



Date Approved/Released: 6-7-18

Date Approved/Hold: _____

School Committee Chair: *Greg Vine*

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 24, 2018

2nd Floor - Town Hall Auditorium

1. Call to order: 6:00 pm/ Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Larry Murphy, Danielle LaPointe, Felicia Nurmsen, Greg Vine, Dawn Fronte (Abs)
Steve Haddad-Superintendent, Richard Ikonen-Business Manager

2. Audio/Video Disclosure – Barrie Martins, Recording Secretary

3. Citizen Questions and/or Comments: None

4. Student Representative Report:

Nicole Lemire reported that Class Day is May 31st, at 12:30 pm. Promenade is Friday, June 1st at 4:45 pm. Prom follows at Oak Hill Country Club at 6:00 pm. The Alumni Banquet is on Saturday, June 2nd at the American Legion at 6:00 pm; contact Mrs. Provost for tickets. Graduation is Sunday, June 3 at 2:00 pm. The Varsity Softball Team has made districts. Relay for Life will be June 9-10. The Track team will be carrying one of the relay torches from Murdock to MWCC. Donations for the school team can be made out to the American Cancer Society and sent to Ms. Rondeau at Murdock. The team has raised \$1,300 towards their \$2,000 goal. Responding to L. Murphy, Nicole stated the best thing about the school year was her grade winning the Tournament of Plays.

5. Student/Staff Recognition:

Students of the Month, May, 2017; Pre-School: Ava Godfrey; Memorial School: Brady Brunt, 2nd grade; Toy Town Elementary: Haley Fleming, 5th grade; Murdock Middle School: Kelsey Boucher, 8th grade; Murdock Academy: Abigail Gagne, 12th grade.

G. Vine congratulated Haley Fleming on winning the statewide Department of DFW Auxiliary Essay Contest 'What Being an American Means to Me'. She will be honored and receive an award at the Memorial Day ceremony at Toy Town Elementary on Friday, May 25th.

The MHS students are on the ball field and will be recognized in June. The Girls Varsity Softball team playoff draw will be on June 5th.

6:32 pm. F. Nurmsen moved for a 5-minute recess. Second by G. Vine. Approved 4-0-0.

6:37 pm. Reconvened in Open Session.

6. Teaching and Learning Highlights:

Michelle Atter-Memorial School Principal, Jennifer Massey-Speech & Language Pathologist and Tom Paine-Guidance Counselor, presented their implementation of PBIS. (Positive Behavior Intervention System) at Memorial School. Ms. Atter noted the school was recognized at the North-East Leadership Forum as an exemplar PBIS school. The Tier I & Tier II supports work every day to support the social -emotional learning and skills for the students. T. Paine noted the office discipline referrals have been reduced by approximately 75%. They teach students the skills to conduct themselves in the expected behavior throughout the school day; all teachers use the same language to teach the skills. Ms. Atter noted they support the classroom teachers, reinforcing the skills when needed. J. Massey noted the team effort makes the program so successful; the program starts in the Pre-School where they set the standards. The program is data driven. They met with the bus drivers and now work with them extending the behavior skills to the bus. G. Vine commended them for imparting to students the positive social norms for behavior between students and teachers. Information is sent to parents via a newsletter. They explained the PAWS ticket system, which reinforces positive observable behaviors. F. Nurmsen also voiced approval, noting the program shows the importance of language and the social norms that are expected.

G. Vine wants people to know that we are doing great things in the school district. L. Murphy agreed that successes should be highlighted for the public and included in an end of year report. Mr. Paine noted that other school districts have visited the school to observe and learn the program. Requests for training sessions have also been received. J. Massey noted the program is proactive. A new piece will extend the program into the students' homes.

7. New Business:

- a. Lead Remediation: S. Haddad reviewed the history of the issue. The district received a grant used to pay for testing and have since replaced several water fountains and taps. The district applied for grant through the MIIA and received \$7,000 of the \$11,200 needed to provide a filtering system to be installed at the kitchens at TTE & Memorial. \$63,000 in additional funds were requested through the Capital Projects Fund and approved at Town Meeting; it will be used to put filters at the MHS/MMS kitchen and replace taps and water fountains throughout the district in order to be in compliance with state regulations.
- b. Blizzard Bags: Suzanne Michel noted that she participated in a Law Training Update last Friday, during which the theoretical possibility of using Blizzard Bags was discussed. DESE calls the "alternative structured learning day programs" one possible solution to scheduling issues posed by inclement weather to fulfill the minimum student learning time requirement. The program must follow well defined policies and procedures and be approved by the district school committee. It must also be approved by DESE to get credited for those hours. Ms. Michel reviewed the program requirements and the logistical challenges. S. Haddad noted a committee comprised of teachers and parents to discuss questions and concerns will be formed, as well as a question & answer forum held. Several school districts have offered to share their experience of their pilot program. F. Nurmsen noted neighboring districts are

using the program quite successfully and urged the committee not to ‘reinvent the wheel’, adding the concern of available resources.

After discussion, the committee agreed on November 1, 2018 as an expected target date to have the program ready to start. The 1st reading would be in September and the 2nd Reading in October. The importance of documentation for the state and in the school handbook so parents are informed was noted. Approval of the program could be related to parents through an addendum/supplement to the handbook sent home to parent/guardians. The issue will on the agenda at the committees’ Summer Retreat.

- c. Communication Plan – S. Haddad reported the district is using a new vendor to rebuild the website; it will be ready by July 1, 2018. The company will hold training seminars for teachers and staff. The new website will improve the districts use of social media. Articles will be in the local newspapers. Communication to parents/guardians, the school committee, the administrative staff, teachers and students on a continuous basis will be improved. F. Nurmsen stressed the district needs a written communication plan, as stated in the Strategic Plan, adding ‘we are failing miserably as a district regarding communication’. She also urged, when needed, the designation of one person by the Superintendent to be responsible so the communication continues uninterrupted. F. Nurmsen asked for completion dates, and noted that, as a member, the Communications Committee has not met. She also cannot get on the MASC and this is her 2nd term. L. Murphy commented that the strategic plan is ‘kind of on the shelf’; the committee has not had updates on the short-term and long-term plans but should have updates every quarter.

S. Haddad noted that his 2-month absence due to illness has disrupted many goal timelines adding “I dropped the ball”. L. Murphy noted the anticipated End-of-Year Report should answer many questions. G. Vine agreed, suggesting that the school committee look at its’ strategic plan on a quarterly basis to see if expectations were realistic or need to be adjusted. L. Murphy stated “the biggest thing we can do to win support from the community is to be transparent and open and provide easy, constant access”. He added the committee needs to review its’ goals. D. LaPointe agreed the Superintendent needs to delegate on a regular basis. S. Haddad noted part of the problem in a small district is not having the resources. F. Nurmsen stressed that a senior leader has to understand what resources are available, and to communicate to the committee if there are not enough.

8. Consent Agenda:

- a. Field Trips: None
- b. Minutes – Regular Meeting Minutes: May 3, 2018

D. LaPointe moved to accept the Consent Agenda. Second by G. Vine. Approved 4-0-0.

9. Superintendent/Business Office Report:

- a. Assistant Principal: S. Haddad reviewed the selection process, noting the district is in negotiations with top candidate. He reviewed positions being filled at Toy Town Elementary.
- b. Evaluation – Superintendent – S. Haddad will have his backup information on his goals to L. Murphy by June 7th to write the summative for the year. The committee return their completed forms to L. Murphy by June 18th; he will present the findings at the committee meeting on June 21st. S. Haddad announced the district will a reading challenge for the community during the summer break using Footsteps to Brilliance.

10. Sub Committee Report: MASC Policies Update Newsletter

D. LaPointe moved to table to the next meeting. Second by F. Nurmsen. Approved 4-0-0.

11. Old Business:

a. Summit Learning:

L. Murphy read a position letter concerning Summit Learning that has the approval of the school committee members. The letter outlined why the committee supports the need for change, problems encountered with the rolling out and implementing the change, and where the committee sees the future of the program. The poor scores and lack of growth over the last decade are unacceptable. It is clear the district as a whole and the middle school in particular needs to make significant changes in its delivery of the curriculum to its students. After a thorough presentation by the middle school principal and staff, the school committee had given its' full endorsement. The concerns raised on academic, social and legal grounds have been recognized and continue to be addressed. Adjustments to the delivery of the curriculum have been made. Meetings, presentations and personal contact ensure the flow of information. The Winchendon School Committee is committed to supporting the middle school principal and her staff in the implementation of the "Summit Learning Program. The committee and the superintendent's office will continue to facilitate the success of the program. The future of the program will be determined based on the data on student achievement. The program will stay focused on grades 7 & 8. It will not be expanded grade 6 or the to the high school.

G. Vine noted he has a grandchild and 2 school committee members have children in the program. He stressed the district cannot afford to keep changing its course without sufficient data. F. Nurmsen noted this is a 3-year pilot program and a decision will be made at the end. She understands change is hard for everyone but feels the students are learning other lessons during the whole process. She is proud of what the school is undertaking and urged students and staff to stay with it. G. Vine added he does not want to discourage parents from advocating for their children. He thanked the parents who came forward with criticisms and concerns.

Jessica Vezina, MMS Principal, reviewed the program components of the platform, professional development and coaching for teachers and the principal. She agreed the instruction needs to be improved, stressing the teachers have full control over the curriculum. She commended the teachers for their dedication to their students. She recognized staff present at the meeting - Matt Bolick, Nicole Landry, M.s Rogers and Alex Johnson.

12. Future Agenda Items:

- a. School Committee Retreat Discussion (6/7/18) (a doodle poll)
- b. MASC Policies Update Newsletter (6/7/18)
- c. FLLAC & CAPS Reports (6/7/18)

13. Committee Member Comments:

G. Vine praised the 2nd grade concert, adding it was a great program. S. Haddad announced the Murdock graduates will walk to Memorial School in caps and gowns on Class Day. F. Nurmsen commended parent involvement, passion and dedication, and their efforts to interact and improve the program. She stressed the importance of making significant and systemic changes regarding school funding and to hear what the district is doing right,

14. Executive Session. 8:07 pm G. Vine go into moved to go into Executive Session for Reason #2 to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, and to reconvene into open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

Second by D. LaPointe. G. Vine – Aye; D. LaPointe – Aye; F. Nurmsen – Aye; L. Murphy – Aye.
Approved 4-0-0.

15. Adjournment: (Adjourned after executive session)

Respectfully submitted: Barrie E. Martins, School Committee Recording Secretary