

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of March 13, 2013
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

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

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos, and Assistant Superintendent Paul Szymanski

I. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

Chairwoman Colby-Clements opened the Regular Meeting of the School Committee at 7:15 P.M. Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Old Business: School Calendar 2012-2013

Superintendent Dr. McGrath explained to the Committee that she had looked at a few options in making up the storm days. Students need to attend 180 days, Teachers are expected to work 184 days during the school year. When making up days missed beyond our 5 built in days, Dr. McGrath looked at vacation dates, Saturdays and non-federal holidays. After numerous conversations with principals and administrators, this is what she proposes: take the March 29, the Good Friday religious holiday and make it a school day with the understanding of allowing parents call in their child out absent to observe any religious observances. However, the district can only do this if there are enough teachers present in the schools.

David Birnbach stated that he had been approached by parents about changing the Feb and April vacations and combine them into one in March so that would help in future school years when there is a stormy winter. Mr. Birnbach also stated that he felt more comfortable with a Saturday school day rather than picking a religious holiday. But he recognized all the work Dr. McGrath did in coming up with a solution for this year's school year calendar. Annie Gilbert asked if the Administration had heard of any feedback from staff or parents. Ms. Colby Clements saw this proposal as a solution to an immediate problem not knowing for sure what the rest of the winter/spring weather might bring in terms of weather related issues. She also recognizes the need to honor religious holidays such as Good Friday and is good with the option of parents calling in their children in absent if they choose to do so. Mr. Forgue also echoed similar sentiments as Mr. Birnbach about having to pick a religious holiday to make up a school day, he also asked why the SC could not vote on 2 school year calendars and Dr. McGrath told him that the AEA did not choose to do this. He noted that the school district's obligation is to offer the school day because of the Dept of Education policy of holding 180 school days.

Annie Gilbert motion to schedule an Early Release Day for Friday, March 29 as a school day. However, if we don't have sufficient school staff/faculty to hold a school day, then the back up date would be Saturday, March 30, 2013. Dick Collins seconded the motion and the vote was carried on a 4-0 vote with Mr. Birnbach sustaining from the vote.

H. Adjournment

At 7:45 P.M. on a motion by Dick Collins and seconded by Dennis Forgue, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of March 13, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Phelan

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Recorder