

The Regular Meeting of the Brockton School Committee was held this evening in the George M. Romm Little Theatre, at seven o'clock. These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

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

Absent: Mayor Carpenter

Mr. Minichiello called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m., followed by a salute to the flag. He asked for a moment of silence for former School Committee member Michael Healy, who passed away one year ago.

Hearing of Visitors

Mr. Minichiello reviewed procedures that are followed during Hearing of Visitors, he said there is a long list of people and asked speakers to be brief if what they intended to say was voiced by someone before them. *Ross DePina* spoke first and he stated that everyone was there to speak to issues that surround Brockton High School's demerit system. Students from BHS who spoke were *Sahmeer Odies, Kinslee Odies, David Omare* and *Bradley Souffrant*. Other speakers included *Kevin Price*, a middle school student, parents *Michael Dockery and Ben Cowart*, BIC members *Kathy Byner and Isabel Lopez*, Brockton community members *Mark Mentor, Charleson Montfort and Bishop Felipe Teixeira*. After the final speaker, Superintendent Smith addressed the students, telling them she was pleased that they had come tonight and she is absolutely available to meet at a time separate from this meeting. She responded to the students' concerns, and said the most important thing she heard was the need for more counselors to talk about life's happenings. She said it is most important for all that we have a safe and secure school for all students. Finally, the Superintendent told students that she wants their high school experience to be successful as well, that their responsibilities include getting to school and class on time, learning and taking part in activities, and to understand that there are rules and policies to follow.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Minichiello explained the purpose of the Consent Agenda, and asked Committee members whether there were any list items they wanted to remove for discussion; there were none.

Mrs. Joyce moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda.

- *Minutes of March 3, 2015 Regular School Committee Meeting*
- *February 24, 2015 Superintendent's Contract Subcommittee Report*
- *March 10, 2015 Finance Subcommittee Meeting Report*
- *BHS Science Club Deep Sea Fishing Trip out of Plymouth, MA*
- *BHS Field Trip to Daniel Webster College, Nashua, NH*
- *BHS Talent Search Field Trip to Green Mountain/St. Joseph Colleges, VT*
- *Chief Supervisor of Attendance Report for February, 2015*
- *Notification of Personnel Actions: Leaves of Absence, Resignations, Retirements*

Voted: to adopt the recommendation, unanimous.

Communication

Mr. John McGarry, Executive Director of the Elections Commission, submitted a letter requesting to use the following schools as polling locations: Kennedy, Huntington, Hancock, Gilmore, Davis, Downey, Brookfield, Raymond; South, West, East and North Middle Schools, for the Special City Election on May 12, 2015, and the September 22 and November 3, 2015 elections in the fall.

Mr. Jordan moved to approve the request to use the listed schools as polling locations for the 2015 election cycle.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Superintendent's Report

BHS Student Representative Report

Valarie Marroquin reported there were some BHS students who competed in the regional science fair and took first place; the BHS drama team will compete in state finals; DECA is moving on to the national level competition, Wednesday is College Admissions Night, Thursday is Parent/ Teacher conferences, 1,389 students made honor roll this term, and BHS has won the National Model School Award for the 12th year in a row.

Scholarship Opportunities

Principal Wolder reported that community partners Charlie Virga and ASA run by Rose Arthur, have worked with BHS to bring college opportunities to our students, there are several out-of-state, residential colleges that have guaranteed that our students can enroll and the tuition will not go up for four years, in terms of commuter colleges, Fisher College and Charter Oaks in Connecticut have also signed on with affordable rates. The opportunity is also open to BHS alumni who graduated in prior years. In response to Mrs. Joyce's questions, Ms. Wolder stated that there is not a limit to the number of students who can apply, and the application criteria is the same as for other students, but there is a certain level of flexibility with respect to SAT scores, they will work with students on finances, as well. Mrs. Joyce said this is a great opportunity.

NEASC Final Report

Ms. Wolder wanted to review the final *Report of the Visiting Committee* and update School Committee on the status of BHS' accreditation. She said so far, the district has spent over \$32,000, she has not yet received a final determination; the committee has up to six months to make a decision. The final report is the result of the visit by a 23-member team that interviewed students, staff, community, school committee, and spent several days at BHS walking through the school and "judging" BHS according to teaching and learning standards and supportive standards—school culture and leadership, school and community resources for learning. She thanked school committee, parents, students and community members for their cooperation during the two-year period. The report must be public and posted on the school department website and a copy placed in the local library.

Ms. Wolder highlighted some of the commendations and recommendations from the Committee, she said that BHS received the most commendations under "instruction".

Mr. Minichiello said the beauty of the study was that the visiting team was made up of people from within the state as well as out-of-state who were not partial to Brockton in any way. He said he is proud of the report and when he met with the team their consensus is that Brockton is doing great work and he commended Principal Wolder and said he has faith in her leadership, he also extended his appreciation to the staff for doing a good job.

Ms. Wolder said *it is what the teachers and students do that makes BHS successful*. She also pointed out that, although they have some concerns, some of the speakers earlier tonight are part of the school's success. She said literacy is a focus at BHS and the students' skills in that area showed in their presentations tonight. Mrs. Joyce commented that the report is very helpful to School Committee, many of the recommendations are resource and budget issues but it helps them identify key issues, especially as they go through the budget process. The Superintendent said community support is going to be very important as we move forward in supporting the school.

State of the Schools Address

The Superintendent reported she was pleased to present a "State of the Schools" address to the City Council on Monday evening. She thanked School Committee, Executive Team and BEA President Kim Gibson for their support and input. The Superintendent said she had a lot of support from councilors; Mr. Minichiello agreed. He said that every year the city contributes \$150,000 for extraordinary expenses and the message was loud and clear that this is not adequate, and he is hopeful that the Council will increase this amount. Mr. Jordan commended the Superintendent for the presentation, he said it was obvious that councilors got a first-hand look at what is going on in the schools and this should help them make the decisions they need to make.

PARCC

The Superintendent reported that the district opted to go with PARCC testing for many reasons, one being that it will position our students well for future testing. She said there has been some confusion about "opting out" of the PARCC test, the Superintendent clarified that you cannot opt out of high stakes testing, if a parent chooses to refuse to have their child to take the test, the child will remain in school and work on an educational assignment or project. The Superintendent said that she would like to see each child have the experience of taking the PARCC test.

Administrative Appointment – The Superintendent said she was happy to introduce Fernanda Vera Cruz as the new Department Head of Bilingual Education, filling Kellie Jones' vacant position.

New Business

Supplemental Calendar to Address Snow Days

The Superintendent reported there have been six days out due to snowstorms, she has met with the BEA president and teachers have agreed to come in to work on Good Friday to work a half day which will replace the June 29th date. This will allow children to start their summer vacation as of Friday, June 26th, also a half day. She said once this supplemental calendar is accepted by School Committee it will be given out to families. The April 8th half-day session for the high school has been eliminated, and the extended testing window has been included. Mr. Minichiello commented that going to school for a half day on April 3rd still allows people to attend services and exercise religious beliefs. He said "this is a compromise that works"; the pros and cons are well-intentioned and this half day takes into consideration both sides of the issue.

Mr. Jordan moved to accept the revisions to the SY15 calendar due to snow days, the motion was seconded. On the motion, Mr. Robinson asked whether provisions have been considered if there is a conflict; the Superintendent responded Dr. Moran will work with this.

Voted: to approve the motion, unanimous.

Presentation of 1914 Letter from Eldon B. Keith

The Superintendent displayed an original, framed letter written in 1914 from Eldon B. Keith to Morris Shapira supporting the naming of the "new school"; she was given it by Ruth Simpson who came across it among the possessions of former Paine School Assistant Principal Ed Kelly, who passed away a few years ago. Superintendent Smith presented it to Maxine Richardson, and asked her to display it in the Paine School as a piece of the school's history.

Seeing no further New Business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Smith, JD
Secretary

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