

MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
September 14, 2023 - 6:30 pm
Medfield High School Library Media Center

PRESENT: Timothy Knight - Chair
Michelle Kirkby - Vice Chair
Leo Brehm - Recording Secretary
Will Horne - Financial Secretary
Kristin Simonini - Member at Large

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Jeffrey Marsden - Superintendent of Schools
Michael LaFrancesca - Director of Finance and Operations
Andrea Moores - Secretary

The chair asked for a motion to open the School Committee meeting at 6:32 pm.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to open the September 14, 2023 School Committee meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was none at this time.

NEW BUSINESS (Agenda out of order)

Budget and Legislative Update – presented by State Representative Denise Garlick

State Representative Denise Garlick was in attendance and presented an update on the FY24 budget and how the budget impacts the work of the School Committee. The budget invests \$55.98 billion into local aid, public education, public and mental health, clean energy, and more. Representative Garlick's presentation covered the following topics:

- Increase of Medfield Local Aid and Chapter 70 Funds
- FY24 Budget Initiatives
 - Universal School Meals
 - Green School Works
 - Civics Programs
 - Early College
 - Special Education Circuit Breaker
 - School Nutrition Standards Study

Representative Garlick informed the Committee that she was appointed as the Chair of the Education Committee. The Education Committee will consider the following matters concerning education through grade twelve as well as other matters referred to the Committee

- Special Education
- Early Education
- Assessments
- Students' Mental Health
- Curriculum and Instruction

- School Personnel
- School Finance
- Early Literacy
- College and Career Readiness

Representative Garlick informed the Committee that the Education Committee will be looking at more than 360 bills to be divided up into fourteen Education Committee hearings.

Representative Garlick thanked the Committee for giving her time to speak to them at their meeting. She encouraged the Committee to subscribe her newsletter to the Garlick Press at www.RepGarlick.com. This newsletter covers district, legislative, and state news and is published every Thursday.

Mr. Brehm asked for Representative Garlick's insight on early childhood education. She stated that this an important issue in the Commonwealth and how it should be done and funded needs to be decided. She explained that if the Commonwealth were to enact everything that is included in the Early Education and Child Care Commission Report the projected cost is 1.7 billion dollars per year. Some of the initiatives that could be advanced quickly were operationalized. She explained that the federal government is no longer funding the emergency COVID funding since the emergency COVID measures were lifted but Massachusetts continued to that funding for this year. Representative Garlick believes that it is important for the Commonwealth to have a strong early education and childcare system with a sustainable source of revenue to support it.

Ms. Simonini asked Representative Garlick if there is a specific bill pending that is focused on Special Education. Representative Garlick shared that she is disappointed by the lack of bills related to Special Education but the state is moving to increase the tuition on the Special Education Schools.

Mr. Timothy Knight asked how the state is thinking in regards to social media and mobile devices impacting mental health, and how School Committees can support and lead in this area. Representative Garlick stated that involving families to help educate them in these areas is important. She also stated that she is a chief sponsor of a bill that looks at social media algorithms and to change how companies are using them to target children. She also stressed the importance of community partnerships in addressing these issues.

Mr. Horne asked Representative Garlick if there were any schools implementing a zero tolerance policy for mobile phone use. She stated that there is a high school in the Commonwealth that is having students place their mobile phones in a locked pouch for the day and other schools are implementing variations of that.

Dr. Marsden thanked Representative Garlick for always fighting for Medfield and the things that are important to the district. He highlighted the following important items in the budget that have impacted the Medfield Public Schools:

- Universal School Breakfast and Lunch
- Increasing Chapter 70 funds from \$30.00 per pupil to \$60.00 per pupil
- Fully Funding of Circuit Breaker to include Transportation Costs

- 100 million dollars of additional Massachusetts School Building Association (MSBA) funding

Dr. Marsden shared that Representative Garlick is one to continually reach out to the Superintendent's in her district for their feedback which is unique and her appointment as Chair of the Education Committee will be invaluable to the communities she represents.

Ms. Michelle Kirkby asked Representative Garlick which bills is she most excited about. The Early Education and Childcare is the bill she has been tasked with and is taking very seriously. She is also passionate about mental health and support for school nurses. One of the bills that she is focused on is reimbursement of direct service care going directly to schools instead of the municipality. The current process is cumbersome and the bill looks at streamlining that process and bringing federal dollars directly back to the school district.

Mr. Horne asked if early college programs were for towns that are less affluent than Medfield. Representative Garlick stated that it isn't based on affluence, it's based on the district having the program. Dr. Marsden explained that Medfield does have a partnership with Regis College to provide Early Childhood Education classes to high school students who want to pursue a career in education.

Mr. Knight asked Representative Garlick for her thoughts on best practices in working with the MSBA. Representative Garlick stated that the MSBA needs to know that the community is united in moving forward together in the best interest of their children.

Representative Garlick thanked the Committee for their efforts and work as School Committee members.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes 8/28/2023
- MHS Student Activity Account - New Sub - Account Request

Mr. LaFrancesca explained that the new sub - account request is for the Medfield High School Mock Trial Club. This is not a new club but it's a request to establish a line item for funds.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Simonini to approve the Consent Agenda.
The motion passed unanimously.

Medfield Public School Policy Update - presented by Dr. Marsden

Dr. Marsden presented the following policies, along with Nurse Leader, Brittany Hardiman and Director of Student Services, Mary Bruhl

- ADF - Wellness Policy - Informational - Ms. Hardiman informed the Committee that the Wellness policy is required to be reviewed every three years by the Health Advisory Committee. This Committee consists of students, parents, teachers, administrators, food service staff, health professionals and other interested community members. The Committee met over the course of last school year and presented its recommendations. Ms. Hardiman noted that there were no major changes to the policy. The changes that were made focused on updating the language in the policy and expanding the information on health and counseling services to support students in the schools.

One of the changes that has been made at the secondary level (middle and high school) is that food from the outside is not allowed to be brought into the classrooms. This has been in place at the elementary level for quite some time and now it will be in place at the secondary level.

Ms. Simonini inquired about transition services being offered to elementary students as offered to secondary school students when they have missed school for a significant period of time. Dr. Marsden explained that those programs are based on the needs of the student and that need has not been identified at the elementary level.

Mr. Horne asked for clarification on the changes to the guidance program. Dr. Marsden explained that the changes were made to the language to identify is now school counseling/school counselor instead of guidance/guidance counselor. Ms. Hardiman that additional language was added to expand the information on social emotional well-being in the policy.

- **IMGA - Service Animal Policy - Informational -** Dr. Marsden explained that the policy presented is a result of the MASC model policy and additions from the school attorney. Ms. Bruhl explained the difference between a service animal and an emotional support animal and how that translates into the school environment.

Donation of Outdated Curriculum Materials – Vote – presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that as a result of the Districts' recent elementary mathematics program adoption, the previous curriculum (Envisions Mathematics) is no longer in use and asked that the outdated materials be approved for donation to Bay State Books. Bay State Books is a local organization focused on sustainability, recycling, and support of education initiatives.

Mr. Knight opened the meeting to public input prior to the vote on the donation of the outdated curriculum materials:

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked the District to consider donating to More than Words which is a non-profit organization located in Waltham, MA. More Than Words is a nonprofit social enterprise that empowers young adults who are in the foster care system, court-involved, homeless, or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to approve the donation of outdated curriculum materials to Bay State Books.

The motion passed unanimously.

Other items since posting on September 11, 2023

There were none at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Medfield Public Schools Strategic Plan - Focus Areas for 2023-2024 school year presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

The School Committee approved the Medfield Public School's Strategic Plan at the July 24th meeting. The Leadership Team met in August, subdivided into groups to review the priorities. Each group reported out their 2023-2024 priorities/strategies and the Leadership Team collaborated to determine the focus areas for each priority.

Dr. Marsden gave a presentation on the important strategic initiatives for the 2023-2024 school year for the following priorities:

- Safety and Belonging
 - 1.1 Evaluate Current Practices to support student and staff well being
 - 1.2 Promote Sense of Belonging
 - 1.3 Align DEI Efforts
 - 1.6 Review School Start Times
- Community Engagement and Communication
 - 2.1 Develop a comprehensive internal and external communication plan.
 - 2.2 Consistently Communicate Core Values
 - 2.3 Explore website update
 - 2.4 Home/School Connection
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
 - 3.1 Continual Review MPS Curriculum for Vertical and Horizontal Alignment
 - 3.2 Identify Timely Professional Development Needs
 - 3.4 Evaluate Current PK-12+ Multi-Tiered System of Support Practices
 - 3.5 Investigate an aligned PK-12+ Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum
 - 3.6 Streamline Student Transitions Between Grades/School
- Finance, Facilities, and Personnel
 - 4.1 Develop Long-term Sustainable Budget Strategies to address District needs
 - 4.2 Re-evaluate the 5 Year Capital Plan
 - 4.3 Collaborate with the Town to Establish New Revenue Streams

The next steps in the process are:

- To develop and launch the dashboard
- Receive final copy from Teaching Learning Associates (expected at the end of the month)
- Print posters for all classrooms
- Send finished strategic plan to all families and staff
- Post on website
- Checkpoints in January/May

Ms. Simonini asked what the processes would be to explore school transitions. Dr. Marsden explained that school leadership and school counselors would work together on this because they have an understanding of the issues as a result of their direct work with kids and families and he will report out the action items established.

Mr. Horne asked who would be responsible for reviewing the communication practices. Dr. Marsden explained that the District will work with a professional communication consultant.

Mr. Horne asked how many slots will be available for middle and high school parent conferences. Dr. Marsden explained that a conference sign-up software will be used and it will establish the parameters for sign-ups and it won't be possible to see every teacher.

Mr. Knight shared that he liked the communication checkpoints established.

Mr. Brehm is looking forward to seeing the dashboard and to see how the progress is monitored.

Mr. Knight asked Dr. Marsden which areas will be more challenging. Dr. Marsden stated that school start times will not be an easy change and requires lots of conversations and work because it impacts everybody.

Medfield School Committee Goals Discussion – Mr. Timothy Knight

Mr. Knight presented a draft of the School Committee Goals from the feedback he received from School Committee members. Mr. Knight explained that the goals were structured to be aligned to the priorities outlined in the strategic plan and the Committee will attempt to make progress while remembering to fulfill the core duties of the School Committee as outlined in the policy manual.

The School Committee goals fell under the following categories:

- Goals Related to Priority #1: Safety, Belonging, and Well-Being
- Goals Related to Priority #2: Community Engagement and Communication
- Goals Related to Priority #4: Finance, Facilities, and Personnel

Mr. Horne wanted to know how topics get elevated to a committee, for example school start times, and how a committee would be established. Ms. Simonini clarified Mr. Horne's question by stating that her understanding is that the Committee agrees on priorities for the year which would be reflected in the goals and an outcome of some of those things may result in a subcommittee on a particular topic.

Dr. Marsden explained that a school committee would need to establish a subcommittee if they were spearheading a particular issue and if a subcommittee was established it would fall under open meeting law requirements.

Mr. Brehm stated that he didn't have any issues with the goals listed and his recommendation would be to make sure that everything aligns with the strategic plan and not to overlap with groups that the Superintendent has established because it is part of the strategic plan.

Dr. Marsden explained that the school department/administration could establish a committee/task force and would include one or two members of the School Committee.

Ms. Kirby recommended that the Committee review the goals that were presented and decide if the goals make sense for the Committee to take on. Once the goals are established the Committee can decide how to tackle them operationally.

Mr. Brehm suggested pairing down the goals by removing the expectations as it related to the goals and create goals that align with the strategic plan and define the School Committee's role in the execution of the strategic plan.

Mr. Horne shared that he liked the goals but is more concerned about how to act on the goals and referenced school start times which the Committee has been discussing since June.

Mr. Brehm explained that the responsibility of operational items falls to the Superintendent and not the School Committee.

Mr. Knight explained that the Committee are elected officials who help support and drive initiatives forward but are not fully involved in the project planning on the initiatives.

Ms. Simonini agreed with Mr. Brehm and said that some of the goals felt like a part of the School Committee's ongoing responsibilities and she was leaning toward more specific measurable goals. She would like to develop a project list for the School Committee that is accessible to the Community. She would also like School Committee members to commit to participating in a number of activities during the school year.

Mr. Brehm cautioned the Committee that the District is about to embark on a very large strategic plan and the action items in these goals will impact the same people who are working on that strategic plan.

Ms. Kirby stated that the goals are aspirational on what the Committee would like to accomplish together as well as a compass for the Committee and also understanding that all of the goals set in September may not be complete by the following June.

Mr. Brehm said that it is important to understand where the goals are coming from and the data used to produce them

Dr. Marsden stated that the Committee shouldn't make the assumption that the District will be changing the school start times. The recommendation to change or not change the school start times will be a result of the process of looking at it and understanding if it is the right thing for the Community.

Mr. Knight explained that the goals are more quantitative than qualitative because there are other measures, such as the Superintendent's Goals, and the strategic plan, and does not want something heavily structured on quantitative to run the School Committee.

The Committee decided to submit their additional comments and recommendations on the goals to Mr. Knight to create a second draft to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Medfield School Building Committee (SBC) Update – presented by Ms. Kristin Simonini, Ms. Michelle Kirby, and Dr. Jeffrey Marsden

Ms. Kirby provided an update from the September 11th SBC Meeting. The SBC will have a booth at Medfield Day which will provide information on the SBC and Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The SBC also discussed scheduling a joint meeting with the School Committee and Selectboard on November 7th at Dale Street. The SBC is required to give an update to the Selectboard every six months and the SBC decided to expand on that by having a joint meeting/joint forum to allow all governing bodies and the Community to hear information and ask questions.

Community Engagement and Communication Discussion – presented by Mr. Timothy Knight and Ms. Michelle Kirkby

Ms. Kirby shared that she attended her first PTO meeting at Memorial which had a great turnout and spoke about the new playground at Memorial which is the Memorial PTO's biggest initiative.

Ms. Simonini shared that she was at Memorial as the open house was letting out noted that it was highly attended.

Ms. Kirby shared that she attended both the Memorial and Dale Street open house which both were well attended and the new scavenger hunt format was well received and a lot of fun for the students and families. She shared that her children were very excited to show her around the building and the format was so much more interactive and created a positive atmosphere.

Mr. Knight shared that he spoke with Nicole Drummond who is the President of the K-8 PTO which focused on how the Committee can continue to be more engaged and hearing from parents.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Marsden shared with the Committee that the Safety Drills were conducted today and went very well. A few things identified will need to be done differently and the students and faculty did an amazing job.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Massachusetts Association of School Committees Policy Manual Project
- Private School Follow Up
- School Start Times
- District Fees
- Cell Phone Policies
- Principal Opening Reports
- FY25 Budget Calendar


Next Meeting - October 12, 2023

A motion was made by Ms. Kirby, seconded by Ms. Simonini to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.

EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS

- 9/14/2023 Meeting Narrative
- State Representative Denise Garlick Presentation to the School Committee - 9/14/2023
- DRAFT 8/28/2023 School Committee Meeting Minutes
- MHS Student Activity Account - New Sub Account Request
- DRAFT Policy ADF - Wellness Policy - Informational 9/14/2023
- DRAFT Policy IMGA - Service Animals in Schools - Informational 9/14/2023
- Memo to the Superintendent - Donation of Outdated Curriculum Materials
- Donation of Elementary Math Materials - September 2023
- Medfield Public Schools Strategic Plan Focus Areas 2023-2024
- DRAFT School Committee Goals 9/14/2023
- School Committee Meeting Video:  School Committee Meeting (09-14-2023)

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Moores
Secretary

Minutes Approved by School Committee: October 12, 2023