

Board of Education Special Meeting
Thursday, June 20, 2024 6:30 PM Eastern
www.youtube.com/@MiddletownStream

Beman Middle School
1 Wilderman's Way
Middletown, CT 06457

Liz Crooks:	Present
Sheila Daniels:	Present
Rakim Grant:	Absent
Callie Grippo:	Absent
Debra Guss:	Present
Adam Hayn:	Present
Deborah Kleckowski:	Present
Susan Owens:	Present
Harold Panciera:	Present

Present: 7, Absent: 2.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

II. Salute to the Flag

Mr. Hayn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda. This motion, made by Debra Guss and seconded by Adam Hayn, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Callie Grippo: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

IV. District Highlights

IV.A. MPS Hosts Second Annual Igniting Inquiry Conference

Ms. Lavorgna introduced Denise Kraft and James Gaudreau, Principal of Snow School. The Igniting Inquiry Conference will feature 3 speakers; Trevor MacKenzie, Jessica Vance and Amy Chang. There is an in-person or a virtual option to attend. The workshops model the inquiry-based and learner-centered teaching practices the district hopes to bring to our students. Mr. Gaudreau thanked Ms. Kraft and her team for putting together this unique experience.

IV.B. Two Elementary Schools Achieve National Recognition in STEM Education: PLTW Distinguished Program Recognition

Ms. Lavorgna introduced Rebecca Deotte, Elementary STEAM Coach. Farm Hill and Spencer Elementary Schools were awarded this recognition. Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is an inquiry-based, student-centered curriculum. Farm Hill and Spencer were the only schools in Connecticut that were awarded this recognition.

IV.C. Middletown Applauds Cohort 2024 for Successfully Completing the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

Ms. Lavorgna introduced Karen Bernard, Corey Holmes and McCann Birmingham. The Parent Leadership Training Institute empowers parent leaders to become change agents for the next generation. It is a free, evidence-based program for parents that runs 21 weeks. Each participant completes a community project that highlights skills honed from PLTI involvement. Mr. Holmes and Mr. Birmingham shared their experiences and projects.

IV.D. Upcoming District Events

Upcoming events include the Harlem Magic Masters Assembly & Game on. June 28. It is free for all MPS Community members. Free summer meals will be offered this summer at Beman and Macdonough.

V. Public Session

Chair Daniels explained the rules of Public Session.

William Wilson, 221 Woodbury Circle. Mr. Wilson spoke about his dissatisfaction with Math Pathways.

Cris Freer, 108 David Drive. Ms. Freer asked the BOE to vote no on Math Pathways. She discussed many reasons that she does not support Math Pathways.

Rose Lagana, 806 Ridgewood Road. Ms. Lagana spoke about the proposal for an apartment complex near Lawrence School. She spoke of the dangers of having a complex in near proximity to the school.

VI. Communications

Dr. Vazquez Matos spoke about Mr. Richard Henderson's career at Middletown Public Schools. Mr. Henderson is starting his new chapter of retirement. Mr. Henderson thanked everyone for their support and his love of his career.

Ms. Daniels spoke of the success of the MHS Graduation. She thanked everyone that worked behind the scenes to make the event a success.

VII. Consent Agenda

A motion was made to approval the Consent Agenda. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Liz Crooks, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Callie Grippo: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

VII.A. MHS Crew - Head of the Fish Regatta

VII.B. MHS Crew Head of the Charles

VII.C. MHS Crew CRI Fall Classic

VII.D. MHS Crew New England Jr. Regionals

VII.E. Family Resource Center Grant Executive Summary

VII.F. Grants Status Report

VIII. Superintendent's Report

VIII.A. Strategic Operating Plan

Dr. Vazquez Matos explained the Strategic Operating Plan and the Portrait of a Global Citizen. Mr. Griswold reviewed an overview of the timeline of both the Portrait of a Global Citizen and the Strategic Operating Plan. A portrait of a global citizen is a holistic view of expectations for students, including the transferable skills, content, understandings and dispositions that students should have by the time that they graduate. There was a steering committee of approximately 15 members made up of parents, teachers, students and staff. The team followed an interactive design thinking process. There was a strong focus on community engagement. This was done through surveys, focus groups and interviews. Mr. Griswold shared the design of the portrait with its 7 attributes.

Ms. Lavorgna elaborated on the Strategic Operating Plan (SOP). She explained the anatomy of the SOP. Approximately 25 individuals comprised the Steering Team throughout the 2023-2024 school year. Parents, students, alumni, teachers, administrative assistants and paras participated in the process of the SOP. There were 1,575 community members surveyed and 8 focus groups in which approximately 90 community members participated. The mission statement is that Middletown Public Schools cultivates the brilliance of each student. The four pillars are: Building a Culture of Growth, Supporting our Middletown Community, Communicating with Clarity and Consistency, and Fostering Relationships and Belonging. These pillars will guide the work of Middletown Public Schools for the next 3 years.

Next steps include recruiting implementation teams, identifying key metrics, and building a monitoring dashboard. The title is Thriving Together, a journey toward empowerment and growth.

VIII.B. Math Pathways

Richard Cordaway, Yvonne Daniels, Mary Grace Cianci and Jill Shahverdian were introduced. Ms. Daniels began by discussing the Statistics Course. The team made changes based on feedback from the Board. She explained the semester breakdown of the course and what will be taught in the new course. There will be two units, the SAT Readiness Unit and the Career Readiness Unit, which students will choose from. Ms. Daniels reviewed the changes to the math courses. She reviewed the questions that were submitted. She shared that no content was removed. She explained that Illustrative Mathematics spans 399 days, which equals 2.2 years. MPS extended this to 2.5 years to account for special events and half days.

Ms. Shardardi, Professor and Chair of Mathematics and Statistics, Director of Data Science, explained the integrated curriculum. She stated the advantage to the integrated curriculum is that students will have multiple opportunities to study and gain different viewpoints on a topic.

VIII.C. Cell Phone & Digital Usage

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared that MPS is focusing on decreasing screen time on cell phones for students. The policy for restricted cell phone usage will begin to be enforced. Conversations

with administrators and staff are developing a plan to limit the use of cell phones. Research has shown an increase in academic performance, mental health and physical health with phone usage and screen time is limited. The response is to improve our policies and practices, increase non-screen activities and time and promote digital literacy. The district plans to partner with students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and Board Members to come together for the benefit of our students.

IX. Committees

IX.A. Facilities Committee

Ms. Owens shared that the summer projects, including the Adult Ed cooling unit, will be completed in the summer. The MHS Library cooling unit has been installed. There is a discussion with the City regarding storage space.

X. Action Items

X.A. Approval of Statistics Course

A motion was made to approve the Statistics Course. This motion, made by Debra Guss and seconded by Harold Panciera, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Callie Grippo: Absent, Liz Crooks: Nay, Sheila Daniels: Nay, Deborah Kleckowski: Nay, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 3, Absent: 2

Liz Crooks: Nay, Sheila Daniels: Nay, Deborah Kleckowski: Nay

X.B. Approval of Math Pathways

A motion to approve Math Pathways was made. This motion, made by Debra Guss and seconded by Harold Panciera, Failed.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Callie Grippo: Absent, Susan Owens: Abstain (With Conflict), Liz Crooks: Nay, Sheila Daniels: Nay, Adam Hayn: Nay, Deborah Kleckowski: Nay, Debra Guss: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea

Yea: 2, Nay: 4, Absent: 2, Abstain (With Conflict): 1

Debra Guss: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea

XI. Future Agenda Items

Chair Daniels asked for a conversation about the construction in the area of Lawrence School. She would like the background and how to move forward. Ms. Kleckowski suggested a group or representative going to Planning and Zoning to express concerns. Ms. Crooks asked how parents would be informed of the updated cell phone policy.

XII. Proposed Executive Session

XII.A. Leadership Survey (proposed for Executive Session)

A motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of the Leadership Survey was made. This motion, made by Sheila Daniels and seconded by Deborah Kleckowski, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Callie Grippo: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

XIII. Adjournment

Move at 9:44 PM to adjourn. This motion, made by Deborah Kleckowski and seconded by Harold Panciera, Carried.

Rakim Grant: Absent, Callie Grippo: Absent, Liz Crooks: Yea, Sheila Daniels: Yea, Debra Guss: Yea, Adam Hayn: Yea, Deborah Kleckowski: Yea, Susan Owens: Yea, Harold Panciera: Yea
Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 2