

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the Theater at the Dr. William H. Arnone School, at seven o'clock.

Present: Mayor Carpenter, Chair; Mr. Minichiello, Vice-Chair; Mr. Henningson, Mr. Jordan, Mrs. Joyce, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Sullivan, Mrs. Smith

Absent: Mrs. Jean-Clark Wilson

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

Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag.

Hearing of Visitors

Mayor Carpenter explained the Hearing of Visitors process, then took up the list of speakers. Mrs. Yolanda DiFalco, Mrs. DeeAnndra Jones with Monica Ligunya, and Mrs. Heather McDonough individually spoke about Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG), a mandated assessment which they addressed as taking teachers away from classroom instruction time. Andrea Donaruma thanked the Committee for closing schools on Election Day and putting the safety of the students first.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Carpenter explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked Committee members if there were any list items they wanted to remove for discussion. Mrs. Sullivan asked to remove Item B, September 10, 2014 Community School Advisory Board Minutes.

Mr. Robinson moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following remaining items on the Consent Agenda.

- October 21, 2014 Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes
- Huntington School Out-of-State Trip – December 3, 2014
- Report of Chief Supervisor of Attendance for October, 2014
- Notification of Personnel Appointments, Certified and Non-Certified
- Notification of Personnel Actions: Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements

Voted: to adopt the recommendation, unanimous.

From the minutes of the CSAB meeting, Mrs. Sullivan highlighted the many summer activities that were offered. She said that while the schools are closed for the summer, Community Schools is still working. **Mrs. Sullivan then moved to accept the minutes of the September 10, 2014 CSAB meeting. Mrs. Joyce seconded.**

Voted: to accept the minutes; unanimous.

Superintendent's Report

Commendation

The Superintendent began her report with "good news"; she invited Baker School Principal Ryan Powers to talk about School Custodian Miguel Rentas. Mr. Powers said that during Mr. Rentas' morning crossing guard duty, a child was crossing when he saw a car approaching that showed no sign of slowing down. Mr. Rentas stepped directly into the path of the car, putting himself in harm's way to shield the student from being struck, preventing a potentially devastating accident. Mr. Powers felt it was appropriate to recognize Mr. Rentas for his actions. The Superintendent, Mayor, and Mr. Powers presented Miguel with a Certificate of Appreciation, to a standing ovation. The Superintendent said this represents the importance of what the custodians do each and every day, crossing our children; she thanked Mr. Rentas. Mayor Carpenter extended his personal thanks, he

said with pedestrian safety at the forefront of efforts by city departments, the school department, and DOT, all of these cannot prevent a tragedy in the way Mr. Rentas did on that morning.

In Memory of Diane Gosselin – The Superintendent asked for a moment of silence for Diane Gosselin, the Principal of the Downey School who passed away two weeks ago. She said she was a valuable, beloved employee and she praised the response by the Crisis Management team and the many administrators who provided support for staff and students during that very difficult time of grief.

Student Representative Report

Ms. Freeborn reported on events at BHS, included the Veteran’s Assembly held on December 10th, report cards going home November 19th, on Friday, 314 seniors will receive the Abigail Adams scholarship for their achievement on the MCAS exam, and the Thanksgiving Day football game will be the last home game of the season.

East Middle School Arts Strategy

The Superintendent invited Principal Kelly Silva, along with music teacher Lisa Villani, to give an update on what is happening at East Middle School. Principal Silva “introduced” East Middle School via a video of staff and students, including interviews, which was recorded by Bridgewater State University’s Lisa Battaglino. Ms. Silva used a power point presentation to show what *Arts Integration* is and how East is using it in the classroom, below are some key points:

- Arts integration is an *approach* to teaching, it is not a class. Teachers connect an art form to their content areas; students use art forms to demonstrate understanding.
- Arts Integration is a powerful teaching tool for differentiation.
- The response from students and staff has been extremely positive.
- Arts-based electives are available for the student to experience the arts.
- Instrument lessons are offered; the band has grown from single to double-digits.

Ms. Silva thanked the many people who have been a part of this endeavor and then invited School Committee to participate in a mini activity which demonstrated arts integration.

Mrs. Joyce asked when the program began and whether this type of philosophy has translated into behavioral changes; Ms. Silva responded that the program was fully implemented in September and behavior, along with writing and thinking skills have shown improvement; students in the Special Education and ASD classes have responded remarkably well, the visual learning helps ELL students better understand content. Mrs. Joyce said this is exciting and asked Ms. Silva to come back at the end of the year and update the Committee.

Mr. Minichiello thanked Laurie Silva, Mayor Carpenter, and Mr. Buckley for their assistance in securing some funding for equipment and technology.

Strategic Plan Implementation – Revised School Improvement Plans

The Superintendent talked very briefly about the collaboration with EDI, who will come in and work with the district to guide us in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Brockton was chosen by the DESE to work with EDI and the group will provide feedback and consultancy at no cost to Brockton. EDI was here for two days working with district administrators; the Superintendent said she was very pleased with how things went.

Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Saba-Maguire debuted the new School Improvement Plan (SIP), currently being used at Huntington and West Middle. Mrs. Barry said that it is important that the SIP is directly linked to the *District Strategic Plan*. Changes to the plan include:

- The SIP is specifically aligned with the District Strategic Plan, the vision and mission statements are front and center of the plan

- Schools will use the three focus areas from the district plan—Instructional Excellence, Supportive Environments, and Community Engagement--and develop their own action steps within these focus areas; the school-based plan will mirror the district plan
- Schools will use the district strategic initiatives to develop school-based action steps accordingly

Mr. Minichello asked how the plan will be presented to staff going forward; Mrs. Barry responded it has not yet been shared with all schools, but in years past schools have collaborated together. Mrs. Joyce said that during the EDI interview a major concern was that the District Strategic Plan translates to accountability at the school level, she said this is a fantastic tool to ensure that the district plan aligns with what is going on in the schools. Mrs. Joyce asked about community/parent involvement in the plan; Mrs. Saba-Maguire responded this occurs through the school councils.

The Superintendent said that superintendent goals will be linked with district goals; the district plan should “live with” the district; it should not change with superintendents.

(At this point, Mr. Minichiello chaired the remainder of the meeting in Mayor Carpenter’s absence.)

Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG)

The Superintendent thanked the teachers who spoke at the hearing of visitors. She said she has met with the BEA and teachers with respect to this issue, and will continue to look at what is feasible for us to do. This is a \$600,000 grant that comes with requirements, but she will make sure that the main goal and priority for teachers remains to teach the children.

Mrs. Barry explained that TSG was piloted in preschool last year, but until it was brought to scale they did not get a real sense of what the issues would be, some of the issues are listed below.

- TSG is a requirement of the \$600,000 Quality Full Day Kindergarten Grant, which pays for kindergarten paraprofessionals
- This year, teachers are required to complete only two of the ten “domains”, next year the requirement will increase to ten
- Much of the information TSG requires is already being done by Brockton
- The time spent is getting in the way of instruction
- How will the district comply with the mandate and meet the needs of the teachers?

Steps the district has taken:

- Committed to ongoing conversation with teachers, BEA, with respect to supporting teachers while complying with the grant requirements
- Provided teachers with additional time to input/upload information
- The state is only concerned with ratings, Brockton will meet the minimum state requirements only
- Expressed the district’s concerns to DESE representative
- Notified parents via letter that Brockton Public Schools is not collecting and uploading personal information on children; the letter also encourages parents to contact Mrs. Barry’s office with questions or concerns

Mrs. Barry explained that this mandate is in response to districts across the state that do not have early indicators for success; that is not the case in Brockton. She said if we are going to continue to receive the funds, these are some of the things that will come with them.

Mr. Robinson asked about the type of grant and whether funding requirements can be adjusted, Ms. Barry responded that it appeared that the state may be reconsidering the requirement of increasing from two to ten domains next year, as a result of pushback from districts.

Mr. Minichiello said he would like to schedule a curriculum subcommittee meeting to get better educated on the issue, and then be proactive and advocate for the district where necessary. He invited the BEA and Jackie McDonough from the MTA to attend. Mr. Jordan said this is a case where programs do not fit all districts in the same way; Mr. Henningson questioned how a teacher would have time to teach while performing all of the “domains”. Mrs. Joyce acknowledged that the funding is vital, she asked whether some of our own assessments could be replaced with the TSG assessments, Mrs. Barry responded that if Brockton’s assessments are aligned she would not want to replace them with something that is not. The Superintendent concluded by stating that an Early Childhood Coordinator is important to our success, Brockton is currently without one.

District Update

The Superintendent provided the following updates:

- School Police Officers Hancock and Smith completed their first GREAT class at the Huntington School. The Superintendent said the district will continue to unveil GREAT in the middle schools.
- The Legislative Dinner will be held at BHS on November 25th at 6 p.m., at which time the district will continue to address issues of advocacy, including Chapter 70 funding.
- The DESE vote on the proposed charter school waiver is scheduled for November 25th; 8:30 a.m. Mr. Minichiello said we have been clear that Brockton does not need or want a charter school; he said he anticipates the DESE will need to follow the rules in place and if they do not, the Committee will take whatever action is deemed appropriate.

Items to Refer to Subcommittee

Mr. Minichiello asked to schedule a *Superintendent’s Contract Subcommittee Meeting* at 6:30 p.m. prior to the School Committee meeting on December 2nd; all agreed.

Mr. Minichiello announced the next *Joint City Council/School Committee Meeting* is scheduled for Wednesday, December 3rd, 6:30 p.m. at South Middle School.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Robinson said Halloween Hallways at BHS was a good time for everyone. He also reported that on Election Day, with the schools closed, over 30 BHS students were able to work at polls; he thanked Mr. McGarry for providing this opportunity for students.

Mr. Henningson reminded everyone that the Holiday Parade is Saturday, November 29, 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Minichiello announced Dave Gorman will hold the annual Jingle Bell Run (Saturday, December 6, 1:00 p.m.).

New Business

Facilities Planning Team Report

Mr. Thomas reported that the planning team has met twice and is looking at options to address the need for additional classroom space. He noted that that it takes at least 4 to 5 years to bring a new school in through the Massachusetts School Building Association (MSBA). Some of the areas the committee is reviewing are the makeup of school populations and neighborhoods, transportation, and kindergarten assignments.

Seeing no further comments, Mrs. Joyce moved to adjourn, Mr. Robinson seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD
Secretary

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