

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the George M. Romm Theater at Brockton High School.

Present: Mayor Balzotti, Chair; Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Robinson, Mr. Donegan, Mrs. Joyce, Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Healy, Mr. Sullivan, Mrs. Smith, Secretary; Jessica Freeborn, Student Rep

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

Mayor Balzotti called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag.

Hearing of Visitors

Mayor Balzotti explained that during the Hearing of Visitors portion of the agenda, speakers should limit their comments to three minutes and that the School Committee will take comments under advisement.

Mr. James Daley, Chairman of Region 5 Advisory Board for Commission of the Blind of Massachusetts, addressed the Committee about the White Cane Safety Awareness Campaign, and announced that October is *White Cane Safety Month*.

Messrs. Charles Monfort and Ross Depina addressed the Committee with regard to their opinions about the state of public education.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Balzotti explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked if School Committee members wished to remove any items from it. Items D, F, G, and H were removed for discussion.

Mrs. Joyce moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following remaining items from the Consent Agenda:

- *October 1, 2013 Regular SC Meeting Minutes*
- *CSAB June 12, 2013 Minutes*
- *2013-2014 Home Education Requests*
- *October 3, 2013 Report of Bid Review Subcommittee Meeting*
- *Notification of Appointment of 2013-2014 BPS Student Harassment Officer*
- *Notification of Appointment of 2013-2014 BPS Personnel Harassment Officer*
- *Notification of Personnel Appointments*
- *Notification of Personnel Action: Leaves of Absence; Resignations*

Voted: to approve the Superintendent's recommendation, unanimous.

Mr. Robinson addressed *Enclosure F, approval of the Walking Classroom Grant*. He announced that Arnone School classroom teacher Laura Letteney had applied for the above-named grant from the Walking Classroom Institute, and was selected. All grade five students at the Arnone School received iPods with a year's worth of educational podcasts that are aligned to the Common Core. Mr. Robinson thanked Ms. Letteney and Principal Proudler for taking the initiative to apply for the grant.

Mr. Minichiello invited Principal Proudler and Ms. Letteney to further explain the program. Ms. Letteney explained that the podcasts are directly aligned with the Common Core standards, the program address both fitness and different learning styles as the students walk, listen, and learn; she added that all grade 5 classes at the Arnone are using the program and they have received positive feedback from students. Mayor Balzotti added that she pleased to be able to visit the school and participate in the experience with the students.

Mr. Robinson then moved the Superintendent’s recommendation to accept the Walking School Grant.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Enclosure G, Target Donation to Brookfield School. Mr. Healy acknowledged the donation from Target in Braintree, MA, and Manager Patti Lentini, who was responsible for selecting the Brookfield School as the recipient of a generous donation of school and household supplies for students and teachers. Mr. Healy invited Mrs. Lentini to address the School Committee; she said that when she was given the task of selecting the receiving school, she chose the Brookfield School because of her personal connection to the school and to Brockton. She also shared that Target offers assistance to schools in various ways and advised that schools can search the Target website and apply online. Superintendent Smith thanked Mrs. Lentini and Target for their support.

Mr. Healy moved the Superintendent’s recommendation to accept the donation of supplies from Target Stores, in Braintree, MA.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Supervisor of Attendance Report, Enclosure D. Mr. Donegan asked for details with regard to the reported Residency/Guardianship investigations. Mrs. Smith responded that she would provide that information to the Committee in the Friday informational packet.

Mr. Donegan then moved to Superintendent’s recommendation to accept the report of the Chief Supervisor of Attendance.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

EOS Nourishing Kids Grant, Enclosure H. Mrs. Joyce asked Mr. Tom Burke, Director of Food Services, how he envisioned the expansion of this program, and how it will add to Brockton’s current breakfast program. Mr. Burke said that the Universal Breakfast program has been successful in select schools in Brockton, resulting in a large increase in the number of students eating breakfast. Mrs. Joyce called the program a positive addition, because many children, for various reasons, do not eat in the morning before school. Mr. Robinson added that he would be interested in seeing the data that will follow with respect to behavior referrals, visits to the school nurse, test scores, and other ways that the program will have a positive impact on students and schools.

Mrs. Joyce then moved the Superintendent’s recommendation to go forward with the grant.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

“Be A Star” Chartwells Presentation

Mayor Balzotti invited Mr. Tom Burke to talk about the Chartwells award. Mr. Burke introduced *Eric Pimental, Regional Vice President of Chartwells in the Northeast*, who announced that Michelle Sergio, Cafeteria Manager at the Brookfield School, was selected as the recipient of the *Hourly Associate of the Year* award for outstanding performance. Ms. Sergio was presented with a plaque from Chartwells; the School Committee also presented her with a certificate of appreciation.

Superintendent’s Report

The Superintendent invited Jessica Freeborn to give an update from the high school. Ms. Freeborn announced the following:

- On Wednesday morning, sophomores and juniors will take *PSAT’s*
- Students were able to view displays and speak to members of the various clubs that are at the high school during the *BHS Annual Club Fair*
- The *Peer Tutor Program* recently trained forty students as peer tutors, a valuable program where students are helped by other students, the program is up and running
- Class elections for junior and senior officers will be held in the next couple of weeks
- Parent-teacher conferences will be held on Thursday

Closing of FY 2013 Budget and FY2014 Budget Update

Mr. Petronio said that after the initial closing of the FY2013 budget in June, his department has now completed reconciliation of the line items and balanced the accounts, and at this time he would ask the School Committee for approval to close the FY 2013 budget. A report was passed out for review and discussion. Questions about line items were answered by Mr. Petronio.

At the end of discussion, Mr. Minichiello moved to transfer \$1,175,000 from Personal Services to Ordinary Maintenance in order to balance out the accounts for the close of the FY 0213 fiscal year.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Mr. Donegan then moved to accept the FY 2014 Budget Update Report.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

2013 MCAS Results

The Superintendent explained that Dr. Cancell’s presentation was a “snapshot” of the test results. She further explained that she requested the report from Dr. Cancell earlier than usual due to the District Review that Brockton is about to begin, which Dr. Cancell will also head up.

Dr. Cancell stated that his power point presentation should be looked at from the viewpoint of “accountability for improvement.” When assessing Brockton’s performance, results are compared to prior year’s test results, how the state is doing, and

comparable urban districts. Dr. Cancell reminded the Committee that the data reflects only the tested grades: 3 through 8, and grade 10. He outlined the state's accountability model, featuring the progress and performance index (PPI). He went into depth as to how the district achievement levels were in terms of CPI (composite performance index), and the performance levels on MCAS. In addition, he revealed the student growth percentile in his presentation.

Questions from School Committee members included the following:

- Mr. Donegan asked what the School Committee can do, to bring to the attention of our state representatives, the unique situations in Brockton that should be considered when looking at our achievement gaps
- How Brockton plans to target low student growth percentile
- What SPED can do to close the ongoing achievement gap between students with special needs and “typically developing” students
- Mrs. Joyce inquired about comparable urban districts that have shown good gains, and what they are doing

Mrs. Joyce expressed her concern about the ELA scores at the elementary level and large class sizes, she said the Committee must work more diligently on developing short and long-term plans to reduce class size, as well as move forward with changing the cut-off date for kindergarten age. She said these areas are holding Brockton back from making better gains. She also voiced her support of more preschool.

Mr. Minichiello said that the School Committee has asked for information with regard to comparable districts' “best practices”. He would like to see a compare/contrast with other communities with regard to start age, subgroups in these communities, curriculum, class sizes, and successful interventions being used. Mr. Minichiello said that in addition, he would like to hear from Brockton principals who have had positive results in their schools, and see how their efforts are being shared throughout the district.

Items to Refer to Subcommittee

The Superintendent said that she will put off review of the policy manual until after the new School Committee is seated in January.

A *Finance* subcommittee meeting will be scheduled on October 29th. Mr. Carpenter would like to schedule a *Facilities Subcommittee* meeting to begin addressing classroom utilization in preparation for next year. He said the Committee needs to begin early in order to have time to plan properly, splitting the cost over two fiscal years as was done this year would be a good idea, and input from the community is essential. He stated his belief in “high quality schools in all neighborhoods for all students”, and suggested reopening schools, possibly the Whitman School.

New Business

Mr. Donegan inquired about the state of the planetarium and the greenhouse at BHS. Mr. Thomas responded. The Superintendent said that Brockton recently received \$5,000 from the 3M Corporation and has begun the process of applying for a \$100,000 grant with them which, if successful, would fund the new computer and projection equipment in the dome theater. Brockton would commit to completing the work needed to restore the planetarium to operational. Mr. Thomas added that the facility work can be done in-house.

Mr. Donegan inquired about handicap access to Marciano Stadium, Mr. Thomas responded and updated the Committee on the plans to construct a handicap parking lot and a ramp on the “home side” of the stadium, adding that the district is not in violation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD
Secretary/Superintendent

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