



Winchendon Public Schools

Date Approved/Released: 10/7/21

Date Approved/Hold: _____

School Committee Chair: [Signature] 10/7/21

School Committee Meeting August 26, 2021 - 6:00 pm 2nd Floor - Town Hall Auditorium

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance:

Shauna LaPointe, Greg Vine, Ryan Forsythe, Thad King, Interim Superintendent,
Karen Kast-McBride via telephone

Audio visual disclosure read by K. Kast-McBride.

3. Public comment: None

4. School Choice Request from Jessica Vezina:

T. King explains the request brought forward by J. Vezina to school choice her children to Winchendon Public Schools from Ringe, NH. Letter from J. Vezina presented to school committee. T. King outlines school choice policy. State line statute explained, it is completely legal to accept student from across state lines as verified by T. King and legal counsel. T. King verifies it is acceptable to enter into an agreement with J. Vezina as an individual as opposed to a school committee. Additionally, WPS has policy J-F entitled School Admissions, all children of school age who reside in the town will be entitled to attend the public schools, as will certain children who do not reside in the town but are admitted under school committee policies related to non-resident students or by specific action of the school committee. T. King recommends that the committee approve J. Vezina's request to school choice her children into the Winchendon Public Schools and that her principal's contract be updated to reflect that this would be a listed benefit and that tuition will be waived as part of the benefits to her.

K. Kast-McBride asks for Motion or discussion.

Motion made by G. Vine to accept Interim Superintendent, Thad King's recommendation and allow the children of J. Vezina, resident of Rindge, NH, to attend Winchendon Public Schools. Seconded by S. Lapointe.

K. Kast-McBride asks for discussion.

R. Forsythe asks if Winchendon Public Schools will seek any remuneration from the Rindge Public Schools or from another entity for what would be a per pupil compensation.

T. King recommends that the school committee make this part of the benefits package for J. Vezina as a principle and that it be written into her contract and that any such tuition be waived, now, or in anything retroactive.

R. Forsythe asks if this is a benefit that should be made available to other public school employees.

T. King replies that it is something he discussed with the attorney today, and as the school committee is about to enter into negotiations this year for a contract for the WTA, it is also recommended that they possibly present this as part of the negotiation package with all of Winchendon Public School employees and as a part of the union contract.

K. Kast-McBride asks if allowing this would create an issue with balance in the school district or cause the district to lose money.

T. King replies that in the future it may be possible to enter into an MOU with a school district out of state such as Rindge that would allow Winchendon Public Schools to set such prices. He states that Amesbury Public Schools currently has an MOU with Southampton, New Hampshire, and they do include a remuneration structure for those students.

K. Kast-McBride suggests that this issue might be a personnel issue that should not be discussed here.

T. King states that the issue was raised by an attorney, so it avoids any ethical violations of any ethics issues around gifts or those types of things that they are all bound to sign off on, so if they put this in as a contractual obligation to an administrator, as well as to our WTA, we satisfy all set requirements.

K. Kast-McBride states that she wants to be careful and suggests that this detail be kept out of the Motion since J. Vezina made this request not as a school principal but as an independent mother of students. She suggests that the details of the contract be left out of the Motion and the personnel matters be dealt with separately by T. King so as not to trample anyone's privacy.

G. Vine withdraws previous Motion and makes Motion to accept the children of J. Vezina as students of the Winchendon Public School system. Seconded by R. Forsythe.

K. Kast-McBride asks for discussion.

S. Lapointe states that she feels as though the committee should state that remuneration

will be discussed rather than leaving this blank sentence and simply stating that they are just accepting the students because it is going to be a benefit to J. Vezina. She is concerned that wording the Motion in this way will set a precedent for the future. She suggests that they clearly state the terms rather than only saying the committee will accept them. She recommends that they add the fact that remuneration will be discussed at a later date.

G. Vine suggests that the committee should go ahead with the Motion as given and then at a later committee meeting they can establish it as a formal policy.

K. Kast-McBride asks for clarification that if the children of J. Vezina were not across state line, the committee would not be discussing the matter.

T. King clarifies that in the case of students within the state of Massachusetts, School Choice is how those decisions are made.

K. Kast-McBride continues that it is T. King's job as Interim Superintendent to ensure that the district is getting paid when it is supposed to. She suggests that they continue with the Motion as worded and determine the policy piece at a later date.

R. Forsythe suggests that the Motion be adjusted to include that negotiation of the contract by the school district will include the topic of a benefits package without declaring what that benefit will be so as to not disclose the benefits of a contract.

K. Kast-McBride states that she believes that to be a legal question that they will not be able to answer tonight. She suggests that they move forward by stating that the committee will negotiate for payment through remuneration to the town or benefits.

T. King states that all school district contracts are public record. They are not private. He states that as public employees, all principal, superintendent and union contracts are all public contracts available to be read by any individual in the state. He recommends that the committee waive any tuitions that might be assessed elsewhere as they would be doing the same thing as they negotiate contracts with the WTA.

G. Vine withdraws previous Motion.

S. Lapointe makes Motion to accept the students and remuneration will be discussed at a later date. Seconded by G. Vine.

K. Kast-McBride asks for vote. Vote is unanimous. Motion passes.

5. Student Handbook:

K. Kast-McBride presents the next item on the agenda as the Murdock High School handbook changes.

T. King asks Megan Weeks, Murdock High School principal to come forward.

M. Weeks comes forward and proposes the following changes to the handbook:

- a. Portrait of a Graduate, which will be used by schools throughout North Central Massachusetts.

R. Forsythe commends M. Weeks and her team for the Portrait of a Graduate. It makes a school district rethink the outcomes of a high school education, and the Winston Public Schools has done a fantastic job and getting to the point that they are.

M. Weeks gives recognition to her team members who helped put together the Portrait of a Graduate, stating that it is very Winchendon based and had strong influence from her very dedicated staff members.

- b. Program of Studies, indicating that the students must take two years of the same foreign language.
- c. Summer School, using the Ingenuity Program, students who receive a grade between 50-59 are eligible to make up their credit over the summer. Previously, the handbook stated that students were limited to only two classes, but in the update, it now states that students can three or four classes, as many students took advantage of after the pandemic.
- d. College Visits, now reflects that students can go on as many college visits as they want rather than being limited to three as the handbook previously stated.
- e. Truancy now reflects the students will not be allowed to make up missed assignments and will receive a zero for unauthorized absences rather than keeping the students out of school when they were already missing too many days. Additionally, communication will be made to parents/guardians and upon excess truancy, the possible filing of a CRA.

G. Vine asks if an attempt has been made to eliminate as many acronyms as possible so that parents understand the meaning.

M. Weeks confirms that an attempt has been made and she will do a better job to make sure those are spelled out.

- f. Tardiness now reflects students are able to complete missed assignments at the discretion of the teacher if a student comes late to class.
- g. Dress Code was changed so there is less targeting of the female student. Teachers

and staff will also be working through life skills with students, reinforcing that there is a time and place for certain types of dress.

h. Additional grammar and spelling errors, as well as bulleted lists, have also been updated.

i. The mask policy has also been updated and included in the handbook.

M. Weeks explains the significance of the new clothing pantry which has been vastly helpful to students who come to her to ask for help.

Motion to approve the amended handbook made by G. Vine. Seconded by S. Lapointe.

K. Kast-McBride asks for discussion, then asks for vote. Vote is unanimous. Motion passes.

6. Subcommittee Assignments:

K. Kast-McBride presents next item on the agenda as subcommittee assignments.

G. Vine makes Motion to table discussion of subcommittee assignments until all five committee members are present. Seconded by R. Forsythe.

K. Kast-McBride asks for discussion, then asks for vote. Vote is unanimous. Motion passes.

7. Superintendent Evaluation Process:

K. Kast-McBride presents next item on the agenda as Superintendent search.

S. Lapointe makes Motion to table Superintendent Evaluation conversation to the next meeting agenda and move to discussion of Superintendent Search.

K. Kast-McBride asks for discussion, then asks for vote. Vote is unanimous. Motion passes.

S. Lapointe reads letter from T. Novak, of the MASC, in which the request is made to set a time in September or early October to discuss the search committee. Request is also made to share the survey which will be posted around the week of September 20. S. Lapointe summarizes timeline:

- a. Preliminary meetings with full year staff regarding district vision and direction late August and early September
- b. Monday September 20 public survey on the district vision and direction

- c. Week of September, 20 and 27 meetings with the community, in the evening, staff, faculty, students
- d. Friday, October 1, survey closes.
- e. Thursday, October 7, school committee meets to approve position description and job posting.
- f. Friday, October 8, position posts and is circulated through the MASC contacts.
- g. Wednesday, November 10, Search Committee orientation
- h. Friday, November 12 application for positions due.
- i. Monday, November 15, Search Committee meets in executive session to select finalists.
- j. November 17th, 18th, 19th, semi finalists interviewed in executive session.
- k. Monday, November 22, Search Committee selects finalists.
- l. Thursday, December 2, Search Committee presents finalists to full committee.
- m. Weeks of December 6 and 13th, site visits, followed by interviews
- n. Monday, December 20, Superintendent selection.

K. Kast-McBride opens topic for discussion.

T. King reports that he has been in contact with Miss Novak from MASC to set up the meetings with full year staff, including building administrators and central office staff as she requested in her letter regarding district vision and direction.

R. Forsythe comments that closer to Thanksgiving, some of those dates may need to be adjusted slightly, but he believes it is a good, ambitious schedule to meet the desired outcome, which is the selection of a permanent superintendent by the end of the calendar year. He suggests that in order to facilitate the committee's meeting with the MASC representative, which needs to take place before September 25, that they meet with her on their September 9 meeting; however, a second date may need to be offered to her as her own school committee also meets on Thursdays.

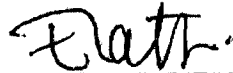
K. Kast-McBride agrees that a different date needs to be offered to Miss Novak by emailing her and asking for her availability.

S. Lapointe agrees that it is a good idea to reach out to Miss Novak via email to ask for her availability and then schedule a meeting with her at that point. She reflects that the committee only needs a short period of time to post publicly and stay well within guidelines.

8. Adjournment:

K. Kast-McBride asks for Motion to adjourn. Motion made by R. Forsythe. Seconded by S. Lapointe. Vote is unanimous. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:



Liz Latoria, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents Attached:

None