

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of January 26, 2010
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Debra Rahmin Silberstein, Secretary-Dennis Forgue, Richard J. Collins Annie Gilbert, and David Birnbach

Others in Attendance: Dr. Claudia L. Bach, Superintendent, Dr. Susan M. Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent, and Interim Business Manager Bernie Tuttle

I. Regular meeting in the School Committee Room

A. Salute to the Flag

Chair Deb Silberstein reconvened the meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:08 P.M. Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence in memory of Tina Vitale, a Shawsheen parent who recently passed away. After the moment of silence, West Elementary students Isabella Allen (Grade 5) and Reetahan Mukhopadhyay (Grade 5) led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Collins presented the students with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

B. Recognition of Achievement

1. ACE Donation of Foreign Language Lab

Dr. Bach introduced Tina Girdwood, President of ACE (Andover Coalition for Educators), Vice-President Tony James and Board member Dr. Eileen Woods. Mrs. Girdwood shared the history of ACE which was formed in November 2005 to provide support to the Andover Public Schools by providing funding for programs and services beyond the reach of the yearly school budget. Mrs. Girdwood is proud to announce that through the efforts of many, ACE has raised the funds to purchase and install a high-tech Foreign Language Lab at Andover High School. The new Foreign Language Lab will be installed over February vacation. Mrs. Girdwood is delighted with the response of the community for their contributions but most especially for the monetary gifts received from the Horne Family Foundation and the Andover High School PAC that enabled the purchase of the \$128,319 Foreign Language Lab to be realized. Mrs. Girdwood recognized and thanked Dr. Susan Nicholson, AHS Principal Jonathan Harris, and Technology Director Ray Tode for their efforts, hard work, and assistance with acquiring the lab. This was a team effort on many parts. ACE is anxious to continue to work with the school administration to support the needs of Andover Public Schools. The School Committee thanked Tina and the members of ACE for their generous support.

C. Communications

1. Strategic plan update

Dr. Bach reported that she and Dennis Forgue have held two meetings with the members of the Revenue-Generating Pinpoint Committee. The Committee will report to the School Committee on their 12-15 revenue generating ideas and discuss their findings at an upcoming School Committee Workshop. The next meeting will be held on February 5th.

Dr. Nicholson said the Steering Committee met and brainstormed ideas for the vision statement, a draft of which was sent to Future Management Systems and they expect to have a report back next week. The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on March 4 at 8 AM. The subcommittee of the Steering Committee met to discuss the community focus group scheduled for Thursday, March 11 in the cafeteria at Andover High School from 7:00-9:30 PM. The Community Focus Group will be a large forum representing all the different stakeholders.

C. Communications (Cont'd)

2. Bancroft Feasibility Study

Annie Gilbert reported the School Building Committee (SBC) expects to have a report on the results of the traffic study by mid-February and anticipates having preferred alternative sites to give to MSBA in May. The SBC should make a decision on an anticipated site by mid-March. The School Building Committee will meet on January 27th to consider the eight different site options to consider and will decide how many options to have a rough costing of. They will also review floor plans for elementary schools and if necessary engage the assistance of a space consultant.

3. IT Consolidation Study Update

Dr. Bach reported that BlumShapiro Consulting has accumulated all the necessary data for the IT Consolidation and are in the process of preparing their report.

4. Finance Consolidation Study Update

Dr. Bach has met with the Department of Revenue and J. Sullivan of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to discuss the exploration of consolidating some of the Town and School Business functions. Key personnel from the Town and School Departments have been interviewed to gain an understanding of the functions of the business offices. They will also be meeting with the Chairs of the three Boards.

5. Superintendent Search Update

Dennis Forgue provided an update on the Superintendent Search. The School Committee met with MASC consultant, Michael Gilbert and the search committee members and presented their charge to them. Thirty-two candidates have applied and ten candidates were brought forward based on the criteria established; with three to five finalists to be brought forward to the School Committee for consideration. After the finalists have been brought forward, site visits and interviews will be arranged. Michael Gilbert has recommended only School Committee members should attend site visits. The School Committee voted to agree with this recommendation. The site will be held after February vacation.

Dennis Forgue reminded everyone who will be registering their child(ren) for kindergarten in September 2010 that the Shawsheen School would remain open until September 2013 or longer if needed. Mr. Forgue noted that an additional full-day kindergarten class was added for the 2009-2010 school year and hopes this year the School Department makes use of all its resources to have a full complement of class sizes. Mr. Forgue also responded to questions received via email regarding class sizes at AHS extending beyond the School Committee recommendation of twenty-nine students. The School Committee Policy states a recommended class size of twenty-nine, however, the policy also states the number is flexible and can be increased if deemed necessary by the administration. This caveat is effective at all levels, not just Andover High School. Mr. Forgue reported he attended the AHS Democracy and Media Literacy Class conducted by Ruth Masters where he saw first-hand how challenging the use of technology is at the high school and how the students struggled with out-dated equipment.

Mr. Collins recognized and congratulated the Andover High School Boys' and Girls' Track Team on winning the Massachusetts State Relay Championship this past weekend.

Chair Silberstein is disappointed with the collaboration efforts of the Andover Educators' Association (AEA) for not signing the Memorandum of Understanding for the Race to the Top Grant (RTTP) and stated it is a misconception on the part of the AEA that only \$29,000 in funds would be available. She said it is unfortunate that Andover has lost the opportunity to be involved in the first round of funding. Dr. Bach said there is over \$1M in competitive grant funds available and Andover's Grant Coordinator Lisa Glickstein has been highly successful in capturing competitive grant funds for Andover. Lower performing districts have contacted Andover to consider partnering with them for these funds. Dr. Bach also dispelled the concern of the AEA about tying student performance to teachers' performance because with Andover has outstanding

C. **Communications (Cont'd)**

teachers and is one of the top school districts in the State. School Administration reached out several times to the AEA to discuss the RTTP and the signing of the MOU and the AEA was invited to attend an informational session on the RTTP funds but declined the invitation. The Commission of Education said that the MOU's with three signatures would be given first priority for the grant funds and those with only two signatures would be considered for the second round of available funds.

D. **Citizen Input**

Diane Costagliola Co-chair of the "Raise the Roof" telethon for Andover Youth Services and the Andover Youth foundation announced that the telethon will begin on Thursday, February 4th and continued on Friday, February 5th. Revenue raised will not only benefit the Youth Center Building Fund, it will also support the crucial services and programs provided by Andover Youth Services.

Andrea Zaimis spoke about the Wrestling Club at AHS and requested it be placed on an upcoming School Committee agenda to discuss the club's current status and the possibility of it being incorporated into the Athletic Budget. Mrs. Zaimis distributed a pamphlet which provides a summary and history of the program, its budget and milestones met. The Wrestling Club has been self-funded for three years and they are entering his fourth year.

Dan Kowalski asked if the School Committee would be voting on the School Choice Option. Dr. Bach responded that by law, the School Committee is required to vote on this. He also inquired about renting out school facilities and if the rates should be increased.

E. **Consent Agenda**

Warrants: Mr. Tuttle reported that the warrants are in order.
On a motion by Mr. Collins with a second by Annie Gilbert it was voted 4-0-0 to approve the warrants as presented.

Field Trip Disclosures: On a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Annie Gilbert it was voted 5-0-0 to accept the field trip disclosure forms as presented.

Minutes: On a motion by Dennis for with a second by Mr. Collins, it was unanimously voted to approve the Regular Session Minutes of December 14, 2009, January 5, 2010, and January 11, 2010; Work Session Minutes of December 17, 2009; and the Tri-board Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2009.

F. **Education**

1. **Middle School Common Planning Time**

The three Middle School Principals, Theresa McGuinness-Darby (DMS), Steve Murray (WMS), and Patrick Bucco, (WHMS) came forward to discuss the importance of team common planning and the Middle School philosophy of educating the whole child. The teaming of interdisciplinary courses is in line with the data received from Dr. Willard Daggett. The Principles showed a video of what common planning time looks like, and why it is so important to the Middle School philosophy. Common planning time allows teachers to develop creative and interdisciplinary projects that produce connectivity. Mr. Murray said that teaming is the heart of the Middle Schools and collaboration between teachers and students.

Three examples of the value of common planning were shared by the following teachers: John Gibbons and Erin Suffoletto of Doherty Middle School talked about the student hike up Mt. Major and how they were able to integrate various disciplines in writing, social studies, science, and math into this exercise. Steve Cogger, the Engineering teacher at Doherty Middle School talked about the new eighth-grade engineering curriculum developed this past summer, and two of his students through the live demonstration of a robot they developed, demonstrated this curriculum. Darrell Keane and Levinson who teach Grade 8 Math at West

F. Education (Cont'd)

1. Middle School Common Planning Time (Cont'd)

Middle School talked about how they used common planning time to create curricula partners, combining two different groups of students in learning centers and engaged them in a higher learning unit. Wood Hill Middle School teachers Chip Gregory and Donna Sunderland talked about the expeditionary learning unit made possible through common planning time to engage students in compelling topics. The students studied the issues and cultures of Afghanistan and provided an expedition of their findings, which was phenomenal.

Wood Hill Middle School Principal Patrick Bucco hopes that the tonight's presentation illustrated the importance of common planning time and why it is so essential to the Middle Schools and interdisciplinary learning.

2. Two Year school calendar

Dr. Bach explained the school year calendars provided to the School Committee members for school years 2010 and 2011. They are two versions (A & B) for each school year. The School Committee will review the calendars provided and vote at their next meeting.

G. Finances

1. Pupil Personnel Quarterly Report

Dr. Kathy Fink provided a Quarterly Report of the Pupil Personnel Department. Updates from the last quarter review include notification from the DESE that corrective actions for the Coordinated Program Review are complete, status of the program review by Walker Partnerships which will soon be available, and the opening this month of a new full day preschool class with revenue from the Early Childhood Stimulus Grant is funding several positions. Dr. Fink explained staffing changes, specialized programs, and the request for an increase in pre-school tuition. She also talked about new sources of revenue including professional development opportunities in Andover with other communities attending (and paying), an increase in preschool tuition, and soliciting referral packets from surrounding districts for our in-house programs. The on-going challenges for the Special Education Department include the Circuit Breaker reduction from 72% to 40% reimbursement leaving a shortage of \$944,508 for out of district tuition due to this reduced reimbursement from the State.

2. Preschool in full day kindergarten tuition proposals

Mr. Tuttle is recommending 15% increase in the tuition of the preschool. Full-day Kindergarten tuition will remain at the current tuition rate of \$4400 with a \$200 discount for early payment.

On a motion by Dennis Ford with a second by Annie Gilbert the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommended 15% increase for the preschool tuition.

3. Food service department proposal

Mr. Tuttle reported that Food Services is purchasing a used van from the Plant and Facilities Department that is not being traded in. The purchase cost of the van will be shared with the Greater Lawrence Vocational Technical School. The cost to Andover will be \$1,250 and the students of the Technical School will perform all maintenance on the van. This vehicle is a public vehicle and is not assigned to one person, it will not be a take-home vehicle. The van will be available to other departments to use.

H. Adjournment

On a motion to adjourn by Mr. Collins with a second by Dennis Fergie, it was voted to 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder