

**Board of Education Special Meeting**

**August 19, 2025 6:30 PM**

**Alfred B. Tyschen Building, 311 Hunting Hill Ave.**

**Conference Room B**

**DRAFT**

Board Members Present: Liz Crooks, Sheila Daniels, Rakim Grant (6:43), Callie Grippo (participating remotely), Debra Guss, Adam Hayn, Deborah Kleckowski, Susan Owens, and Harold Panciera

Others Present: Superintendent Dr. Alberto Vázquez Matos, Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Cannata, Chief Academic Officer Colleen Fitzpatrick, Director of Facilities, Safety and Security Marco Gaylord, Director of Information Technology Michael Skott, Executive Director of Finance Natalie Forbes, Director of Pupil Services Vacianna Spaulding, Director of Food, Nutrition and Wellness Randall Mel, Manager of Human Resources Harry Snyder, Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Education Joyce Carey and 4 visitors.

**I. Call to Update**

Ms. Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:31PM.

Ms. Kleckowski led the pledge of allegiance.

**II. Budget Update**

Dr. Vazquez Matos introduced Natalie Forbes. Ms. Forbes shared that the departments have monthly meetings with schools regarding fiscal constraints. The main goal is to support students, teachers and families. She shared that the district is launching into electronic time keeping this week for employees. A new software to track student activities accounts is also launching. This will assist in keeping track of what vendors need 1099 forms. Grants that were undetermined (Titles 1, 2 and 3) will be released from the State. The District Repair Improvement Grant was also released.

Ms. Guss asked if there were any other concerns regarding the grants. Ms. Forbes shared that Title 4 has not been released yet. Dr. Vazquez Matos shared his concerns regarding free and reduced lunches for the 26-27 school year. Mr. Mel shared the qualifications for families to receive free or reduced lunch.

### III. Personnel Update

Mr. Snyder shared that HR has hired about 105 hires or new hires so far this summer. He listed the current vacancies in the district. Mr. Snyder shared how those vacancies will be covered. He thanked the HR team and hiring managers for all of their hard work this summer. Mr. Snyder and Ms. Cannata explained how the shortened day will impact paraprofessional hours and coverage.

### IV. MHS Schedule Change

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared the updated MHS schedule. A committee was created to review the high school schedule. The A B schedule will remain. Advisory was shortened to 30 minutes per day. Teachers will have a duty block of time assigned, prep time and data review time. Board Members shared their concerns regarding block scheduling versus students having each class everyday. Dr. Vazquez Matos explained why the committee decided to have A B days. It allows for longer instruction time, project based learning and less transitioning. Chair Daniels suggested surveying the high school teaching staff and reviewing the schedule. Dr. Vazquez Matos shared that a survey will be going out to both students and staff in November.

### V. District School Day Time Change

The school day times were reviewed. Teacher arrival and dismissal times were discussed. Teachers will be in the buildings for wrap-around time. This will allow for collaboration time, meetings and parent communications. Legacy Academy student school times and teacher schedules were discussed.

### VI. Grading Policy Regulation Change

A committee was created consisting of district administrators, building administrators and teachers. The lowest grade possible will now be 40 instead of 50. Letter grades will also be implemented. Students will be accountable for attending class. Students that have an unexcused absence will have a 40 (F) for that class and work will not be able to be made up. This will affect Beman and MHS. A credit review committee will also be in place for students with 10 or more unexcused absences. Attendance will be tracked through Powerschool and hall sweeps. Tardies and missing instructional time was also discussed.

### VII. Phone Policy Regulations Change

The phone policy regulation was revised. The phone policy was followed at Beman and was successful. Enforcement at MHS will increase. For the first violation the phone will be confiscated and the parent or guardian will have to pick it up. A conference will be held with the parent. Students must use the Yondr pouch. The second offense is in school suspension. Consequences for the third offense were discussed. Dr. Vazquez Matos will review options with legal.

#### VIII. Choose Love Movement

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared that MPS will become a Choose Love District. Scarlet Lewis will be the convocation speaker. Ms. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Spaulding and Ms. Ferriera will assist schools in accessing the curriculum. Students at the high school will access the lessons during Advisory. At the elementary level SEL interventionists will work with classroom teachers to share lessons. The Board will also have access to the website. Guidelines and expectations for the rollout will be discussed between Ms. Fitzpatrick, Ms. Spaulding and Ms. Ferriera.

#### IX. Macdonough

Dr. Vazquez Matos thanked Mr. Gaylord and his team for all the hard work they have put into Keigwin. Mr. Gaylord described the work that went into renovating, moving and setting up the building. Major repairs include: HVAC repairs (that will occur this week), asbestos abatement is on hold due to funding, the playground was funded by the city and will go to the Building Committee on Thursday. Bathrooms, stairwells and the library were all renovated.

#### X. Legacy Academy

Legacy Academy will have a wing within Keigwin School. Hiring has been happening all summer. Meetings with families have been happening at Beman and MHS. Placement has been done through the PPT process. Ms. Spaulding is very pleased with the space and the accommodations that have been put into place for the students. Ms. Spaulding will be at Legacy Academy to oversee the opening of the program.

#### XI. MHS

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared that schedules are being finalized with the help of Mr. D'Amato. Freshman orientation was today and Ms. Llantín Cruz reported that it was a success. The Assistant Principals created an action plan. It will be a road map in terms of teaching and learning. It includes operations, portrait of a global citizen, relooking at study halls, behavior management, scheduling, climate and culture.

#### XII. Behavior Expectation Districtwide

Dr. Vazquez Matos shared that student and staff safety is a top priority. The behavior policy will be strictly enforced. The Discipline Policy (5114) can be found on the district's website.

#### XIII. Convocation

Dr. Vazquez Matos reported that the agenda is finalized. Scarlett Lewis is the keynote speaker. Convocation will be at Middletown High School and will be both in person and virtual.

XIV. Future BOE retreat

Chair Daniels suggested having the BOE retreat in September. She will send an email to the Board for dates and suggestions.

XV. Executive Session: Superintendent Evaluation follow-up

MOTION: A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of Superintendent Evaluation follow-up was made by Ms. Daniels and a second by Ms. Owens at 9:26PM.

XVI. Adjournment

MOTION: A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Guss and a second by Ms. Crooks at 10:27 PM.