. Bento, Vice-Chairman, may be joining the meeting via Facetime from overseas. Chairman Silva also acknowledged and welcomed Walter Burke as well as Nathan Calouro, Bristol Town Council member and Chairman of the

Joint Finance Committee

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES

In order to accommodate Mr. Burke and Mr. Calouro, Chairman Silva said the order of the meeting would be rearranged.

RECOMMENDATION #S2013-74

That the School Committee, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and supported by the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee, approve an additional \$100,000 in matching funds for Grant Funding to be used for Drainage Issues on the Athletic Fields at MHHS.

Chairman Silva stated for the record that Mr. Bento, Vice-Chairman, who is serving overseas, would be momentarily joining the meeting via Facetime.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano made a motion to approve committing \$100,000 in additional matching funds for Grant Funding to be used for Drainage Issues on the Athletic Fields at MHHS; seconded by Mrs. McBride.

DISCUSSION: Chairman Silva stated by way of review that since the

time the School Committee committed funds toward the matching grant funding to address drainage issues on the athletic fields at MHHS, Mr. Burke reread the grant and realized there was an opportunity to apply for \$800,000 as opposed to the \$400,000 originally thought. Upon learning about the increased grant opportunity, Mr. Burke approached the Bristol Town Council to request they become an active participant of this grant. The Bristol Town Council met last week and enthusiastically agreed to spend the additional \$400,000; the Town committing an extra \$100,000 which aided the School Department in applying for this grant.

Mrs. Campbell asked if money is available in Capital Funds. She also asked if the State will provide support in terms of Housing Aid. Mrs. Silva responded that funds are available in Capital Projects. Mrs. Silva stated that RIDE views the drainage issues on MHHS athletic fields as an emergency project. Mrs. Silva has submitted a Stage 1 application to RIDE which will go before the Board of Regents in May.

Mrs. Campbell asked if this would be a continuation of the last approval. Mrs. Silva responded this would be considered separately.

Mrs. Lynch thanked Mr. Burke and the Town Council for helping the School Department to take the first step in improving the drainage issues on the athletic fields at MHHS especially as it benefits the students and the community.

Chairman Silva clarified for the record that when Mr. Burke stood before the Bristol Town Council he stated that “every penny that is received will be spent on this facility adhering to the master plan”.

Mrs. Campbell asked about the status of the Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Bristol in regard to the drainage issues project at MHHS. Mrs. Thies stated that one has not been developed at this point in time. She added that she had a conversation with Mr. Teixeira, Bristol Town Administrator, regarding an MOU. Mrs. Thies said one step at a time will be taken. After having conversations with Mr. Burke, it was made clear to Mrs. Thies that the students of MHHS would have priority and primary use of the fields. Mr. Burke also acknowledged the fields will be open for public use as well. Mrs. Thies stated that the mitigation of the drainage issues at the high school will enhance the school community as well as the larger community of Bristol and Warren. Mr. Burke clarified his statements further by stating that the School Department has priority use of the fields related to scheduling and field condition. He added that if the fields become worn down from overuse due to scheduling, the fields would need “time to rest”. This determination would be made by George Simmons. Mr. Burke cited the example of a person wanting to use the tennis courts saying if there was no scheduled event by the School Department for use of the tennis courts, it would be open for others. Mr. Burke further stated that use of fields would go according to scheduling as it has for the past 20 years. He added

there will not be any changes to scheduling or field usage.

Due to the drainage issues, Mrs. Wainwright asked what amount of land is involved, and what fields are currently usable. Mr. Burke responded the amount of land has yet to be determined. Once the grant is obtained, an engineer will be consulted to go through the master plan ensuring it is feasible. Mr. Burke stated that his guesstimate for the drainage project would be the entire property inside of the tree lines.

Chairman Silva asked Mr. Bento if he had any questions. Mr. Bento asked what the impacts would be to the students, the budget and the community. Chairman Silva responded saying if a field becomes unusable during the project, he is hopeful that the students would have use of the Town fields to continue their activities. Until an engineer determines the impact of the project, the School Department will not know whether use of town fields will become a factor. Chairman Silva stated that the grant is for \$800,000 which is a 50/50 matching grant whereby \$400,000 would come out of the School Department's pocket. The School Committee has already committed \$200,000; tonight another \$100,000 is being considered for committal. The Town of Bristol will commit the remaining \$100,000. Chairman Silva reiterated that from RIDE's point of view, the project is considered an emergency situation. As a result, the School Department will not have to wait for the housing moratorium to be lifted in order to be reimbursed.

Mrs. Thies stated that she had a productive conversation with the Department of Education. During that conversation, Mr. DaSilva felt it was clear there was a connection between the first project at the site and the proposed project. The first project began in the Fall and deals with settlement issues due to erosion. It is an ongoing project that is close to completion. RIDE approved the first project which was also presented as an emergency situation.

Mr. O'Dell asked if there is a benefit to the Town of Bristol. Mr. Burke responded that the Town of Bristol has responsibility for the water that comes through the site which ultimately floods Hope Street. This project will lessen the flooding that happens at Hope Street and Chestnut Street. Mr. Burke commented that the Town of Bristol built the high school on wetlands and views the drainage issues as a resulting consequence. Mr. Burke stated he felt it was prudent that the Town of Bristol partner with the School Department to help mitigate this problem. The Town of Bristol wholeheartedly agreed.

Mr. O'Dell expressed concern that the Town of Warren was not a part of the discussion. Mr. Burke responded that the Town of Warren was contacted. He is in receipt of a letter of recommendation from Warren showing support to proceed with the grant. Mr. Burke added that the grant is based on regional concepts and is a benefit to each town equally as it effects both communities.

Mrs. McBride stated this is a Capital Projects Plan. It is the duty of the School Department to ensure the safety of the students while on school grounds. She added one of the ways to address safety is to fix the fields to ensure buildings are no longer compromised.

Mr. O'Dell asked if the motion passed tonight would it be contingent upon reimbursement being confirmed. Chairman Silva responded the grant is not firmed up at this time. The motion before the School Committee is whether or not to move forward with the grant process. He added that one motion is not contingent on the other. Chairman Silva reiterated the motion is to dedicate funds. Chairman Silva stated the grant would get awarded in approximately August.

Councilman Calouro commented that the Town Council approved moving forward with the grant to address drainage issues unanimously. He added to Mr. O'Dell's point that he believes the Town Council approved because of the benefit to both the Towns of Bristol and Warren. There will be a benefit to all students. He added there is an ancillary benefit to Bristol related to the flooding issues.

The motion passed unanimously.

#S2013-70 A-E CONSENT AGENDA - PERSONNEL

Chairman Silva stated that all items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the School Committee and enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a

Committee member requests, in which event the item will be withdrawn from the general order of business and considered in the normal sequence on the agenda. Chairman Silva asked if it was necessary to remove any items. Hearing none, the vote commenced.

MOTION: Mr. Saviano made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Mrs. Lynch. The motion passed unanimously.

S2013-70 A-E: CONSENT AGENDA - PERSONNEL

A. MIDDLE SCHOOL EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following individuals for the 2013-14 session only of the Kickemuit Middle School Extended Day Program contingent upon sufficient enrollment:

Name Position

- 1. Emily McCaffrey Credit Recovery English/Language Arts
Teacher**
- 2. Lisa Scagos Credit Recovery English/Language Arts
Teacher**
- 3. Michelle Way DaSilva Credit Recovery Mathematics Teacher**
- 4. Kristen Pacheco Credit Recovery Mathematics/Science Teacher**
- 5. Stephen Buonfiglio Credit Recovery Science Teacher**
- 6. Frank Patalano Credit Recovery Social Studies Teacher**

B. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicants to the extracurricular positions listed below for the 2013-14 school year only (pending certification, funding and sufficient sign-ups to warrant running these programs):

WINTER COACHES – MT. HOPE HIGH

Sport Position Coach

- 1. Swimming Head Coach Kasey O'Connor**

SPRING COACHES – MT. HOPE HIGH

Sport Position Coach

- 2. Track (Outdoor) (Boys) Head Coach Kevin Medeiros**

HEALTHY HUSKIES WELLNESS CENTER/GYM AREA SUPERVISORS

- 3. Supervisor (Winter) Thomas DelSanto**
- 4. Supervisor (Winter) Gerard Spence**

C. CERTIFIED SUBSTITUTES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following applications for certified substitutes pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

CERTIFIED

Name Area/Level

1. Sally A. DeGalley General Subject Matter

2. Caitlin K. Kupec Registered Nurse

3. Mariel D. Manchester General Subject Matter

D. CLASSIFIED SUBSTITUTES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following application for a classified substitute pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

TEACHER ASSISTANTS

1. Denise C. Moniz

E. RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to accept the resignation of Austin Kelly from the position of Assistant Swimming Coach as listed below:

**1. Austin Kelly Asst. Swimming Coach – Mt. Hope
High**

Effective: December 3, 2013

Reason: Personal

RECOMMENDATION #S2013-71: That the School Committee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and supported by Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee, approve the second reading of the Health and Wellness Policy (JHCG).

MOTION: Mrs. Campbell made a motion to approve the second reading of the Health and Wellness Policy (JHCG); seconded by Mr. Saviano.

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Wainwright requested that a hyperlink be added to the Health and Wellness Policy for RI Nutrition Guidelines for School Vending and A La Carte Foods.

Chairman Silva asked for clarification on whether the three bullets concerning fundraisers are based on state law. Mrs. Wainwright responded that those items come directly from state law. Chairman Silva asked whether this would prohibit students from conducting a fundraiser during the school day. Mrs. Wainwright responded, “yes”. Chairman Silva cited an example from the past when during exam time there have been fundraisers where classes would sell muffins

and coffee during the exam. He asked if this would no longer be permitted. Mrs. Wainwright responded that a fundraiser by a class during exam time would not be allowed.

Chairman Silva asked if there is anything in the policy under Celebrations/ Events that would prohibit parents from providing cupcakes to celebrate their child's birthday with the classroom. Mrs. Wainwright responded celebrations are to be geared away from unhealthy foods. Celebrations are allowed at the teacher's discretion once a month, but should adhere to the policy which states that food items be related to curriculum and be provided by a licensed food service provider. Mrs. Wainwright added that Rockwell and a majority of the Wellness Committee are on board with this aspect of the policy. She commented that cupcakes are not necessarily restricted, but strongly discouraged.

Mrs. Lynch asked for the rationale behind the item "limit food celebrations/events to no more than one per month per class." Mrs. Wainwright responded this was part of Mrs. Campbell's revision when she chaired the Wellness Committee. Mrs. Wainwright stated celebrations are a gray area. Chairman Silva asked for clarification on whether this requirement is only limited to the classroom. Mrs. Wainwright responded, "yes". Chairman Silva commented that he does not feel there is anything wrong with a parent sending cupcakes to school with their child. Mr. O'Dell commented that the intent of the language was supposed to be that celebration related decisions

would be left up to the teacher. Mrs. Wainwright stated there are differing opinions concerning cupcake celebrations from parents who do not want their children consuming unhealthy foods. School nurses are concerned about the sanitary conditions of the food preparation. Mrs. Wainwright added there are other school districts that are modeling strong language. Mrs. Lynch commented she is concerned about the way the above item is written and suggested that it instead refer to “once a month dedicated celebrations”. Mrs. Campbell responded she doesn’t feel it is asking too much of the teacher to handle the coordination of these events. Especially if there were a case where a majority of the students had a birthday in the same month where class time would be greatly compromised. Chairman Silva reiterated he just wanted clarification on the issue of parents providing cupcakes, but cited that he has a problem if teachers can have a cake, but the students cannot. He feels this should be the rule of the building not just the students. Mrs. Rancourt responded that an adult will typically make healthier choices than a child. Chairman Silva believes that the adults should be the role models of the school.

Mrs. McBride stated she feels the policy is unwieldy, unmanageable and restrictive. She will not vote for the Health and Wellness Policy for those reasons. Mrs. Wainwright asked what was unmanageable about the policy. Mrs. McBride responded that the policy is much too long and should only be a page and a half. Mrs. Wainwright responded that 36 districts in the State have revised their Health and

Wellness Policies to align with the new federal guidelines. Those Health and Wellness Policies averaged seven pages.

Mr. Saviano commented that three families approached him in the last week concerning the Health and Wellness Policy. These families said it was cheaper to send a food item to school rather than, for example, to host an ice skating party. Mr. Saviano stated he would not vote for the Health and Wellness Policy as written. He would like to see the sentences read more as suggestions rather than mandates.

Mr. Bento would like the Health and Wellness Policy to be less restrictive. He asked whether the Health and Wellness Policy addresses allergies. Chairman Silva responded allergies are addressed in a separate policy.

MOTION: Mrs. Lynch made a motion to remove bullet item, "Limit food celebrations/events to no more than one per month per class."; Mr. Saviano seconded.

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Wainwright commented that the item concerning limiting food celebrations and events to once per month has always been a part of the Health and Wellness Policy. Mrs. McBride responded there are times after reflecting upon a document, it will become apparent that an item needs to be revised. Mrs. Campbell asked Mrs. Thies and Dr. Andrade what the teachers thoughts were on the Health and Wellness Policy. Mrs. Campbell feels once a month

celebrations are beneficial for the least amount of impact to timeline learning. Mrs. Thies responded that she is a proponent of autonomy for teachers as they are skilled managers of the classrooms. She believes the teachers have the ability and resources to make decisions concerning classroom celebrations themselves. Dr. Andrade concurred with Mrs. Thies.

The motion to remove “Limit food celebrations/events to no more than one per month per class.” passed with a 7-1 vote; Mrs. McBride dissenting

Mrs. McBride questioned whether withholding recess should be at the sole discretion of the administrator. She feels the teacher should be part of the decision making concerning extending instructional time into recess. Dr. Andrade responded that withholding recess was discussed during the Policy Subcommittee meeting. He commented that the Rockwell teachers had expressed the same concern raised by Mrs. McBride. He added that teachers will have discretion to extend instructional time. Dr. Andrade stated a guidance packet will be provided which will outline enforcement guidelines which should eliminate interpretation issues. Mrs. McBride stated to her earlier point that if a seven page policy needs a guide to help with interpretation, it is unmanageable.

The Health and Wellness Policy passed the second reading with a 6-2 vote; Mrs. McBride and Mr. Saviano dissenting.

Mrs. McBride addressed Mrs. Wainwright telling her not to take to heart critical comments that were made concerning the Health and Wellness Policy. There are nine people on the School Committee who feel they are doing the right thing when they express their opinion. Mrs. McBride stated that she sat on the Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee years ago and knows what a celebration it is when a policy passes the second reading. Mrs. Wainwright responded that she appreciated Mrs. McBride's comments. Mrs. Wainwright expressed her frustration that the Health and Wellness Policy could not be one or two page, yet still meet all the state and federal guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION #S2013-72: That the School Committee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and supported by Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee, approve the second reading of the School Improvement Team Policy (CN).

MOTION: Mrs. McBride made a motion to approve the second reading of the School Improvement Team Policy (CN); seconded by Mr. O'Dell.

The motion passed unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION #S2013-73: That the School Committee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and supported by

Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee, approve the second reading of the School Admissions Policy (JEC).

MOTION: Mrs. McBride made a motion to approve the second reading of the School Admissions Policy (JEC); seconded by Mr. O'Dell.

The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES

At the request of Mr. Burke, Chairman Silva invited everyone to attend the Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner that will be held in the MHHS: Cafeteria at 5 p.m.

As this is the last School Committee meeting before the end of the year, Chairman Silva wished everyone a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and all the best in the upcoming year.

Chairman Silva asked Mrs. Thies to notify the School Committee members with the name of the Christmas card winner once it is announced.

SUBCOMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND INITIATIVES

Budget/Facilities Subcommittee

Mrs. Rancourt stated that the next meeting of the Budget/Facilities

Subcommittee would be held on December 16th at 6:00 p.m. The FY15 Budget as well as a Joint Finance Committee Meeting update will be discussed. Chairman Silva reminded everyone present of the Joint Finance Committee meeting that will be held at the Bristol Town Hall on Wednesday, December 11th at 7 p.m.

Policy Subcommittee

Mr. O'Dell said there was nothing new to report. The Subcommittee has now enjoyed the passing of the Health and Wellness Policy.

Personnel/Contract Negotiations Subcommittee

Chairman Silva stated the Subcommittee is still awaiting a response from the teacher's union to confirm a meeting date to proceed with the negotiations process. He added that the Personnel Contract Negotiations Team has met and a number of items were discussed. Mr. Henneous is preparing the School Committee's package.

Wellness Committee

Mrs. Wainwright reported that the Wellness Committee will meet on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 from 4-5:30 p.m. at Hugh Cole School. She announced to date the Stop & Shop A+ Rewards Program has earned the District schools a total of \$3194. 39. MHHS leads in those totals at \$725.40. Mrs. Wainwright encouraged everyone to sign up for the Bonus Bucks Program at Stop & Shop.

Mrs. Campbell said she enjoyed attending the recent PTO meeting at Hugh Cole School. She said it was great to meet all the parents and found the meeting invigorating. Mrs. Campbell said she was impressed with the enthusiasm of the organization. She looks forward to attending the PTO meetings of the other schools in the District.

Mrs. Lynch commented on how wonderful it was to see Mr. Bento, stating the School Committee will be thinking of him overseas at Christmastime. Everyone expressed that they were looking forward to seeing Mr. Bento in the new year.

Mr. Silva highlighted the upcoming holiday concert events within the District and encouraged everyone to attend. Mrs. Thies commented that the event dates are listed on the District website.

ADJOURNMENT – 8:17 PM

MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Campbell motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM; seconded by Mr. O'Dell. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen A. Lynch, Secretary

/kd