

RECORD OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL COMMITTEE HELD ON **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009** AT 7:00 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, except Mr. Morse. Also present: Dr. Lupini, Dr. Fischer-Mueller, Mr. Rowe, Dr. Wilson, Mr. Alfata, and Ms. Coyne.

OTHERS: Heidi Cook, Sonya Elder, Kathy Fazzalano, Terry Jewell, Lisa Lamont Harris, Amy Martin, Tim McGillicuddy, Pete Rittenburg, Charlie Simmons, Christopher Throft-Brown, and Peter Zawadzki

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

a. Calendar

Dr. Warren called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He noted upcoming events on the calendar.

b. Approval of Past Record: June 18, 2009

ACTION 09-68

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Dr. Childs, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the past record of June 18, 2009.

c. Acceptance of Funds and Establishment of the Mindlin Family Scholarship

Dr. Warren stated that this scholarship is being established by BHS graduate Michael Mindlin who believes that his experience at BHS laid the groundwork that became essential for his success in the years that followed. This scholarship, in the amount of \$1,500, will be given annually to a graduating member of the senior class who has worked diligently, persevered and achieved success above and beyond expectations.

ACTION 09-69

On a motion of Ms. Scotto and seconded by Ms. Meyers, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to accept funds to establish the Mindlin Family Scholarship, as shown in Attachment A.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one signed up for Public Comment.

3. STUDENT REPORT

Mr. Alfata reported that school started on September 8. The BHS community was saddened to learn of the death of Louis Lee Prowse, who would have been starting his junior year. The school observed a moment of silence. Dr. Weintraub was pleased with how great the school looks and expressed his appreciation to the staff who worked on the

building over the summer. The freshmen were treated to a welcome barbecue, which was sponsored by the PTO and the Rotary Club. Dr. Michael Fowlin gave an extremely moving talk to all of the students on respect, humanity and diversity. The Student Legislature met to create an election commission. They would like to schedule a day of dialogue. Ms. Angione will be their new liaison. They were told that the MCAS scores were impressive and that the juniors will be treated to an ice cream party. Chrysanthemums were planted at the school. The custodians did a great job getting the school ready and it looks wonderful. Ms. Stone noted that her children also told her how moving the assembly on diversity and respect was. At some point, she would like to hear more on this. Ms. Charlupski asked if the assembly was taped and if it was, suggested broadcasting it on BATV. Mr. Alfata said that he will look into this and report back to the School Committee.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Introduction of New Staff

Dr. Lupini introduced the following new staff members: Heidi Cook, Vice Principal at Lincoln School; Dr. Sonya Elder, Director of Food Services; Terry Jewell, English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator; Lisa Lamont Harris, Director of Special Education; Tim McGillicuddy, Interim Principal at Lincoln School; Christopher Throft-Brown, Performing Arts Curriculum Coordinator (PK-8). Dr. Lupini stated that he is so pleased that they were able to attract people of this caliber to Brookline and they are all off to a tremendous start. Each of the new staff members stated that they are thrilled to be working in Brookline and are looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead. They expressed their appreciation to the School Committee and the Superintendent for providing them with this opportunity and thanked their fellow staff members, the parents and the students for their support and the warm welcome. The School Committee members welcomed the new staff members. Dr. Lupini noted that Joe Connelly, Acting Principal at Runkle; Jennifer Fischer-Mueller, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; and Denise Rochlin, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, joined them in the spring. He stated that they are very fortunate to work with such a strong group of administrators and he thanked them for their service to the Public Schools of Brookline.

b. General Report

- New Teachers and Paraprofessionals (They began the year with 55 new teachers and 65 first-year paraprofessionals. Gene Thompson-Grove coordinated an outstanding orientation program, which represents one aspect of our three-year mentoring program.)
- Opening Day (Teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators participated in a variety of professional development and retreat activities prior to the start of school.)
- Enrollments (Our second day enrollment was 6,570 students, which represents an increase of 239 students over our June 30 numbers. There are 592 Kindergarten students. The 8th grade number concerns them. They expect to have 500-525 Kindergarten students next year. Pierce School is now the second largest

- elementary school. They added a fourth kindergarten at Lawrence School, consolidated a fifth grade section at Baker School, and added a fourth grade section at Pierce.)
- METCO and Materials Fee Enrollments (They have 300 METCO students and 127 materials fee students.)
 - Building Preparation (A great deal of work was done over the summer. He expressed his appreciation to Jay Pagliarulo, Ed Clancy, and Charlie Simmons.)
 - Instructional Rounds (Instructional rounds will begin on Monday. The model is inspired by the medical-rounds model used by physicians. Education leaders and practitioners develop a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction looks like and what schools and districts need to do to support it.)

Dr. Lupini's full report can be found as Attachment B.

5. SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTES

a. Reorganization of Senior Staff

Dr. Lupini stated that they are requesting that the School Committee vote to change the title of the Director of Human Resources to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. He had told the School Committee back in June that he would be recommending this vote in the fall. There will be no change in salary. Dr. Lupini then introduced Dr. Anne Wilson to describe the changes to the organizational chart.

Dr. Wilson expressed her appreciation to Administrative Assistant Jill Kennedy. She referred to the revised organizational chart (Attachment C) and noted that the Human Resources Office now has more interaction with Teaching and Learning and Student Services. There is now a dotted line between the Human Resources Office and the Director of Professional Development. They need to work more closely in providing information to staff and delivering training. As an example, Dr. Wilson noted that she is now interviewing substitute teachers and has recognized that there is a need to provide them with training to ensure that learning continues at a good pace. She is delighted to have the opportunity to work very closely with Dr. Fischer-Mueller and Dr. Rochlin and their departments.

ACTION 09-70

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Ms. Meyers, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to change the title of the Director of Human Resources to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

b. 2010-2011 School Starting Dates

Dr. Lupini stated that next year's proposed schedule follows the same model as this year. September 1, 2009 and September 2, 2009, which both come before Labor Day, would be teacher days and students would come back on the Tuesday following Labor Day. In response to a question from Ms. Meyers, Dr. Lupini stated that they would expect that in the following year, the teachers would return after Labor Day.

ACTION 09-71

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Ms. Meyers, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to establish Wednesday, September 1, 2010 and Thursday, September 2, 2010 as the first two days in the 2010-2011 school year. These days will be used for beginning of year teacher meetings and classroom preparation, with the student year to begin on Tuesday, September 7, 2010.

c. All Kinds Alcoholic Beverage License: 21st Century Fund Gala

Dr. Warren stated that the 21st Century Fund is requesting the School Committee's approval to serve all kinds alcoholic beverages at their 21st Century Gala and to allow students to be present on the stage during the dinner portion of the program. He then introduced General Manager of the BHS 21st Century Fund Kathy Fazzalano. Ms. Fazzalano stated that they submitted an application to the Selectmen for a Special Alcoholic Beverage License in July. They would like to be able to serve one vodka drink during the 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM cocktail hour. Two or three students would be escorted by an adult chaperone into the Gala at approximately 8:30 PM to speak from the stage during the program and then would be immediately escorted back out by the chaperone. They will have a dozen or so volunteers who are college students and who are at least 21. Ms. Charlupski noted that this has been done in the past without any problems.

ACTION 09-72

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski and seconded by Ms. Meyers, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve of a liquor license under the current policy so that all kinds alcoholic beverages can be served, as described in Attachment D.

ACTION 09-73

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski and seconded by Ms. Meyers, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to permit the 21st Century Fund to apply to the Board of Selectmen for an all kinds alcoholic beverage license with the understanding that the School Committee will waive the requirement in the current policy that no students be present at an event where alcohol is served to allow supervised student speakers to be present during the dinner, but with no other exceptions.

**d. Waiver to Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)
Rule 53: Grade 8 Eligibility for Girls and Boys Ice Hockey**

Dr. Lupini stated that Mr. Rittenburg has requested that the School Committee vote to waive MIAA Rule 53: Middle School Students on Senior High Teams for Girls and Boys Ice Hockey. He noted that last year he informed the School Committee that this recommendation might be forthcoming. Mr. Rittenburg discussed this proposal with him and with the BHS headmaster and principals. Dr. Lupini then introduced Director of Athletics Pete Rittenburg.

Mr. Rittenburg explained that this waiver would only apply to Grade 8 students seeking to participate in Girls and Boys Ice Hockey. The waiver request would need to be approved by the MIAA. In response to a question from Mr. Cunha, Mr. Rittenburg stated that it is difficult to state how many students this will impact, particularly among the girls. They generally know which boys might be able to participate, but some of them may go to private school. Girls seem to stay in the town's ice hockey program until about 4th grade. By allowing 8th graders to participate, they hope to expose them to the coaching staff, which may influence matriculation decisions. In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Mr. Rittenburg stated that this waiver would need to be reviewed on a yearly basis. The BHS does not currently have a junior varsity program for ice hockey. It is unlikely that the 8th grade students would play games for the varsity team. If participation increases, they could add a junior varsity team.

In response to a question from Ms. Meyers, Mr. Rittenburg stated that a waiver is not needed when the high school and middle school share a principal. Other schools have received these waivers. Cooperative teams, where students from two, three or four schools play on one team, represent an alternative. Ms. Meyers stated that she is concerned about the safety implications. Mr. Rittenburg stated that their biggest concern is providing a safe and healthy physical and social environment. In response to a question from Ms. Meyers, Mr. Rittenburg stated that the 8th grade students would be expected to go to the practices and be available for games. Dr. Childs stated that she is concerned about the students' safety and asked what the value of this is to an 8th grader. Mr. Rittenburg stated that they are providing an opportunity within the town, particularly for the girls. No one would be forced to participate.

In response to a question from Ms. Ditkoff, Mr. Rittenburg stated that he does not foresee see any additional costs. Most of their costs are fixed and they collect an activity fee from each participating student. Ms. Charlupski asked whether the addition of a junior varsity team would result in additional costs. Mr. Rittenburg noted that they collect \$175 per athlete and that they have the option of using Larz Anderson for a junior varsity team. In response to a question from Mr. Cunha, Mr. Rittenburg stated that one of their goals is to add a junior varsity team. In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Mr. Rittenburg stated that enrollment in hockey has been fairly low. They haven't had a junior varsity team for four or five years.

Ms. Stone noted that there are significant developmental differences among the ages and that hockey is such a physical sport. She wishes they could have a physician's report that could speak directly to the physical impact. Dr. Warren noted that participation would be self selecting and that they have asked the administration to consider programs for middle school age children. In response to a question from Ms. Meyers, Mr. Rittenburg stated that the parents of the 8th graders would be required to sign the same waiver forms as the other participants. In response to a question from Dr. Childs, Mr. Rittenburg stated that there are no other mechanisms available for a talented 8th grader to play on the high school team, unless the schools have the same principal

Ms. Meyers noted that the School Committee seems to be conflicted on this issue and that hearing an expert's opinion might increase the level of comfort. She asked if there was interest in deferring this vote. In response to a question from Mr. Cunha, Dr. Lupini stated that in most cases where there is eligibility, the 8th graders play on a junior varsity team, while exceptional players may play on the varsity team for five or six years. Mr. Rittenburg stated that they will ensure that the students are safe.

ACTION 09-74

On a motion of Mr. Cunha and seconded by Ms. Charlupski, the School Committee VOTED (Dr. Childs and Ms. Scotto voted against the motion and Ms. Ditkoff and Ms. Stone abstained) to submit an Application for Waiver of Athletic Eligibility Rule 53 to allow Grade 8 Eligibility for Girls and Boys Ice Hockey, as shown in Attachment E.

e. Annual Acceptance of Grant Funds

Amy Martin, Director of Grants and Program Review, provided an overview of Grant Awards for FY 2010 (Attachment F). Ms. Martin stated that they receive grants from many sources, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The total for FY 2010 is \$6.7 million, up from \$6.6 million in FY 2009. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) grants have increased, primarily due to the increase in Title I funding. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) was reorganized and funds were shifted among accounts. For five years, they received a 21st Century Fund grant, used at the Lincoln School. This grant ended but they intend to apply for another cycle. ARRA funding provided a big boost. These are two-year grants. They are required to spend at least 50% of the funding on reinvestment and have used funds to support half-time kindergarten aides, inclusion specialists, special education team facilitators, playgroups, special education data management, and the partnership with the Landmark School. They were able to bring back math specialists. They will be completing requests for proposals for the Competitive Grants later in the fall and they have been gathering the data. They have been invited to apply for a grant to look at the continuity of curriculum. Ms. Martin expressed her appreciation to Principal Clerk Susan Fields who manages the grants and to Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance Peter Rowe and Budget Analyst Michael D'Onofrio for their collaboration.

Dr. Childs noted that she is on the Board of Early Education and Care and will therefore recuse herself from the discussion and vote.

In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Ms. Martin stated that the Parent Child Home Program is still in existence, but has been encompassed by the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Program. They have supplemented funding with an ARRA Early Education Grant. Similar services will be provided and service will not be disrupted. The directors have received a Community Development Block Grant to help them manage the program.

ACTION 09-75

On a motion of Ms. Scotto and seconded by Ms. Stone, the School Committee VOTED (Dr. Childs recused herself from the vote) to accept the FY 2010 Grant Awards, shown in Attachment F.

6. PRESENTATIONS

a. Report on Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and Repair and Maintenance Projects

Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance Peter Rowe stated that Mr. Simmons did an amazing job to get work completed at the schools over the summer. He then introduced Director of Public Buildings Charlie Simmons to present a report on CIP and Repair and Maintenance Projects. Mr. Simmons presented photos showing projects completed at the schools over the summer, including occupancy sensors and office space at Devotion School; gym floor refinishing, the science room, and a bathroom for the Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP) at Driscoll School; new sinks at Heath School; kindergarten room, auditorium/music space, basement and corridor floors at Lawrence School; a new 4th grade classroom at Lincoln School; kindergarten room, sound panels, floor refinishing at Pierce School; new office space at Runkle School; culinary arts and special education classrooms and new keycards at BHS; floor refinishing at the Schluntz Gym; the BEEP main entrance, classroom, bathroom and office space; Tappan Gym windows; and the changes at the Unified Arts Building due to the Brookline Access Television (BATV) relocation. Mr. Simmons described the work being done at the Old Lincoln School in preparation for the theatre production.

b. Architect's Final Design Program and Budget for the Runkle School Project

Director of Public Buildings Charlie Simmons and Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance Peter Rowe provided an update on the Architect's Final Design Program and Budget for the Runkle School Project. Mr. Simmons stated that the Runkle School renovation will double the square footage and the project should be completed on schedule. He appreciates the cooperation of Dr. Lupini, Mr. Rowe, the School Committee and the principal. The floor plan is finalized, but the exterior design is not finalized. Dr. Lupini noted that the cafeteria seats just over 200. Each classroom area has a special education learning support classroom. There is some additional space for an extended day or autism program. They have built in some flexibility.

Mr. Rowe referred to the budget submission, which was approved by the Runkle School Building Committee on Tuesday. The deadline for submission is tomorrow. The SBAB will review our submission and will be submitted to the board for a vote on September 30, 2009. This would be authorization to move forward to Town Meeting. Dr. Lupini stated that they are assuming a 41.58% reimbursement rate and noted that \$1 million in costs are not reimbursable. They expect that some of their assumptions will be challenged. The figure includes funding for playground equipment.

Ms. Charlupski noted that there will be sinks in every classroom. In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Dr. Lupini stated that the 41.58% reimbursement rate is fixed. He recognized the work of Deputy Town Administrator Sean Cronin in securing that rate. In response to a question from Ms. Scotto, Mr. Rowe stated that there is a limited technology budget of \$315,000, but they hope to find some additional funds that could be redirected to technology. In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Mr. Rowe stated that the building will have a white roof and the project will qualify for a silver level of LEED certification.

In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Mr. Rowe stated that he believes that the change in the budget will have minimal impact on other projects in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Dr. Lupini stated that the changes in enrollment in the system will have CIP implications. In response to a question from Ms. Ditkoff, Dr. Lupini stated that they are comfortable with the size of the building. Mr. Rowe noted that there will be three sections across the board plus one pre-k. The school will accommodate up to 560 students and they current have 500 students. In response to a question from Dr. Childs, Mr. Rowe stated that there would be no green space if they tried to include four sections. In response to a question from Ms. Stone, Mr. Rowe stated that funds for the playground and grounds are included in this budget.

Dr. Lupini commended the Building Commission for their work on this project. Ms. Charlupski noted that a public meeting to present the plans has been scheduled for September 30, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Runkle School. Ms. Stone thanked Mr. Simmons for his extraordinary work in the schools over the summer. Ms. Meyers noted that Project Manager Tony Guigli has done a terrific job working with the community.

ACTION 09-76

On a motion of Mr. Cunha and seconded by Dr. Childs, the School Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the Architect's Final Design Program for Runkle School, as shown in Exhibit G.

c. Update on Brookline Access Television (BATV) Relocation

Dr. Lupini expressed his appreciation to Mr. Zawadzki for the tremendous amount of work he did over the summer on the BATV relocation. He then introduced BATV Director Peter Zawadzki to provide an update. Mr. Zawadzki reported that temporary occupancy was approved on Wednesday. A lot of work had to be done in a very short period of time. They started the project on June 25. He presented photos showing the work that was completed over the summer, including the new educational control room, the educational studio, the early childhood classroom, the drawing room, and the culinary arts room. Classes have started. They have two classrooms with three LCD displays. Each computer is protected in terms of site access and downloads. They have a shared storage server so nothing will be saved on the computers. Mr. Zawadzki described the courses. A tour will be provided on Wednesday, September 16, 2009 at 7:00 PM. Phase II of the project will be completed towards the end of October. They will have a 25-person viewing room. There is a barrier between the education spaces and

construction. They will be meeting to discuss security. The project is on schedule and on budget. He and the teachers are very excited.

Dr. Warren thanked Mr. Zawadzki for his work on this project. Ms. Meyers noted that the collaboration between BATV and the school system has been exceptional. She expressed her appreciation to Dr. Lupini for having the vision to pursue this project and to Dr. Weintraub. Dr. Lupini stated that they are pleased to be able to offer this opportunity to the students. He stated that Mr. Zawadzki and the BATV Board of Directors, particularly Mr. Slotnick, have been terrific partners.

d. Update on FY 2010 Budget

Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance Peter Rowe provided an update on the FY 2010 Budget (Attachment H). He provided a comparison between the final state budget for FY 2010 and the budget approved by Town Meeting in the spring. State aid was reduced by \$618,973 and town revenue has been reduced by \$400,000. With the changes in funding for the Quinn program and the Circuit Breaker, the schools were left with a revenue shortfall of \$999,124. After applying the contingency reserve of \$600,000 and a net increase in grants, the schools were left with a net funding shortfall of \$159,124. Mr. Rowe referred to a chart showing FY 2010 Expenditure Action Options/Pressures. The potential budget gap for special education transportation is between \$100,000 and \$150,000 and the potential budget gap for enrollment is between \$61,100 and \$122,200. Potential savings in steps and lanes are expected to total between \$100,000 and \$200,000 and a position freeze could save between \$100,000 and \$200,000. They will have better numbers towards the end of October and have been meeting with the town to discuss the potential impact of the increase in the meals tax. There may be further reductions at the state level. They are facing a gap that is not necessarily insurmountable.

In response to a question from Ms. Charlupski, Mr. Rowe stated that the Baker and Lawrence consolidations are reflected in these numbers. In response to a question from Dr. Childs, Mr. Rowe stated that the Department of Administration and Finance will be making the determination as to whether local funds are being supplanted by federal funds. Ms. Stone noted that they do not have contracts with any of the bargaining units. Mr. Rowe stated that there is no contingency for that purpose. Ms. Ditkoff stated that between now and December, it would be helpful to get information on which revenue streams are ongoing and which will sunset. There is a timing component. Mr. Rowe stated that he could incorporate this information into the FY 2010 First Quarter Financial Report. Dr. Lupini stated that most of our ARRA expenditures have been categorized as innovation. There is a belief that these innovations will eventually reduce other expenditures.

e. Evaluation of Superintendent

Dr. Warren presented the 2009 Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent conducted by the Brookline School Committee.

I. Purpose and Process for the Evaluation

The Brookline School Committee (BSC) is charged with the supervision and evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools, and therefore is committed to constructing and maintaining an evaluation process that provides support for the Superintendent's professional development and continued improvement in the role. To that end, in the 2008-09 school year we revised the evaluation procedures in cooperation with the Superintendent. The new process aims

- to provide the Superintendent a more meaningful process for professional growth and support;
- to provide the School Committee sufficient feedback on which to make reasonable decisions about renewal and compensation; and
- to hear feedback from the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) community regarding the Superintendent's strengths and challenges, thus improving the flow of information and strengthening the relationships with that community.

The evaluation process now includes

1) Community Feedback on the Superintendent's Performance

During the late spring, parents and staff are invited by the School Committee (through multiple media outlets including the PSB web site, Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) newsletters, the Brookline TAB newspaper, direct email, the Brookline Educator's Union (BEU), etc.) to comment in writing on their experience of the Superintendent. The BSC asks for feedback in four specific areas of interest:

- Leadership and Management
- Instructional Leadership
- Finance and Operations
- Communications and Community Relations

To encourage open and candid feedback, the questionnaire clearly states that all responses are kept strictly confidential and available only to Brookline School Committee members.

2) In-Person Interviews with Direct Reports

To assess more closely the Superintendent's role as supervisor and manager of PSB senior personnel, including Senior Staff and Principals/Headmaster, the Chair of the BSC conducts confidential, in-person interviews with a sample of the Superintendent's direct reports. As with questionnaires, these interviews are confidential, and the Superintendent does not know with whom the Chair has spoken. While only some of the direct reports each year are asked for such an interview, any direct report may request and will be given an opportunity to speak in person with the BSC Chair as part of this evaluation process.

3) Superintendent's Self-Evaluation

In 2008, the School Committee for the first time asked the Superintendent to provide a self-evaluation of his own strengths and challenge/development areas. This remains an important component of the Superintendent's evaluation.

4) School Committee Review and Deliberation

Over the summer, the School Committee meets with the Superintendent to hear his self-evaluation, then meets without the Superintendent to discuss its own sense of the findings from questionnaires, to hear a summary of the feedback from the direct reports, and to discuss the Superintendent's relationship with the BSC specifically.

5) Public Statement

The BSC Chair and Vice Chair write a summary of the evaluation of the Superintendent for inclusion in the minutes of the first School Committee meeting in September.

6) Follow-up

The Chair and Vice Chair and Superintendent meet on an ongoing basis throughout the school year to review progress toward goals and objectives in the review.

Note: While this evaluation focuses largely on the Superintendent's personal leadership qualities, the School Committee recognizes that significant work remains on the system-wide goals and objectives outlined in the PSB Strategic Plan. The results of the District's overall performance will be addressed in a separate presentation to School Committee later this year.

II. Statement of Evaluation

Summary

In the most robust of times, the job of Brookline Superintendent of Schools is challenging. Maintaining high levels of achievement while raising standards across ten diverse schools in a high-performing school district of dedicated, innovative teaching where faculty independence has long been prized would challenge anyone in this increasingly mandate-heavy environment. But school year 2008-2009 layered huge expectations as well as unexpected challenges on top of that already difficult job.

Due to a successful override, the Superintendent had the good fortune in 2008-2009 to be implementing a longer school day district-wide and putting in place a brand new K-6 World Language program. In the Central Office on his core Senior Staff, he had a new Human Resources Director, a new Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and a new Data Manager. The year began with an unfinished Strategic Plan and a new

Principal at Lawrence School. This represented a hugely challenging environment of new hands on deck with significant initiatives to be accomplished as a team.

The economy, in the most significant collapse of our lifetimes, led the State to cut current fiscal year funds twice. A Master Plan for Facilities correctly predicted unprecedented future enrollments and an urgent need to move forward with facility expansion. While trying to negotiate the renovation of the Runkle School with the state and the community, Runkle's principal took a family leave, and then resigned, followed by the resignation of Lincoln's principal and vice principal. In addition, we said goodbye to Tom Cavanaugh after 30 years of service to Brookline, a respected colleague and beloved leader at the Baker School.

In addition to three principal searches, two vacancies opened in the Central Office. The new Deputy for Teaching and Learning accepted the superintendency in Taunton, MA, and the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services left to pursue other interests.

The Superintendent, in his self-report, acknowledged a number of places where he wishes he had handled a situation differently, particularly with regard to the A.S. for Student Services. The BSC agrees that the path to resolving many of these anticipated and unanticipated challenges was rocky at times and a learning opportunity throughout. But at the end of the school year, the following was true:

- 1) The Strategic Plan had progressed and had been incorporated over the course of the year into myriad program reviews and curricular plans.
- 2) The PSB budget was balanced, with an innovative new approach to Kindergarten special education and SPED administration that promises to provide better services at lower cost in the long run.
- 3) A new principal had been hired for Baker School, talented interim principals had been secured for both Runkle and Lincoln Schools, and a gifted new educational leader had accepted the vice principal position at Lincoln, to the community's satisfaction.
- 4) The Runkle School renovation was on track, with designs discussed and vetted with a nervous community and SBA reimbursement, for the moment, still held at 40%.
- 5) A new Assistant Superintendent for Student Services had been hired, and a newly created position, Director of Special Education, had been filled from within our system.
- 6) The former long-serving and highly respected Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning had been re-hired to return to that post in Brookline.
- 7) K-6 World Languages had been fully implemented to very positive reviews from parents, students, and teachers.
- 8) The extended school day had been in place for a year with very little disruption and overall favorable results.

The School Committee believes that, in light of the economy in particular and the extraordinary challenges presented this past year, this list of accomplishments is to be commended. While the Committee identified areas for improvement in the Superintendent's performance during the evaluation and while the Committee became aware of pockets of dissatisfaction with the Superintendent, and the reasons for them, the Committee also believes that this evaluation demonstrates Dr. Lupini's excellence in the superintendency overall. Dr. Lupini has the full and unqualified support of this School Committee and the School Committee looks forward to continuing working with him to enhance and improve our schools.

Superintendent's Strengths:

Brookline is in strong, steady, trusted, and knowledgeable hands. Dr. Lupini is an articulate and dedicated leader; he is committed to advancing instructional practice in the District; he is administratively highly skilled and widely respected for his honesty, work ethic, and setting of high standards.

Leadership & Management: Excellent managerial skills; detailed, organized, consistent, transparent; supportive in a crisis; trusted as knowledgeable; strong sense of the big picture and ability to bring the many different parts of the system into coherence; greatly respected in surrounding districts and affiliate organizations.

Instructional Leadership: Sets high standards and holds people accountable; has a strong vision for specific areas; has clearly articulated and maintained commitment to Program Review and Professional Development.

Finance and Operations: Superb command and finesse; singled out by everyone as a key area of strength. (And we are mindful of how important this has been during these particularly challenging times.)

Communication and Community Relations: Clear, straightforward and direct (even with bad news); has increased presence at buildings – showing response to past comments; excellent response to complaints, follow-up; excellent presentations and ability to translate complicated ideas for different audiences.

Superintendent's Challenges:

Where pockets of dissatisfaction with the Superintendent exist, respondents focused typically on issues of style, rather than skill. Already a valued and successful Superintendent in terms of the skills he brings and has developed, Dr. Lupini has the potential to be an even stronger leader for Brookline. The School Committee would like him to develop a more consistent demonstration of his empathy toward staff and his personal connections with the PSB community. The School Committee realizes that Dr. Lupini has made significant efforts to reach out to teachers but that

the nature of this outreach is direct, personal and individual and therefore not always broadly appreciated. It is also time consuming and important.

Leadership & Management: Need to improve leadership and coaching skills, to ensure top team members (administration and principals) all feel supported toward success; specifically, Superintendent should more consistently demonstrate empathy; create more space/invite sharing of idea development with top team (vision and goals) and use positive reinforcement and inspiration to motivate others.

Instructional Leadership: Be more open to creative brainstorming to bring people into the process of creating new strategy and programs; while continuing to set the bar high, reach into classrooms more and praise work while keeping everyone focused on the doing better; emphasize positives more on the path to improvement; articulate and demonstrate connection between system actions (MSAN, PSB programs) and educational progress.

Finance and Operations: No major development areas. Try not to let the obvious demands of this area supplant growth in other areas.

Communication and Community Relations: Focus on others in interactions; schedule time in meetings to listen to general concerns; choose occasionally to listen without reacting immediately; relax the agenda sometimes and spend drop-in time in a classroom after a morning meet-and-greet.

Goals for 2009-2010

The Superintendent has been asked to develop an action plan and timeline to address both the issues outlined in this evaluation as well progress against system-wide goals, as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Warren thanked Ms. Stone and Ms. Ditkoff for their help in conducting the evaluation. He expressed his appreciation to Dr. Lupini for his assistance and cooperation.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance

There was nothing to report at this time.

b. Capital Improvements

Ms. Charlupski had nothing further to report at this time.

c. Curriculum

Ms. Ditkoff reported that the Curriculum Subcommittee's schedule and agenda for the year have been finalized.

d. Government Relations

Ms. Stone reported that the Government Relations Subcommittee will be meeting to establish a schedule for the year and to set a date for the Legislative Breakfast.

e. Policy Review

Ms. Meyers reported that the Policy Subcommittee will be meeting on a monthly basis starting in October.

f. Additional Liaisons

Mr. Cunha reported that the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) will be hosting a series of parent breakfasts to introduce the new Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and the new Director of Special Education. They will take place at Runkle (September 17), Lincoln (September 18), Pierce (September 22), Lawrence (September 24), Heath (September 25), Devotion (September 29), Baker (October 1), and Driscoll (October 2) from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM.

Mr. Cunha reported that the Enrichment and Challenge Support (ECS) Advisory Council will be meeting on September 15, 2009 at 8:30 AM in Room 111, Town Hall.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for an Executive Session.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Warren adjourned the meeting at 10:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin E. Coyne, Executive Assistant
Brookline School Committee