

MINUTES OF THE HYBRID REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, February 26, 2024

Via WebEx <https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=me6595a310c82d04ca61efebba0665e77>

Meeting Number: 2496 825 4077 Meeting Password: gPcK8i5BpM7

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair, called the meeting to order (7:04 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (in-person); Dr. Jay Dahya (remote); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (in-person); Dr. Lauren Francese (in-person); Ms. Brooke Hopkins (remote); Mr. Jeff Hughes (in-person); Mr. Steven Lawrence, Vice Chair (in-person); Dr. Michael Strambler (remote) and Erin Williamson (in-person).

STAFF: Vonda Tencza, Superintendent; Analisa Sherman, Principal; Cheryl Tafel, Assistant Principal; Carrie Borcharding, Special Services Director; Donna Coonan, Director of Business Services/ Operations; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

CORRESPONDENCE – Ms. Del Prete acknowledged receipt of several emails from parents regarding Open Choice and advanced math.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

Laura Hall spoke regarding the advanced math program, adjustments to the math curriculum, and urged consideration of holding a community forum on math.

Catherine Mezzacappa urged continuation of the Open Choice program and specifically the sibling preference placement process.

Betty Miller noted the disservice to students in Grades 5 and 6 regarding the math curriculum.

PTO Update – Monica Phillip, Vice President, provided an overview of various activities, inclusive of STEAM night, the Valentine's Day staff gratitude project, math night and the upcoming international night.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Mr. Lawrence

Second by Ms. Del Prete

UNANIMOUS

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Tencza reminded the Board there would be three slots available for 2024/25 in the Open Choice program, BOS approval of the 2024/25 budget proposal to the BOF and the relocation of the SEP and ESY 2024 Summer programs to the Amity Middle School Bethany Campus.

Math Update – Superintendent Tencza updated the Board on recent adjustments made to the Math curriculum related to compacting and differentiation of instruction / extensions. While there is always room for improvement, it is evident that given our smarter balanced test scores and ranking #1 in our DRG and 3rd in DRG A, student achievement is on the right track. Children need time and opportunities to learn content strands properly to grow their individual pathway. Garnering intelligence is not fixed and can be developed throughout the learning process to raise student performance and/or individual achievement. There is no one answer and our goal is to ensure that all students have access to high quality instruction that meets diverse needs, is flexible and focused for future development.

Ms. Hopkins left meeting (7:35 PM).

Amity Assistant Superintendent, Frank Purcaro, noted the many systems and processes that are in place to support math learners through their individual pathways. The elementary foundation is critical in building a firm foundation of scaffolding content strands, compacting and differentiation of instruction. Various cohort data from 2019 to present

depicted approximately 20% of students consistently placing in AP courses at the high school level. Since realigning the Pre-Algebra criteria to the Amity Middle School placement criteria, eligibility requirements are very rigorous and encompass only 1-2% of the students in Grade 6 attaining acceptance. It was suggested that communications be developed and shared with parents of Grade 5 students detailing the potential risks and benefits of moving children into Pre-Algebra as well as the impact of skipping content areas to ensure parents have a full understanding of the ramifications of this decision.

Kindergarten Entrance Age – Superintendent Tencza presented a brief overview of our process and procedure in response to recent legislative changes. Early entrance waivers must be received by mid-February for enrollment consideration in the fall of 2024 with final determinations made by mid-March. Additional assessments will be conducted in April and August for anyone moving into district.

CSDE Mandated Recruitment / Hiring Plan Approval – Superintendent Tencza apprised the Board on the recent CSDE mandate that requires all districts to complete and submit an Increasing Educator Diversity Plan template documenting recruitment, hiring, selection and retention of diverse staff. As the BOWA districts share similar staffing needs, they collaborated in creating an *overview of criteria of action* in response to the specific strategies and objectives detailed by the CSDE. Districts are required to submit the template and once approved by the CSDE, make the applicable revisions as determined by the CSDE. Ultimately, the template for every district will be available on the CSDE site.

MOTION #2 – CSDE MANDATED RECRUITMENT / HIRING PLAN

Move that we approve the CSDE Recruitment / Hiring Plan as submitted by the Superintendent and authorize the Superintendent to make any plan revisions etc. as suggested by the CSDE.

Ms. Piascyk
Second by Dr. Francese
UNANIMOUS

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted the various reading and writing activities for Grade 2 learners; the 100 day festivities, the request of hat day from Grade 2 students, mini musical performances in Grade 4 and the upcoming *Read Across America* celebration on Wednesday, March 6.

BRS Town Building Committee – Mr. Hughes noted that the roofing project continues to move forward with funding approved at the Special Town meeting on January 8, 2024. This committee met on February 12 and 16 to amend the committee charge to include educational specifications and feasibility studies pertaining to population, space and program challenges. The change in leadership from Sheila McCreven to Dr. Maria Madonick was also noted. The Committee also reviewed the plans, specifications and estimates of the roof and drainage projects identified by Silver Petrucelli as part of the roofing project and requested Board of Education endorsement of the project.

MOTION #3 – ROOFING REPLACEMENT PLAN

Move that we approve the estimates, plans, and specifications as presented by Silver Petrucelli & Associates dated February 14, 2024 for State project # 167-0026 RR.

Mr. Hughes
Second by Mr. Lawrence
UNANIMOUS

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Strambler reviewed the February 1 meeting, which focused on the math research process administration has conducted over the last several months in exploring math resources, “best” practices, standardized curriculum-based measures / assessments and assorted articles. In addition, meetings were held with the Middle School math specialists to ensure vertical alignment with the Amity curriculum as well as Pre-Algebra.

Finance Committee – Mr. Lawrence reviewed the February 13 meeting inclusive of the standard monthly reports. With approximately half the year expended, it appears there will be a significant projected surplus in the range of \$241,000. As suggested by the Board of Selectmen, the funding of Phases I and II of the CSG project were incorporated recently into the 2023/24 operating budget.

Policy Committee – Ms. Williamson reviewed the February 5 meeting with modifications made to Policy 5111 – inclusive of the new Kindergarten Age legislative changes and residency language modifications / requirements to update timelines for compliance and form documentation.

CABE Liaison Report – Day on the Hill is March 13 with a registration deadline of March 8. It was suggested that the Leadership Team start data collection now to support participation in the CABE Leadership Level Award process for next year.

Upcoming Meeting Presentation – Technology Upgrades / WBOE Appreciation.

Upcoming WBOE Committee / Meeting Schedule – Facilities Committee on March 7 at 7:30 AM, Finance Committee on March 12 at 4:30 PM, and the regular WBOE Regular Meeting March 18 at 7:00 PM. The Town will host an FOI Workshop on March 5.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Kristen Turkosz inquired what the end of the year will look like for Grade 6 Math and urged consideration of holding a public forum on the topic of Math.

Executive Session

The Board entered Executive Session in accordance with State statute to conduct the mid-year evaluation of the Superintendent and invited the Superintendent to attend.

MOTION #4 – EXECUTIVE SESSION (9:16 PM)

The Board entered Executive Session in accordance with State statute to conduct the mid-year evaluation of the Superintendent and invite the Superintendent to attend.

Mr. Lawrence
Second by Ms. Del Prete
UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (in-person); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (in-person); Dr. Lauren Francese (in-person); Mr. Jeff Hughes (in-person); Mr. Steven Lawrence, Vice Chair (in-person); and Erin Williamson (in-person).

The Board conducted the mid-year evaluation of the Superintendent.

MOTION #5 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Move that we return to Public Session (10:03 PM).

Mr. Lawrence
Second by Ms. Del Prete
UNANIMOUS

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (10:04 PM)

Mr. Hughes
Second by Dr. Dahya
UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board