

Brockton, Massachusetts Regular Meeting April 9, 2012  
The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the Theatre at the Dr. William Arnone School at seven o'clock.

Present: Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Robinson; Mr. Donegan; Mrs. Joyce; Mr. Carpenter; Mr. Healy; Mr. Sullivan; Dr. Malone, Secretary

Absent: Mayor Balzotti

Note: These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Vice-Chair Minichiello called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag. Mr. Minichiello asked those present to take a moment of silence in honor of Kennedy School Grade 3 Teacher Mary Valente, who died the past week. Mrs. Valente was Mayor Balzotti's sister.

### Hearing of Visitors

Ms. Maria Mendes, program coordinator for Communities Mobilized for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) addressed the Committee to detail underage drinking prevention programs offered through the non-profit CMCA. As a local chapter of the national CMCA organization, Ms. Mendes and her staff have worked in collaboration with Parents' Academy and other school-based groups to provide information on alcohol abuse prevention. Ms. Mendes expressed a wish to provide information on underage drinking, share data and discuss with parents and community leaders how we can best work together to prevent teen alcohol abuse. She invited all to attend a town hall-type meeting on the topic on Thursday, April 26, 2012 from 6-8:30 p.m. at the Arnone School.

Former Ward 2 School Committee Member Richard Bath appeared before the Committee to deliver good news about Brockton High School JROTC students who took part in a roundtable discussion on terrorism at Lasell College in Newton, where works. Mr. Bath was effusive in praising the JROTC students, Colonel Robert Tripp and Teacher Jeff Driscoll for their thoughtful questions and maturity in dealing with a difficult subject.

### Consent Agenda

Mr. Minichiello explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked if School Committee members wished to remove any items from it. Mr. Donegan requested that **Enclosure #1, Approval of Supervisor of Attendance Report, March 2012** be removed.

Mr. Sullivan then moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following remaining items listed on the Consent Agenda:

- Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Appointments
- Acceptance of Notification of Personnel Action
- Acceptance of CSAB Minutes, February 8, 2012
- Acceptance of Finance Sub-committee Minutes, March 27, 2012
- Acceptance of Facilities Sub-committee Minutes, March 28, 2012
- Acceptance of Building Naming Sub-committee Minutes, March 28, 2012
- Approval of BHS International Club Trip, NY, NY, April 16, 2012
- Approval of BHS Science Club Trip, Providence, RI, April 28, 2012

- Approval of South Middle School Trip, Newport, RI, May 31, 2012
- Approval of Downey, Grade 5 Trip, Salem, NH, June 11, 2012
- Approval of Hancock Grade 4 Trip, Providence, RI, June 18, 2012
- Approval of Hancock, Grade 5 Trip, Salem, NH, June 18, 2012
- Approval of Accounts Review Sub-committee Report of March 28, 2012
- Approval of Addendum to Superintendent’s Employment Agreement

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

Mr. Donegan asked Superintendent Malone to explain what steps the school district takes to ensure that non-resident students are not attending the Brockton Public Schools. The Superintendent reported that the Attendance Office investigated 30 issues of residency or guardianship in March, bringing the total this year to 78. The Superintendent said he would provide details and outcomes of those investigations in the weekly School Committee packet and invite the Chief Supervisor of Attendance to appear before the Committee at a future meeting. Following the brief discussion, Mr. Robinson moved the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve the submission of the above proposal.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

**Superintendent’s Report**

Commissioner’s Visit

Superintendent Malone reported that he had spent the day at the State House, meeting with Secretary of Education Paul Reville and Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz (D-Boston) to discuss dropout prevention and reengagement. “We are getting a lot of attention for all of the work we are doing on pathways and alternative education,” the Superintendent said. On Thursday, the Superintendent and BEA President Kim Gibson will join other urban education officials at a Gateway Cities meeting in Fitchburg; the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Governor’s proposal to set aside \$10 million to reengage dropouts.

Crisis Response at BHS

The Superintendent invited Brockton High School Principal Dr. Susan Szachowicz to address the Committee to provide details on the crisis situation that occurred Sunday evening in the Azure House. At 10 p.m. on Easter Sunday, Dr. Szachowicz said she got a call from Executive Director of Operations Michael Thomas alerting her to the fact that a water valve gave way, flooding the Azure House. The principal described the response of the custodial and facilities crews as “amazing” and praised Mr. Thomas and his team for their immediate response and around-the-clock work to mitigate the damage and ensure that classes could be held the next day. Because the Azure cafeteria could not be used, Chartwells reassigned staff and students to other cafeterias and ensured that everyone was fed in an efficient manner. Facilities Crews fixed the valve, cleaned up the water and removed ceiling and floor tiles. Insurance adjusters are calculating the cost and scale of the repair work. “I have to say, it was a Herculean effort – everyone responded in a way that you should all be proud of,” Dr. Szachowicz said. “It was incredible. We are very grateful for all of the work that was done on Easter Sunday night.”

Mr. Sullivan thanked Mr. Thomas and his crew for their efforts to handle the crisis and asked if this could happen in other parts of the building; Mr. Thomas said Facilities craftsmen have checked all of the other valves and believe this was an isolated incident. Mrs. Joyce asked when the Azure cafeteria and affected classrooms and study halls will be operational again and Mr. Thomas responded that they will be closed for the rest of the

week, but that custodians and craftsmen are working around the clock to get those areas functional by next week. Mr. Minichiello asked Dr. Szachowicz how administrators are handling the overflow in the other cafeterias and the principal responded that seniors are being allowed to eat in the libraries so that there are enough seats for all students, and that the Azure freshmen were assigned to the green cafeteria, sophomores to the red café and juniors were assigned to the yellow cafeteria. Mr. Minichiello commended the BHS faculty, staff and Chartwells staff for working together to make a difficult situation better.

## Learning & Teaching

### Early Education Rollout Plan

Elizabeth Barry, Executive Director of Learning & Teaching PreK-8 gave a presentation on the proposed Early Education Rollout Plan. Research shows that the earlier students have access to quality education programs, the more academically successful they will be later on, and Brockton hopes to expand early childhood education opportunities for 3- and 4-year-olds while also gradually adjusting the entrance age for Kindergarteners to be 5-years-old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>. Currently, Brockton allows children who turn 5 before December 31<sup>st</sup> to enroll in Kindergarten at the start of the school year.

Over the years, there has been a lot of talk about changing the kindergarten age for educational and social-emotional reasons, and by doing so, Brockton could also decrease class sizes that are now very high in the primary grades. Additionally, Kindergarten curriculum has become more academic over time (including new Common Core standards) and modifications to the current structure would lead to experiences that are developmentally appropriate for students, Mrs. Barry explained.

Under the Early Education Rollout Plan, there are two choices for rolling back the Kindergarten entrance age. Under Choice 1, school year 2012-2013 would be a planning year, in 2013-2014 the Kindergarten entrance age would roll back to 5-years-old by November 1<sup>st</sup>, and then to September 1<sup>st</sup> in 2014-2015. Under Choice 2, 2012-2013 would be a planning year; in 2013-2014 the entrance age would roll back to December 1<sup>st</sup>, in 2014-2015 to November 1<sup>st</sup> and finally to September 1<sup>st</sup> in 2015-2016.

Each year, as the Kindergarten entrance age changes, Brockton would expand PreK classes to provide opportunities for those who would have been able to enroll in Kindergarten. The first year of the plan would require 12 new PreK classrooms, Mrs. Barry said. There are numerous benefits to expanded PreK opportunities including enhanced academic readiness and fewer retentions, Mrs. Barry noted.

Mrs. Joyce said she believes expansion of PreK is “critical as we go forward” and asked Mrs. Barry how the program will prepare students for Kindergarten while also giving young children the opportunity to play and socialize, because some detractors feel 3- and 4-years-old is too young to start school. “There’s most certainly opportunities to learn from play in PreK and Kindergarten,” Mrs. Barry said. “The transition from PreK to Kindergarten makes sure that kids are exposed to structures and routines that exist. So they’re not encountering that for the first time in Kindergarten.”

Mrs. Joyce asked whether the expanded PreK classes would be half-day, full-day or both and Superintendent Malone replied that it would depend on the amount of state funding the district could utilize. Mrs. Joyce expressed her support for PreK expansion.

Mr. Donegan asked how many Kindergarteners turn 5 between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Barry replied that right now, its 480 children. Under questioning from Mr. Sullivan, Superintendent Malone said the district will use the 2012-2013 school year to publicize the changes in Kindergarten entrance dates to parents, childcare providers and the community at large, and to plan for PreK expansion.

Mr. Minichiello moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the above report.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

#### ELL Program Review

Jose Pinheiro, Director of Bilingual Education, and Kellie Jones, Department Head of Bilingual Education K-8 presented a review of the ELL Program Review, a year-long study of the Brockton Public Schools bilingual education delivery model. The report, which was provided to the Committee in an Informational Bulletin, delineates short, mid- and long-term goals the district should adopt to meet the needs of English language learners. The goals have policy and budgetary implications that the School Committee will need to discuss debate and determine, Superintendent Malone said.

The ELL Program Review was undertaken by an ELL Task Force made up of Deputy Superintendent John R. Jerome, Mrs. Barry, department and systemwide administrators, teachers and principals. The task force analyzed the current system of bilingual education in the Brockton Public Schools and programs of education for English language learners from the time of their identification at the School Registration Center to their designation as Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP) students.

The BPS Department of Bilingual Education was founded in 1972 with 100 students (then 0.5% of the total enrollment). In 2012, the department services 3,433 students or 21.5% of the total enrollment. In the past five years, there has been exponential growth in the ELL enrollment, growing from 16.7% of the total enrollment in 2008 to 21.5% now, an increase of 75% in just five years, and this trend is expected to continue, Mr. Pinheiro said.

Mr. Pinheiro and Ms. Jones then provided an explanation of ELL program offerings – Structured English Immersion (SEI), Integrated Structured English Immersion (ISEI), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and the Spanish Two-way program.

Although the number of ELL students expanded exponentially, the program administration continues essentially the same as it was 30 years ago when the district served 400 ELLs, Mr. Pinheiro said. The only recent changes has been that the Superintendent and School Committee added an additional K-8 Department Head to help alleviate huge number of teacher evaluations, and the addition of a second administrative assistant to help with SIMS data and processing.

The Massachusetts ELL system is going through a complete transformation with new curriculum and new testing systems. A very large number of teachers will need to receive training in the new systems before they can complete the state's new assessment system in January 2013. Mr. Pinheiro discussed the new Mass Rethinking Equity and Teaching for

English Language Learners (RETELL) initiative, recently adopted by the Board of Elementary & Secondary Education. MA RETELL will completely change the state's approach to ELL education and require training for all teachers and administrators in the new standards. Any teacher or administrator will need training in order to renew their license; all BPS personnel will need this certification and the department will provide training for 30 percent of teachers in the next year.

Mr. Pinheiro provided an accounting of where new ELL classes and strands were added during the 2011-2012 school year: Cape Verdean/Portuguese Creole strands at Brookfield Elementary and North Middle School; a Cape Verdean/Portuguese Creole SEI Kindergarten at Downey; three elementary ESL teachers were added to instruct students at the George, Raymond and Arnone Schools; an ISEI teacher was added to service West and South Middle School students; an ELL teacher was hired to service students at Goddard, Champion and Russell; and a grant-funded Department Head of Bilingual Services K-8 was hired.

Mr. Pinheiro said that these staffing increases have helped to provide a greater level of service, but it has not resolved the needs of an ever-growing population. Ms. Jones then introduced the recommendations of the Task Force. Utilizing the most recent state and national research, the task force made short, medium and long-term recommendations to strengthen the existing high quality bilingual education programs in Brockton. Those recommendations are:

#### 2012-2013

- Strengthen academic achievement vision for ELLs
- Strengthen instruction for ELLs
- Begin to eliminate splits
- Assign only teachers highly-qualified in ELL instruction; continue to invest in dual licensure for staff
- Hire additional staff to reduce class size and improve learning
- Support WIDA cross-curriculum development activities
- Strengthen wrap-around services for ELLs
- Increase number of bilingual Adjustment Counselors & MSN teachers
- Utilize SES tutoring through Title 1
- Strengthen ELL parent & community involvement
- Improve parent participation in schools

#### 2013-2016

- Increase the number of bilingual special education teachers
- Add 8 K-12 ESL teachers (*2 per school*)
- Add native-speaking paraprofessionals for SEI teachers who not speak students' primary language
- Establish new administration configuration
- Eliminate splits
- Create after-school ESL programs

At the end of the presentation, the Superintendent invited Committee members to ask question. Mr. Donegan asked Mr. Pinheiro how the district can strengthen bonds with non-English speaking parents and how a Newcomer School and/or K-8 International School would benefit Brockton children.

A Newcomer Academy is something Superintendent Malone has been talking about since he started working here, Mr. Pinheiro noted. The Department of Bilingual Services receives ELL students with all levels of English proficiency; students also come with varying degrees of formal education in their native countries/languages: some high school-age students arrive with only three or four years of education, Mr. Pinheiro said, and U.S. schools are not configured to address that kind of unique educational need in a way that a Newcomer Academy could. An International School would be a good way for the district to provide an opportunity for English speakers to learn language alongside ELL students learning English, Mr. Pinheiro said. Further, if the district were to launch a Newcomer Academy and/or an International School, it would be a good way to fend off a charter school in the city, Mr. Pinheiro said.

Upon further questioning from Mr. Donegan, Ms. Jones explained that International School curricula have proven effective. “We know that dual language programs throughout the state and country tend to, by Grade 5, perform on par or exceed the native English speaking on performance assessments,” Ms. Jones noted. “We want to engage in a very substantive and sustained exploration to make sure it aligns with what we here in Brockton value and promote within our educational programs ... this is something to explore, but we need to do a lot more work before we bring it to School Committee.”

Mr. Sullivan inquired about split classrooms, and Ms. Jones explained that a “split” is when there are children in two grades being taught by one teacher. The Kennedy, Angelo and Brookfield Schools currently have splits where teachers are managing large classes with two distinct curricular expectations. At the Kennedy School, there is an ELL Kindergarten class, a Grade 1 and Grade 2/3 class and a Grade 4/5 class.

Mr. Healy asked whether a Newcomer Academy would be necessary for students in the primary grades, or whether it would largely serve older students. Mr. Pinheiro reported that the average time that ELL students spend in bilingual programs 2.7 years; some students stay shorter periods and there are others who need more time. Ms. Jones stated that the Newcomer Academy would be designed for middle and high school students who are coming to this country with significant gaps in their education. The number of older students with limited formal education is still a small percentage of ELL students, but their performance has a bearing on how schools perform, Mr. Pinheiro stated.

Mrs. Joyce asked whether there is a trend in where the growth in ELL students is, by grade level. Most of the students in Grades K-6, Mr. Pinheiro said. There are a large number of ELL Kindergarteners, and many of them are born in this country. The nature of immigration is not set, and Bilingual Department teachers are constantly integrating newly-arrived students throughout the school year, assessing where those students are academically and also working to meet their English language acquisition and academic needs.

Mr. Robinson moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the above report.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

**Unfinished Business**

Dr. Malone announced that he will forward the Superintendent's Recommend School Year 2013 School Department Budget to the Mayor with a letter of transmission tomorrow. The Superintendent stated the suggested Net School appropriation would be \$157,447,196 and the Non-Net appropriate would be \$6,919,668, for a total budget request of \$164,366,864.

Mr. Donegan moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the Superintendent's Recommended School Year 2013 Budget.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

Mrs. Joyce moved to present the Superintendent's Recommended School Year 2013 Budget to Mayor Linda M. Balzotti.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

**New Business**

Dr. Malone presented the 2012-2013 Brockton Public Schools Supplemental Calendar for a first reading and asked the Committee members to study it carefully and prepare any comments for a future meeting. The Supplemental Calendar includes dates for parent-teacher conferences, in-service dates and other pertinent information for planning purposes. Mr. Donegan asked that the Huntington School's new extended hours be included; Superintendent Malone replied that they would be added to the final product.

Mr. Healy asked the Superintendent to consider whether the district could provide parents of first graders with an opportunity to meet their teachers before the first day of school; Dr. Malone replied that it would have to be collectively bargained, but assured Mr. Healy he would bring it up with BEA President Kim Gibson.

Mr. Healy recognized the Brockton High School Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band and Music Director Vincent Macrina for their outstanding performance at the Festival of Music competition in New York City. Mrs. Joyce congratulated saxophonist Colin Kean for winning best soloist, and Mr. Minichiello praised the students and Mr. Macrina on their accomplishments.

Mr. Minichiello asked why the Brockton High School Greenhouse is no longer vibrant. Associate Principal Dr. Sharon Wolder explained that the greenhouse is now under the direction of the plant and animal growth teachers, who will care for the greenhouse with their students. Mr. Minichiello asked why the part-time staffer who had taken care of the plants was no longer part of the program, and Dr. Wolder explained that the position had been foregone in order to create a part-time lab assistant and scheduler for the Science Department. Mr. Minichiello encouraged Dr. Wolder to rethink the decision, and she agreed to take his recommendation under advisement.

Mr. Minichiello reported that as a result of negotiations, an agreement between the Certified Negotiations Subcommittee and the BEA had been reached on the Kennedy School's additional school day. The school had been closed for a day in October when a transformer blew, and the school needed to hold an additional day of classes to meet the state's requirement of 180 school days. Under the agreement, the Kennedy School will remain open for a half-day on June 21<sup>st</sup> for students in Grades 1-6. As Kindergarten does not have a 180-day requirement, it will not be held. The district worked out with the BEA that the teachers would be paid for the half-day at their per diem rate.

Mr. Donegan moved the Superintendent's recommendation to pay the Kennedy School Grades 1-6 teachers to work a half-day on June 21, 2012.

Voted: to adopt recommendation, unanimously

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew H. Malone, Ph. D.  
Secretary