

**Andover School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting of Thursday, June 16, 2011**  
**School Administration Building - School Committee Room**

**Members in Attendance:** Annie Gilbert, Chair, Vice-Chair Paula Colby-Clements, Richard J. Collins, Dennis Forgue, and David Birnbach

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Marinel McGrath and Interim Business Manager Peter DeRoeve

**I. Regular Meeting**

**A. Call to Order**

Annie Gilbert opened the Regular Meeting of the School Committee at 7:05 P.M.

**B. Opening Ceremonies**

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Annie Gilbert said there is a change in the agenda under New Business; the High School Scuba Diving Trip will be tabled to the next meeting. Mrs. Gilbert also stated the School Committee will taken under consideration the request from Food Services to increase a la carte milk prices by \$.10 cents for the 2011-12 school year at their next meeting.

**C. Recognition**

Dr. McGrath welcomed retiring school teachers to the first annual special reception and retirement ceremony, "We Honor You" and to celebrate their combined 624 years of teaching. Dr. McGrath invited each of the school principals to come forward to give an individual tribute to their teachers and to present them with a certificate of appreciation. Each teacher will also receive a crystal bowl inscribed with a quote from Leah Becks in recognition of their years of service to the Andover Public School System. The retirees include:

Jim Batchelder, Art Instructor/AHS-33 years; Arthur Iworsely, Physical Education Instructor/West Elementary - 41 years; Kathy Iworsely, Grade 4 Teacher/High Plain Elementary-40 years; Peggy Cain, Guidance Counselor/AHS-32 years; Dave Gangi – ELA teacher/AHS-34 years; Rosemarie Webb, Art Instructor/Sanborn School -17 years; Mary Ellen Dahlstrand, Special Education/High Plain Elementary-27 years; Patricia Gleason, Kindergarten Teacher-18 years; Illeana Kleponis, Math Teacher/AHS-14 years; Theresa Palardy, Social Studies Teacher/DMS-28 years; Judy Piolunek, Guidance Counselor-West Middle School-27 years, and Ray Tode, Director of Technology, Central Office-15 years, and Magdalen Cantwell-Special Education Teacher/AHS.

**D. Citizen Input - None**

**E. Education**

**1. Bancroft School Update**

Annie Gilbert reported that the RFP's for the new Operating Manager to replace Joe Piantedosi have gone out. She also said concerns from direct abutters on the west side of the school property regarding the closeness of the layout of the soccer fields to their property and the vegetation buffering planned for that area will be discussed at a meeting with the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board. The architects will attend a School Committee meeting in the fall to provide an update on the status of the building project. Mrs. Gilbert also said that the Dragon Lair Playground will be moved.

**F. Old Business**

**1. Financials**

Peter DeRoeve reported on the monthly finances of May 2011 and stated they are heading into the final month of the year with a budget balance of \$26,000; final fourth quarter reports will be available in August. He voiced his concern with the legal services budget, and transportation issues. He also said they are looking into how to offset the cost and usage of gas at Andover High School. The Special Education Tuitions is \$100,000 over budget and there

1. Financials (Cont'd)

is no change on the estimated costs for next year. The reimbursement from Circuit Breaker funds is still in discussion at the State House, but the amount being talked about is not in our favor. Peter thanked everyone for their support over the past year.

**Motion:** Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the General Fund Transfers as presented. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 5-0 to approve.

**G. New Business**

1. Appointment of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. McGrath introduced Nancy Duclos, her appointment for Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction and provided an overview of Nancy's background and qualifications for the position. She recommends the School Committee approve the appointment.

**Motion:** Paula Colby-Clements motioned for the School Committee to confirm Superintendent McGrath's appointment of Nancy A. Duclos as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction effective July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014 at the budgeted salary of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000) for the first year of Ms. Duclos's three year contract with salary adjustments for Years Two and Three based upon performance reviews. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and unanimously voted to approve.

2. School Travel Requests

Wood Hill Middle School

Dr. McGrath said WHMS teacher Frank DeFusco has proposed an extracurricular trip to Spain, France, Italy, and Monaco for the February 2012 School Vacation which is open to twenty students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. All of the required paperwork has been submitted and is in order. This trip is not part of the school curriculum, occurring on a school vacation with no loss of school time, and students are expected to finance the trip without use of scholarship money. The cost of the trip per student is \$3,515. Dr. McGrath is recommending approval.

David Birnbach is concerned with the level of expenditure for the trip and cautions on continuing offering trips at this level for education travel and suggested less costly trips be considered in the future. The Field Trip Subcommittee will review costs of student trips and report back to the School Committee.

**Motion:** Paula Colby Clements motioned to approve the WHMS trip to Spain, France, Italy, and Monaco from February 17-2, 2012 as presented and in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Andover School Committee Policy entitled "School Sponsored Trips and Student Travel". The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 4-01 to approve. David Birnbach abstained from voting.

AHS Scuba Diving Trip - Tabled

3. Superintendent's Evaluation

Annie Gilbert provided a recap of the process for evaluating the Superintendent and highlighted the evaluation areas which include: Administrative Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Relationship with the School Committee, Relationship with the Town and the Community, Budget Development and Financial Management, and Financial Reporting. The School Committee held a workshop on May 17 to discuss the process. Each School Committee member will have an opportunity to report on the evaluation areas. The meeting minutes will serve as the evaluation document to be placed in the Superintendent's file.

### 3. Superintendent's Evaluation (Cont'd)

Administrative Leadership: Dennis Forgue said, as the former School Committee Chair, he experienced great satisfaction with the leadership demonstrated by Dr. McGrath over the past twelve months as she faced many challenges in overcoming many obstacles. She inherited an organization characterized by frustration and discontent, faced a challenging budget process along with a host of challenging operational and tactical operations which included no Business Manager in place, the departure of the High School Principal at the beginning of the school year, and the beginning of negotiations with the Andover Teacher's Association. She tackled these obstacles and challenges in a methodical, thorough and open way. Through these challenges Superintendent McGrath demonstrated a consistency in decision-making always placing the student first. She has begun to develop a Leadership Team, encouraged the collaboration of the principals, and helped everyone to begin to see the District as a Pre-K to Grade 12 School District. Dr. McGrath has shown the ability to support her staff and at the same time, hold people accountable in a constructive way. She was instrumental in the negotiation of the Technology Memorandum of Understanding and more recently, has begun to articulate her vision for the District. She has shown a consistent leadership role, communicated and encouraged collaboration with the Leadership Team and School Principals. Mr. Forgue has greatly appreciated her sense of humor.

David Birnbach stated that Dr. McGrath has worked hard to gain respect of our teachers' union leaders, and in turn, the Central Office/Union relationships have improved substantially since Dr. McGrath joined us in July 2010. Union leaders now go out of their way to praise Dr. McGrath's working and communications styles and point out her strong work ethic. She filled key interim leadership positions (Business Manager and High School Principal), and was instrumental in reaching a compromise with the Union regarding the Edline and X2 Computer Applications. Paula Colby-Clements said Dr. McGrath provided a much needed cultural change. Annie Gilbert appreciates Superintendent McGrath's strong sense of process and systems that are fair and inclusive. Dick Collins stated Dr. McGrath is an outstanding leader and should have the Committee's full support.

#### Instructional Leadership

Dr. McGrath has actively worked to enhance interaction among principals at the elementary and middle school levels to increase consistency of instructional programs across our schools. She has also been instrumental and innovative in several key instructional areas. Examples include:

- Championing the recent teaching and learning innovation grant program to accelerate the adoption of technology to enhance teaching and learning in our classrooms and increase instructional focus on critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.
- Initiating assessments to improve math program at the middle schools
- Revamping middle school foreign language program to enhance proficiency
- Expanding Special Education programming in Kindergarten and Grade 9
- Encouraging staff members to more actively integrate project-based learning into their classrooms
- Investing in a new technology specialist position at Andover High School, to provide support and training to our teachers, and help them effectively incorporate technology into classroom instruction.
- Encouraging staff members to more actively integrate project-based learning into their classrooms.
- Collaborating with Apple and other Massachusetts Superintendents to explore and tap into emerging teaching and learning pilot programs that could enhance the quality of education delivered in Andover.

A. Gilbert said that Dr. McGrath has a core commitment to moving the District forward on a day to day basis. In an Extremely difficult budget season, she had vision and the will to identify priorities which she stuck with even if it meant letting go of others to take the District to the next level.

#### Relationship with School Committee

D. Birnbach said Dr. McGrath has formed a strong, open, forthcoming and proactive relationship with the Committee.

P. Colby-Clements commented that Dr. McGrath's interactions with the School Committee through workshops, agendas, and agenda notes have been very helpful. She readily avails herself to Committee members and provides ample interaction. Dr. McGrath's assistance in guiding them in their role when needed is much appreciated.

D. Forgue said he believes that Dr. McGrath has a good grasp of boundaries between Superintendent and School Committee roles; when boundaries are clear, creating a great working environment. Superintendent McGrath is respectful of the School Committee's priorities and identifies the importance of a healthy relationship with the School Committee as an important aspect of her position.

#### Relationship with Town and Community

A. Gilbert stated that the working relationship between the Superintendent and other Boards (Board of Selectmen / Finance Committee) has been very successful, as well as her role on the School Building Committee which has been a highly challenging school building process. Dr. McGrath's presentations are logical, factual and not politicizing. She has shown the ability to remove elements that people get hung up on. The high caliber budget presentations were appreciated by the Town and the Community. Superintendent McGrath inserted herself into her role on the School Building Committee and process gradually and as she gained more experience provided input on technology, interior and exterior material, classroom space, and advocacy for approval for process.

Superintendent McGrath's relationship with the Community was difficult for a new incoming superintendent – everyone wanted her time. She joined the Rotary Club and worked closely with ACE and on a partnership between ACE and the Rotary Club, Andover Fund for Education, and Andona to provide technology for SMART Boards. Dr. McGrath continues to attend PTO/PAC meetings, School Performances, and holds monthly chats at the Memorial Hall Library. She has a gift for including and inspiring people to where she wants to take the community.

D. Forgue commented that Dr. McGrath quickly developed a degree of credibility with other Boards and made the School Committee's job easier, during the negotiations with peers for the technology consolidation she was flexible but firm and worked well using strong negotiation skills that were collaborative.

A. Gilbert said she likes that Dr. McGrath's presentations always start and end with the vision for the Andover Public Schools. D. Birnbach said Dr. McGrath is an excellent ambassador and has represented the Andover Public Schools well in the Community. She has delivered compelling presentations at Town Meeting and at the League of Women Voters spring event.

#### Budget Development/Financial Management

P. Colby-Clements commented that Superintendent McGrath made an excellent choice for an interim business manager. She knew the qualities needed and displayed patience explaining the budget process. Some people were critical of when the budget was rolled out, but it was the way the School Committee directed it be rolled out. Even though the budget showed a large deficit, Dr. McGrath is to be commended for taking the School Committee's advice this budget season. They learned a lot, it was a transparent process, the community was educated, and the bar was set high on what the budget addressed.

D. Birnbach said Dr. McGrath has worked tirelessly to involve all our principals in the budget creation and prioritization process and produced a budget that maintained critical programs and services and increased investments in several key areas identified in the Instructional Leadership section above.

D. Forgue commented that transparency was helpful, taught them a lot, and they are in a good position for next year. Long-term decisions were driven by what was the best decision for kids. Communications to staff was very helpful.

**G. Consent Agenda**

1. Minutes of June 2, 2011 Regular Meeting (revised)
2. Warrants - the Warrants are in order

On a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Paula Colby-Clements, it was unanimously voted to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented.

**H. Adjournment**

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements with a second by Dick Collins, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dee DeLorenzo*  
Recorder