

RECORD OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL COMMITTEE HELD ON **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2010** AT 6:00 PM IN THE JAMES F. WALSH SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROOM, 5TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL. STATUTORY NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK.

PRESENT: All School Committee members. Also present: Dr. Lupini, Dr. Fischer-Mueller, Mr. Rowe, Dr. Rochlin, Dr. Wilson, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Coyne.

OTHERS: Heidi Cook and Tony Guigli

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

a. Calendar

Ms. Stone called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She noted upcoming events on the calendar.

b. Consent Agenda

ACTION 10-81

On a motion of Dr. Warren and seconded by Dr. Childs, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the items included in the Consent Agenda.

1) Past Record: October 21, 2010 School Committee Meeting

2. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance

Dr. Childs reported that the Finance Subcommittee will be meeting on November 10, 2010 at 5:00 PM. The agenda will include the FY 2011 1st Quarter Financial Report.

b. Capital Improvements

1. Runkle School Renovations/Additions Contract (Vote)

Mr. Cunha provided an update on the Runkle School project. This evening, they are asking the School Committee to approve a contract with G& R Construction Company of Quincy, Massachusetts for the Runkle School renovations and additions. Architectural plans were developed with the full involvement of the community, including parents, staff and neighbors. A number of the bids were below the estimate. The G&R base bid was for \$20,584,000. The three alternates bring the total to \$20,715,300. They will be able to replace the roof on the renovated portion of the building, provide protection board underneath the new roof, and air condition the multi-purpose room. The company has worked on other MSBA projects and was vetted by the MSBA and the Brookline Building Department. The savings will go back to the MSBA (41%) and the town (59%). They are looking into whether there may be opportunities to obtain funding for underfunded items, such as furniture and technology. Assuming approval, the contract will be signed on November 15. Ms. Charlupski expressed her appreciation to the Building Department for their thorough vetting of all of the firms.

Mr. Morse asked for clarification on the legal implications for the School Committee of signing the contract. Ms. Charlupski stated that they are the owners of the building and their signatures are required by vote of Town Meeting. The Building Commission reviews all of the projects very closely. Ms. Stone stated that the School Committee's approval is required by law. Mr. Cunha noted that Town Counsel has carefully reviewed the contract. That is her role and responsibility. Mr. Rowe stated that Town Counsel reviews both the document and process. Town Meeting's appropriation vote requires School Committee approval, so they are required to sign the contract and vouchers. From a control standpoint, there are by-laws and systems which monitor the process and the oversight of the project. The School Committee can feel confident that controls are in place. There is a system of checks and balances. Ms. Charlupski and Mr. Cunha have been involved throughout the project as the School Committee's representatives. The School Committee will need to approve any change orders. Mr. Cunha noted that the MSBA process provides for a number of checks and balances. The town has hired its own clerk of the works. Ms. Stone suggested that Mr. Morse is not questioning the process, but is asking if the School Committee is doing its due diligence given the contract's size and scope. They are required to approve the contract by law, but rely on the expertise of others within the system. If any member has concerns in their role as final owner of the project, this is the place to raise it. Ms. Charlupski stated that signing the contract gives the schools control over the buildings. Mr. Morse asked what if any other due diligence they should be doing. Building Department Project Administrator Tony Guigli explained the contract review process. Town Counsel reviewed the contract. They had a sound bidding process. He is confident that they have a good project and that due diligence has been done.

Dr. Childs asked who is responsible for cost overruns. Mr. Guigli replied that the budget takes this into account and they can request change orders. The budget includes a contingency. They will be reviewing the budget, including the contingencies. They may want to add additional inspections. The current contingency is 6-7%, but they may want to adjust this amount based on the bids. In response to a question from Dr. Warren, Mr. Guigli stated that if the School Committee votes favorably, the Building Commission and Board of Selectmen will be asked to vote on November 9. He would then issue the notice to proceed on November 10. They will gain 17 days in the schedule and hope to be at substantial completion in July so that they can move back in August.

ACTION 10-82

On a motion of Mr. Cunha and seconded by Ms. Charlupski, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a contract with G&R Construction Company, 253 Centre Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169 for the Renovations and Additions to the John D. Runkle School, including Alternates #1, #2 and #3, amount of contract:

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Base Bid: | \$20,584,000.00 |
| Alt #1 | 32,400.00 |
| Alt #2 | 102,000.00 |

Alt #3 (3,100.00)

Grand Total \$20,715,300.00

2. Lawrence School Mural Project (Vote)

Ms. Charlupski reported that the Lawrence School is requesting approval to create a mural on the large concrete wall facing the rear playground area. The Capital Improvements Subcommittee has reviewed this request and recommends approval. The project would do the following: involve the entire school community, enhance the school's strong sense of community, provide a strong public statement of the value placed on the arts, beautify the area and serve to establish ownership and highlight the presence of the new garden. This request would still need to be approved by the Planning Board because it falls into the sign category. Ms. Stone stated that the subcommittee was really impressed with the process and level of collaboration. Ms. Charlupski stated that she raised the concern that this might be precedent setting, but feels that this piece makes sense in this spot. The plan is for a mural that is 15' by 20'. In response to a question from Ms. Meyers, Ms. Stone stated that the Brookline Arts Council invited the school to submit a grant proposal. In response to a question from Dr. Warren, Ms. Stone stated that the area is not that accessible and is not low to the ground. It will be treated for exposure to the elements. In response to a question from Ms. Richardson, Ms. Charlupski stated that the school community will try to get input from as many parents as possible. The actual work will be done by the students.

ACTION 10-83

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski and seconded by Ms. Scotto, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the Lawrence School mural project, as described in Attachment A.

Ms. Scotto provided an update on the Heath School project. The designer selection committee interviewed four candidates on Tuesday. They were very impressed by all of the candidates. In the end, they felt that Miller Dyer Spears, Inc., a firm they have worked with in the past, was the best choice for this project. Ms. Charlupski noted that the Heath School Building Committee will be meeting on November 16, 2010. The process of selecting a designer worked very well. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) representatives listen carefully to what the town has to say. Ms. Scotto agreed. She noted that each of the firms had a different perspective on the project and they learned a great deal through the interview process. Dr. Lupini expressed his appreciation to Mr. Guigli.

c. Curriculum

Ms. Ditkoff reported that the Curriculum Subcommittee met on October 26, 2010 to discuss the goals and calendar for the year. They will continue last year's practice of scheduling several meetings in which the entire School Committee is invited to hear school improvement plans. The subcommittee wants to focus on how to consolidate the various data reports they get from the administration and others and how programs that

fall outside the purview of program review, such as the Calculus Project, get factored into the broader framework of the Strategic Plan. They want to consider the purpose of the programs, their budgets and how they are doing in relation to the Strategic Plan priorities. The Curriculum Subcommittee's next meeting will take place on November 10, 2010. The agenda will include Program Review Updates and the Connected Classroom.

d. Government Relations

Ms. Stone reported that she will be setting a meeting in early December so that they can discuss the legislative priorities.

e. Negotiations

Mr. Morse had nothing new to report at this time.

f. Policy Review

Ms. Meyers reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on October 27, 2010. They discussed the proposed Bullying Prevention Policy and incorporated comments made at the October 21 School Committee meeting. They are in the process of developing a new draft. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued regulations on October 29 that concern both the master plan and the policy. Associate Town Counsel Joslin Murphy is working with them to incorporate the regulations. The policy needs to follow the student related section of the master plan. The vote on the policy will take place in December. Ms. Stone noted that this will give the School Committee the opportunity to hear comments made at the public hearing before voting. Dr. Lupini stated that they had already incorporated some of the items included in the regulations, but there may additional ones that they need to address. Ms. Murphy is reviewing the plan. The plan is out for public comment through an on line survey. Once he sees Ms. Murphy's comments, he will decide whether to issue another version of the master plan prior to the hearing. Ms. Meyers requested that the School Committee members receive a copy of the regulations. The Policy Subcommittee also discussed the Kindergarten Entrance Age Policy. The subcommittee will be meeting on December 13 from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM and on January 12 from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM.

1. Policy on School Committee Meetings (2nd Reading/Vote)

Ms. Meyers referred to the revised draft of the Policy on School Committee Meetings (Attachment B). The proposed policy no longer includes a start time and now reflects current practice. They incorporated Mr. Morse's suggestions made at the October 21, 2010 meeting.

ACTION 10-84

On a motion of Ms. Meyers and seconded by Ms. Stone, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the Policy on School Committee Meetings (revision), as shown in Attachment B.

2. Kindergarten Entrance Policy

Ms. Meyers presented the proposed Kindergarten Entrance Policy (Attachment C). The proposed policy is as follows:

In order for a child to be eligible to enter kindergarten, he/she must have reached the age of five (5) years on or before August 31 of the year in which he/she enters kindergarten. No exceptions shall be made.

They are recommending that the early entrance exception policy be eliminated. This policy applied to children who reached the age of five years by October 15 of the year in which early entrance was requested. Implementation of this policy required a lengthy review process and was a burden for staff. The policy was adopted eight years ago. Since that time, they have amended existing policies on grade and subject acceleration and now have an orderly process and criteria for acceleration. The current exception policy is a cost to the system in terms of staff time. It will be helpful for people moving into the district to have a date certain in place. This will put us into conformity with other districts. Both the Policy Review Subcommittee and the Superintendent are recommending this change.

In response to a question from Dr. Warren, Ms. Meyers stated that over the past nine years, 76 students have participated in the early entry program, with the highest number being 15 in the 2003-2004 school year. Dr. Lupini stated that there is a feeling among staff and principals that decisions not to grant early entry have grown more contentious. There have been three situations over the past two years in which parents talked about bringing in lawyers. He noted the pressure they are experiencing from growing student enrollment. The amount of staff time required for the evaluations has become a burden. Ms. Meyers noted that the numbers of students admitted early have decreased in recent years. Because of enrollment pressures, the schools may not be as enthusiastic about admitting students early and implementation may be uneven. Ms. Stone stated that one of the reasons for addressing this policy at this point in the year is so that they can give families ample warning and time to adjust. Having a date certain gives families and the system assurance about the outcome of applications. They recognize that any date will cause consternation for some families. This change is very reasonable and conforms to common practice.

g. Additional Liaisons

Mr. Morse reported on the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) Annual Meeting. He noted that the intent of the second proposed amendment to the MASC By-Laws was the same as that of the first proposed amendment except that it only applied to MASC Division officers. There was a minor change in the date. Our concern about enabling Division officers to remain in place subsequent to their departure as School Committee members is not relevant because this section of the by-laws was not addressed by the amendment. The School Committee's substitute motion on the fourth proposed amendment, clarifying that the electronic communication must permit all parties to hear all other parties at all times and that electronic participation should not be limited to meeting where there is an in-person quorum, was approved.

Ms. Charlupski reported that the 21st Century Fund Annual Gala will take place on November 13, 2010. Tickets are still available. The Brookline Education Foundation drawing of MINI raffle winners will take place on November 5, 2010.

Ms. Stone encouraged people to attend the BHS production of *Much Ado about Nothing*.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one signed up for Public Comment. Ms. Stone read the School Committee's Policy on Public Comment.

4. STUDENT REPORT

Ms. Richardson reported that they are coming to the end of the 1st quarter. The annual Powder Puff flag football game between the Junior and Senior girls will take place at the start of the Thanksgiving break. She will be representing the junior class. The game will take place at Parson's Field. The China Exchange has been going well. She has met many of the students and both the Chinese and BHS students are enjoying the visit. Several teams including boys soccer, girls volleyball and cross country are in the state playoffs. Sophomore James Wronoski won the Division 1 State Individual Championship in golf. Approximately 60% of BHS seniors are applying for early decision. *Much Ado about Nothing* will be performed on November 3, 4, 5 and 6 and the Freshmen Play will be performed on December 8, 9, 10 and 11. Many of the teachers participated in a costume contest and their costumes were quite creative. The Gay Straight Alliance held their annual dance and it was very successful. They raised a lot of money for the club and for other organizations. In response to a question from Ms. Charlupski, Dr. Lupini reported that the Thanksgiving Day football game is at home this year.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lupini provided the following report:

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Master Plan

The "working draft" of our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Master Plan is now posted on the website for public review. Public comment will be solicited in two ways: (1) an on-line survey, to be available through our website on or before Friday, November 5, 2010; and (2) a Public Hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

Thank you to those parents who volunteered to serve on the Master Plan Task Force. This group will be charged with summarizing the public comments to the "draft" master plan, as well as making recommendations regarding the plan to the Superintendent. Parent members of the group are as follows: Anne Short (Baker School), Patty Underwood (Brookline High School), Merav Socolovsky (Devotion School), Jill Janows (Driscoll School), Pam Palmucci (Heath School), Kate Silbaugh (Lawrence School), Matt Cooney (Lincoln School), Rachel Wurtman (SEPAAC), Marcia Ferrigno (Pierce School)

and Sue Sturman (Runkle School). We expect to name the remaining members of this group (staff, students and law enforcement), including the co-chairs, on or before Monday, November 8, 2010.

Principal Searches

Interview Team membership for both the Heath and Driscoll Principal searches will be finalized on or before Friday, November 5, 2010. Initial interviews are expected to begin during the week of November 15, 2010. Our goal is to begin the finalist phase of both searches on or before Wednesday, December 1, 2010 and to possibly name Principals at both schools before the end of the calendar year.

Professional Development Day

Our Professional Development Day, which took place on Tuesday, November 2, 2010, was a huge success. Staff members were able to access collaborative professional learning opportunities from a considerable number of offerings designed to enhance the skills of our employees and support the goals of our Strategic Plan. Gene Thompson-Grove, Director of Professional Development and Special Initiatives, Betsy Fitzpatrick and other members of the Office of Teaching and Learning staff did a tremendous job in pulling this day and these sessions together.

National Honor Society Induction Ceremony

The Brookline High School National Honor Society Induction Ceremony will be held on Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Roberts-Dubbs Auditorium.

Dr. Lupini expanded on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Master Plan. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently issued final regulations regarding notification of bullying or retaliation with respect to the new bullying legislation. Town Counsel is reviewing the regulations to determine whether they will require adjustments to either the policy or the master plan. Dr. Jennifer Greif Green, Assistant Professor in the School of Education (Special Education Program) at Boston University, will be working with the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Master Plan Task Force as a consultant.

6. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF CURRENT ISSUES

a. Project Discovery

Dr. Lupini stated that Ms. Cook took over this program this year and has done an exceptional job. Dr. Fischer-Mueller stated that this program has been in place for over ten years. At Dr. Lupini's urging, they increased collaboration and coordination with the Recreation Department and as result they have been able to improve the program and double the number of students being served by offering both morning and afternoon sessions. She expressed her appreciation to Lincoln School Vice Principal and Directory of Project Discovery Heidi Cook, Director of Grants and Program Review Amy Martin, former K-8 English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator Terry Jewel and current K-8 English Language Arts Coordinator Patricia Kinsella. Dr. Fischer-Mueller then introduced Ms. Cook to make a presentation on Project Discovery (Attachment D).

Ms. Cook provided an overview of the program. Project Discovery is a month-long summer program designed to use specific assessments and data to pinpoint and target reading skill gaps in Grade 1-3 struggling readers. There is also a 30-minute focus on math skills each day. Students are taught in small groups of ten or less and are taught specific learning objectives and skills by a Brookline teacher. Students attend either a morning or afternoon session. Many parents enrolled their students in the Recreation Department's Camp Gator for the other half of the day. This partnership allowed them to offer up to 80 full-day spots. Of the 130 students, 53 (45%) had an Individual Education Plan. The addition of an inclusion facilitator helped ensure that teachers were supported in finding the right learning match for each student. Ms. Cook explained how the program promotes the system's core values. They were able to serve students who in the past weren't able to participate because all the full-day spots were taken. Bringing together so many teachers from different schools increased collaboration. The inclusion specialist helped the students honor differences. The partnership with Camp Gator furthered their goal of meeting the needs of all students. They were able to create a learning environment that successfully balanced content, pedagogy and student-teacher relationships.

In response to a question from Dr. Childs, Ms. Cook stated that they are able to offer full scholarships, so all students could participate regardless of their family's ability to pay. Dr. Lupini stated that by doubling the number of slots and the number of kids receiving scholarships, they were able to help the families most in need of the full-day slots. Ms. Scotto noted that fluency goes hand in hand with comprehension for most but not all children. She asked if they assessed comprehension. Ms. Cook stated that while they taught comprehension, they were unable to find a good comprehension assessment. They asked teachers to comment on students' growth, but it was difficult to measure over 19 days. They reported back to both parents and teachers. They focused on a couple of skills. In response to a question from Ms. Charlupski, Ms. Cook stated that the program has always been 19 days. Dr. Fischer-Mueller stated that this may change. Ms. Charlupski noted that there is state funding for summer literacy programs. Mr. Cunha stated that his sons went through the program. He appreciates the changes, particularly the addition of the inclusion specialist, the increase in accessibility and the focus on data. He believes that an additional week would be helpful. It is so important that students continue their learning during the summer months so that they do not regress.

In response to a question from Dr. Warren, Ms. Cook stated that she observed some difference in student energy level between the morning and afternoon sessions, but not as much as she had anticipated. Teachers take this into account in their planning. The program goes until 4:00 PM. In response to a question from Ms. Meyers, Ms. Cook stated that, in general, they accommodate all students referred to them by the literacy specialists based on the current cut-off for referral. If the number of slots grew, they could fill them. In response to a question from Mr. Morse, Ms. Cook stated that X2 provides the capability to track the performance of the students who participate in the program. Dr. Lupini stated that they are planning to do this. In response to a question

from Ms. Stone, Ms. Cook stated that they gave the literacy specialists written reports on all participants. The literacy specialists then gave the classroom teachers copies of the reports. Ms. Ditkoff noted that foundations have already done research on summer learning loss and how to best prevent it. Dr. Fischer-Mueller stated that they have made adjustments in Project Discovery so that they can help the students most in need. Through the work of Ms. Cook and Ms. Kinsella, they are poised for even greater moves.

7. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Stone adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin E. Coyne, Executive Assistant
Brookline School Committee