

**MEDFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**October 12, 2023 - 7:00 pm**  
**Medfield High School Library Media Center**

**PRESENT:** Timothy Knight - Chair  
Michelle Kirkby - Vice Chair  
Leo Brehm - Recording Secretary (via Zoom)  
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  
Molly Chin - Student Representative

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and took Roll Call:

- Michelle Kirkby - present
- Kristin Simonini - present
- Will Horne - present
- Timothy Knight - present

Mr. Brehm was not present during the Roll Call.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked the Committee to consider her comments and questions on the following agenda items as part of their discussion on each of the following topics:

- Budget Calendar: Ms. Potts asked where the appointment of a School Committee Financial Liaison fits into the calendar. She inquired about the status of a suggestion made by a school committee member at the June workshop to hold the public budget hearing earlier in January before the School Committee vote since she has not heard the Committee discuss this suggestion further.
- Wellness Policy: Ms. Potts stated that based on actual law and MASC recommendations the Wellness Program coordinators are required to report to the School Committee annually but the draft policy states that the Superintendent will receive and approve the report. She also stated that the report must reference the role of the School Committee, be made available to the public, and include the legal references provided on the MASC model policy. She also said that DESE required this policy to be put in place by July 1, 2023. Ms Potts inquired if the District had a DESE review in 2019 - 2020.
- School Committee Goals: Ms. Potts said that she sent all members of the School Committee feedback on the draft goals. She asked the Committee how they could vote on their own goals without a rich discussion on last year's budget, student assessment data, and districtwide enrollment.

Ms. Potts said she was happy to see the student representatives at the meeting and hoped the Committee would engage Molly Chin, the School Committee Student Representative, in their discussions.

Mr. Leo Brehm joined the meeting via Zoom at 7:06 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes 9/14/2023
- Donations:

- \$3000.00 from the Blake PTO to be deposited in the Blake Gift Account to be used for bus transportation for the Grade 6 Hale Reservation Field Trip
- \$1695.00 from the Wheelock PTO paid directly to Mobile Ed Productions for the Earth Dome Performance
- \$1411.04 from the Wheelock PTO paid directly to the Plimoth Patuxet Museum for the People of Dawn presentation.
- \$450.00 from the Dale PTO to be deposited in the Dale Gift Account to be used for recess supplies.

A motion was made by Ms. Simonini, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Student Advisory - presented Student Representatives**

The following grade-level representatives were in attendance and updated the School Committee on the grade-level activities at Medfield High School:

- Class of 2024: Julia Keating
- Class of 2025: Michael Roth
- Class of 2026: Tess Baacke
- Class of 2027: Ashley Casinghino

Ms. Simonini asked Julia Keating for her perspective on how students are doing in light of what is happening in the world at large along with the demands of school and activities. Julia reported that students are doing well.

### **Principal School Opening Report - presented by Mr. Robert Parga and Mr. Nathaniel Vaughn**

Robert Parga presented the opening school year report for the High School and shared updates on the following topics with the Committee:

- Senior Cruise
- Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies
- Home/School Communication
- Student Conferences
- NEASC
- Professional Development for Staff
- Cell Phone Caddy Implementation
- Student Extra Curricular Activities
- School Musical
- Two-week French Student Exchange Program

Christian Roth, the High School Student Site Council Representative, was also in attendance. Mr. Parga explained that one of the site council initiatives is focused on how to support seniors throughout the college process. Christian shared his insights on the college application process and the current support for students.

Mr. Horne asked if Guidance supports students with the outcomes of their applications or if the support solely focuses on the application process. Christian stated that the support is mainly with the application process. Mr. Horne was happy to hear that the initiative will look at how to support students once they start hearing back from the schools on their decisions.

Ms. Kirkby inquired about the process and logistics for the upcoming conferences at the high school and if parents would be able to meet with all teachers. Mr. Parga explained that there were no restrictions for parents and that they could sign up for as many as they would like. Each conference slot is for five

minutes and each teacher has 32 slots on each conference day. Mr. Parga shared that the sign-ups were released about a week ago and as of today there still were slots available.

Ms. Kirkby asked Mr. Parga to share information on the Summer R&D projects at the High School. Mr. Parga explained that he and Mr. Vaughn are continuing their work on Culturally Responsive Curriculum. Mr. Parga also participated in the rollout and preparation of conferences at the middle and high school as part of Summer R&D.

Dr. Marsden shared that Christine Power will be presenting to the School Committee on the Summer R&D projects at a November meeting.

Mr. Knight was pleased to hear that the 8th and 9th-grade teachers are meeting to discuss the 8th-grade student transition from middle to high school. He asked what themes have resulted from those meetings. There have only been two meetings that have focused on identifying gaps and trends that exist. Teachers have shared feedback on the importance of helping 9th-grade students become better organized. Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that the Leadership Team is discussing the possible implementation of an executive functioning course required for all 9th-grade students.

Mr. Knight inquired about Christian's role on the High School Site Council and how his involvement came to be. Mr. Parga works with Guidance to select students who would be a good fit and can commit to serving for two years. Christian was selected as a junior and will continue this year as a senior. Christian's role is to provide a student perspective on the topics discussed at Site Council meetings.

Nat Vaughn presented the opening school year report for the Blake Middle School and shared updates on the following topics with the Committee:

- Faculty Updates
- Student Enrollment
- Student Support Team Processes and Procedures
- Bridges Program
- Culturally Responsive Practices
- Staff Professional Development
- Feedback and Reporting
- Student Involvement, Culture, and Growth
- Student Activities and Intramurals
- Student Field Trips and Events
- Middle School Conferences

Mr. Vaughn also shared the following areas the Blake Site Council is focused on:

- Updating the School Improvement Plan to align with the Strategic Plan
- Master Schedule
- Experience for Students
- Family Engagement

Orla Berry, the teacher representative on the Blake Site Council, was also in attendance and shared her experience as a Blake Site Council member with the Committee.

Mr. Brehm asked for more information about student portfolios, the possibility of analytics after conferences, and the possibility of a student survey on student activities. Mr. Vaughn explained that using Google Slides for student portfolios where they can archive their work and tie in student assessments, and would be happy to share examples at a future school committee meeting. Mr. Vaughn also shared that students are being asked to share what activities they are interested in. Mr. Horne shared that the Middle School PTO is working on more events to build the middle school community.

Mr. Knight was curious about what is preventing middle school students from participating in school activities and suggested that it could be a question on a future Panorama Survey to add a parent perspective. Dr. Marsden shared that a Panorama survey is planned to go out in February and this type of question could certainly be added to that survey.

Mr. Knight wanted to know what type of professional development teachers are asking for. Mr Vaughn shared that Culturally Responsive Practices and Diverse Learning are the two areas most requested and teachers are looking for professional development that provides concrete strategies to implement these practices in their classrooms.

### **Cell Phone Usage (Agenda Out of Order)**

Dr. Marsden presented the data from student and faculty feedback from a student cell phone usage survey. The faculty reported that 86% have instituted cell phone caddies in their classrooms, 18.3% ask students to put their phones in their bags, and 8.3%, 5 teachers, allow students to use their cell phones. 83% of teachers feel that their cell phone management approach was working, and 16.7 % said that their cell phone management approach wasn't working. Based on the teacher feedback the implementation of cell phone caddies in the classroom has been positive.

Mr. Brehm stated that in his opinion the data shows that the School Committee does not need to deliver an edict about cell phone use and the Committee's role is to support the teachers and the established policies.

The student feedback was not as positive in regards to the cell phone caddies policies, particularly with the seniors. Seniors felt strongly that upperclassmen should have figured out how to balance their cell phone use at school.

The Committee asked Molly Chin, the School Committee Student Representative, for her opinion on the cell phone policies at the high school. Molly shared that classes are better by not having them during class. She explained that not all teachers allow students to use their cell phones in the hallway if a student leaves the class which is a safety concern for students.

Ms. Kirkby stated that it may be worthwhile to survey students in the fall, and Mr. Brehm suggested surveying students in the spring for additional feedback.

Mr. Horne shared his belief that students aren't mature enough to make this decision based on his experience as a classroom teacher for ten years. He referenced written feedback from two teachers that he felt was important to note.

Ms. Simonini stated that this survey was conducted to inform the Committee whether or not there was anything to be done at the School Committee level but the policies in place coupled with the action being taken at the school level she does not feel that any additional action in this area is required by the School Committee.

Mr. Knight asked Mr. Vaughn if cell phone use is contained at the middle school. Mr. Vaughn stated that cell phones are not allowed at the middle school during the school day.

### **Draft FY25 Budget Calendar - Vote - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden and Mr. Michael LaFrancesca**

Dr. Marsden and Mr. LaFrancesca presented the FY25 Budget Calendar to the Committee and asked that it be approved as written. Dr. Marsden explained that the dates changed a bit because the Warrant Committee had pushed up their timeline.

Ms. Simonini asked the Committee if they should vote on a budget liaison for the FY25 budget process. Ms. Kirkby explained that the Committee voted for a budget liaison a bit later in the process once the

review meetings with the Warrant Committee began. Dr. Marsden recommended that if the Committee chooses to vote on a budget liaison it should be listed as an agenda item at a future meeting. Mr. Brehm agreed with Dr. Marsden and said that Ms. Simonini could attend any of the financial meetings as the School Committee's Financial Liaison. Mr. Brehm also noted that all members of the Committee can attend the meetings. The Committee will look at past practices regarding a vote to appoint a budget liaison and decide whether or not to add this as a future meeting agenda item.

Ms. Simonini requested to move the Public Budget Hearing to January 8th before the School Committee vote scheduled for January 25th. This would give the Committee time to take the feedback from January 8th into consideration before the vote. The Committee engaged in a discussion about having a budget hearing earlier in January before the School Committee.

Dr. Marsden explained at the budget hearing the Superintendent presents the District budget to the School Committee, and after the budget hearing the School Committee votes to transfer the ownership of the budget from the Superintendent to the School Committee. Once the School Committee has ownership of the budget the Committee will work with the Warrant Committee of Annual Town Meeting. The budget will have many revisions within that period.

Mr. LaFrancesca explained the budget process and the areas impacted if an earlier timeline for the budget calendar is established.

Mr. Knight shared his concern that moving the budget hearing earlier may impact the administrative team's ability to complete the process to meet an earlier deadline.

Ms. Kirkby reiterated that the School Committee vote on the budget transfers the budget from the Superintendent to the School Committee and once the School Committee owns the budget they can continue to make changes and updates. She stated that the School Committee can continue to accept additional feedback from the public after the public hearing.

Ms. Simonini stated that she is not advocating for the budget process to be rushed but she is not comfortable voting on items when the public comment is during the same sessions as a vote. She now understands the vote is to transfer the budget from the Superintendent to the School Committee and asked if the language on the budget calendar could be changed to more accurately reflect that.

The Committee recommended the following language to be added to the FY25 Budget Calendar

- February - March 2024 Budget Calendar item: add and ongoing public input from community members
- January 25, 2023 Budget Calendar item: add to transfer the FY25 Budget from the Superintendent to the School Committee
- Change Selectmen to Selectboard
- Change January 11th School Committee Meeting to January 8th School Committee Meeting
- Change FY23 to FY25 (typo)

Before the vote, Mr. Knight opened the meeting up for public comment on the FY25 Budget Calendar:

Chris McCue Potts, 7 Curve Street, asked the Committee to consider allowing the public to digest the budget in bite-sized pieces by having Mr. LaFrancesca present a summary of the high-level highlights submitted to DESE and synopsis of the prior budget that shows how it will influence the budget going forward and a future meeting. Ms. Potts stated that this shouldn't impact the timeline of the budget calendar. This would give people an educated look at the budget and the meeting would be taped for people to refer back to. Ms. Potts suggested tying a date to this and having it added to the budget calendar.

Dr. Marsden explained that the previous year's budget information is available on the District's website.

A motion was made by Mr. Brehm, seconded by Ms. Kirkby to approve the FY25 Budget Calendar to include the amended language and changes recommended by the School Committee.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Superintendent's Goals (Tabled)**

#### **School Start Times Discussion - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that he, Will, and Michelle met to discuss the timeline for this work. The Committee has requested that a recommendation on school start times for a vote be scheduled for the June 6, 2024 School Committee meeting. To meet that timeline, Dr. Marsden will begin to work internally on gathering the financial data, schedule scenarios, and information on what may work for the district and a task force will be established to begin in January/February 2024. The Task Force will include teachers, students, administrators, parents, and school committee members. The Superintendent will be responsible for selecting teachers, and students, and the School Committee will be responsible for selecting parents for this task force. The task force would meet all spring and if a recommendation was made to change the start times and approved it would give families a year to prepare for a September 2025 implementation.

#### **Other items since posting on October 6, 2023**

There was none at this time.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Private School Student Enrollment Follow-Up - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden informed the Committee that he and Ms. Simonini met to review the private school numbers as a continuation of the Committee's private school conversations last spring. Dr. Marsden reviewed the memo included in the meeting materials which provided an update and comparison with the Committee.

Ms. Simonini stated that the reason this was being looked at a bit more closely was due to feedback from the Community. This prompted the creation and implementation of the withdrawal survey for students who are leaving the District for Private Schools to help the District understand why some students are choosing to attend private schools. Ms. Simonini explained that from Spring to now there is no significant change and from her research, Medfield continues to hover around 7% to 8% of students who attend private schools. She concluded that unless something dramatically shifts this is not a topic of concern for our community that the Committee needs to actively discuss but it is something to keep an eye on going forward. She also encouraged the Community to view the public data available. This plan is to have this as an agenda item each October.

#### **Medfield Public Schools Strategic Plan Update - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

Dr. Marsden included examples of potential dashboards in the Committee's meeting packet. Dr. Marsden would like to move forward with setting up the dashboard. The one area to be decided is how to calculate the progress within the strategic plan. Neal Sonnenberg, the High School Technology Specialist, is working on this and Dr. Marsden will send it along to the Committee for feedback.

Mr. Brehm suggested creating some sort of rating category to accurately and fairly reflect progress because some of the priorities are involved and will take time to complete. Mr. Knight agreed with Mr. Brehm but would like to get the dashboard out sooner rather than later and adjustments to the dashboard can be made as needed.

Dr. Marsden shared that he received the corrected version of the strategic plan from the graphic designer and hopes to launch it next week. He has attended faculty meetings for two schools and is scheduled at the remaining schools. Dr. Marsden is very pleased with the final document and is looking forward to releasing it to the families.

### **Medfield School Committee Goals Discussion - presented by Mr. Timothy Knight**

Mr. Knight asked the Committee if they should continue or table this discussion. Before deciding to table, Mr. Knight suggested having a quick discussion regarding the goals since the goals have been revised to incorporate feedback he had received from the Committee. Mr. Knight reviewed the updated goals document.

Ms. Kirkby stated that she doesn't want the Committee to continue to discuss these goals and since the Committee is together she asked if there was additional feedback to be added or discussed.

Ms. Simonini suggested adding a category under student engagement about how the Committee will engage with student representatives more productively. Mr. Knight stated that this can certainly be added to the document.

The Committee is not voting on the goals but it was agreed that the Committee would review and reflect on these goals at the end of the year or the School Committee's yearly retreat.

### **Medfield School Building Committee (SBC) Update - presented by Ms. Kristin Simonini**

Ms. Simonini stated that she didn't have much to update the Committee on. The SBC did have a booth at Medfield Day to help foster a connection between the SBC and the Community. The SBC continues to have discussions about how to better engage with the community. The SBC also discussed working with someone to help assess the viability of some of the locations in town as well as the viability of a renovation vs. a new building. A joining meeting has been scheduled with the SBC, Selectboard, Warrant Committee, and School Committee on Tuesday, November 14th at 7:00 p.m.

### **Community Engagement and Communication Update - presented by Mr. Timothy Knight and Ms Michelle Kirkby.**

Ms. Kirkby informed the Committee of the tentative dates for informal conversations:

- Monday, December 4, 2023 at 7 p.m. - virtual
- Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 10 a.m. - in-person meeting
- Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 7 p.m. - virtual
- Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 10 a.m. - in-person meeting

She explained that two weeks before the meeting a Google form will be made available for the public who plan to attend and can submit their questions for the Committee. This will allow the Committee to gather additional information if needed to appropriately respond to questions from the public. These informal conversations will have two School Committee members in attendance. These informal conversations will be in an open format and last for about one hour.

Ms. Kirkby mentioned that she and Dr. Marsden have discussed adding an agenda item called Lens on Learning to future meetings. This would allow teachers/students to highlight initiatives and activities happening in the classroom.

### **Medfield Public School Policy Review - presented by Dr. Jeffrey Marsden**

The following policies are being presented for a 1<sup>st</sup> reading. There have been no changes to these policies since they were first presented as Informational Items on 9/14/2023. If there are any changes or additions from the Committee to be incorporated Committee members were asked to send an email to Dr. Marsden

- ADF - Wellness Policy - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
- IMGA - Service Animal Policy - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

### **Massachusetts Association of School Committees Policy Manual Project (MASC) Update**

Mr. Knight informed the Committee that Policy Subcommittee meetings have been scheduled with MASC Representative Jim Hardy through the end of December and the manual should be reviewed by

then. The policy sections will be brought forward to the Committee to begin voting on the policies with the completion of the entire manual by the end of the school year.

The next Policy Subcommittee is scheduled for Friday, October 13, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Knight tabled the following:

- Policy Manual Section C – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading (**TABLED**)
  - CA - Administration Goals
  - CB - School Superintendent
  - CBA - Job Description
  - CBD - Superintendent's Contract
  - CBI - Evaluation of the Superintendent
  - CC - Administrative Organization Plan
  - CCB - Line and Staff Relations
  - CE - Administrative Councils, Cabinets and Committees
  - CF- School Building Administration
  - CF-R- School Building Administration
  - CH - Policy Implementation
  - CHA - Development of Procedures
  - CHB - School Committee Review of Regulations
  - CHC – Regulations Dissemination
  - CHC - Procedures Dissemination
  - CHCA - Approval of Handbooks and Directives
  - CHCA-E - Handbooks Directives
  - CHD - Administration in Policy Absence
  - CL - Administrative Reports
  - CM - Annual Town Report
  
- Policy Manual Section D – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading (**TABLED**)
  - DA - Fiscal Management Goals
  - DB - Annual Budget
  - DBC - Budget Deadlines and Schedules
  - DBD - Budget Planning
  - DBE/DBF - Communication of Budget Recommendations - Budget Hearings and Reviews
  - DBG - Budget Adoption Procedures
  - DBJ - Budget Transfer Authority
  - DD - Funding Proposals and Applications
  - DEC - Revenues from Federal Tax Sources
  - DEC - Federal Duns Supplement Not Supplant Policy
  - DGA - Authorized Signatures
  - DH - Bonded Employees and Officers
  - DI - Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
  - DIE - Audits
  - DJ - Purchasing
  - DJA - Purchasing Authority
  - DJE - Bidding Requirements
  - DJE - Procurement Requirements
  - DJG -Vendor Relations
  - DK - Payment Procedures



- DKC - Expense Reimbursements
- Policy Manual Section E – Support Services -Informational (**TABLED**)
  - EA – Support Services Goals
  - EB – Safety Program
  - EBB – First Aid
  - EBB-R – First Aid
  - EBB-E – Accident Reports
  - EBC – Emergency Plans
  - EBCB – Safety Drills
  - EDCC – Bomb Threat
  - EDCC-E – Bomb Threat Report Form
  - EBCD – Emergency Closings
  - EBCD-E-1 – Emergency School Closing
  - EBCD-E-2 - One-Hour Delayed Opening of Schools
  - EBCD-E-3 - Two-Hour Delayed Opening of Schools
  - EC - Buildings and Grounds Management
  - ECA – Buildings and Grounds Security
  - ECAC - Vandalism
  - ECE – Traffic and Parking Controls
  - EDDBA – Maintenance and Control of Instructional Materials
  - EDC – Authorized Use of School-Owned Materials
  - EDC-A – Use of Portable Wheelchair Lift
  - EDE – Recyclable Materials
  - EEA – Walkers and Riders
  - EEAC – School Bus Scheduling and Routing
  - EEAE – School Bus Safety Program
  - EEAEA – Bus Driver Examination and Training
  - EEAEA -1- Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus and Commercial Vehicle Drivers
  - EEAEB – School Bus Maintenance
  - EEAEC – Student Contact on School Buses
  - EEAG – Student Transportation in Private Vehicles
  - EEAI – Student Transportation Records and Reports
  - EF- Food Services
  - EFC – Free and Reduced Price Food Services
  - EH – Data Management
- Policy Manual Section F – Facilities Development -Informational (**TABLED**)
  - FA-E – Facilities Development Goals
  - FB – Facilities Planning
  - FCB – Retirement of Facilities
  - FF – Naming New Facilities

#### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- Ms. Kirky shared that she had a great time volunteering Plimouth Patuxet Museum
- Ms. Simonini reported that Middle School Cross Country finished their season undefeated

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- District Fees
- Principal Opening Report - Elementary

## **Next Meeting – November 2, 2023**

A motion was made by Mr. Horne, seconded by Ms. Simonini adjourned the meeting.  
**The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

## **EXHIBITS AND DOCUMENTS**

- 10/12/2023 Meeting Narrative
- Draft 9/14/2023 School Committee Meeting Minutes
- Donations 10/12/2023
- Draft FY25 Budget Calendar
- Medfield High School Staff Cell Phone Survey Data
- Medfield High School Student Cell Phone Survey Data
- Memo to School Committee - Enrollment from May 23, 2023
- Medfield Public School Strategic Plan Potential Dashboard Screenshots
- Draft School Committee Goals V4
- DRAFT Policy ADF - Wellness Policy - 1st Reading 10/12/2023
- DRAFT Policy IMGA - Service Animals in Schools - 1st Reading 10/12/2023
- Medfield Policy Manual Section C - 1st Reading 10/12/2023
- Medfield Policy Manual Section D - 1st Reading 10/12/2023
- Medfield Policy Manual Section E - Informational 10/12/2023
- Medfield Policy Manual Section F - Informational 10/12/2023
- School Committee Meeting Video:

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Moores

Secretary

**Minutes Approved by School Committee: November 2, 2023**