

**Andover School Committee Regular Meeting
Minutes of November 5, 2015**

Members in Attendance: Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, Joel Blumstein, Susan McCready, and Ted Teichert

Others in Attendance: Interim Superintendent Dr. Sheldon Berman, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, Dr. Nancy Duclos, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration, Paul Szymanski, Tim Chen, AHS Liaison.

I. Call to Order

Chair Annie Gilbert called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

Opening Ceremonies

Annie Gilbert opened the meeting with a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag led by Wood Hill Middle School Students, Juliana Barbero and Derreck Silvestro. The students were presented with Certificates of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

II. Regular Meeting

B. Recognition/Communications

1. Certificates of Excellence

Each year the Massachusetts Association for School Superintendents (MASS) allows the Superintendent to present Certificates of Excellence to two students of his choice based on outstanding academic records and citizenship. Dr. Berman recognized Andover High School students James Zhou and Meghna Ray as his recipients of the Certificates of Excellence.

2. John & Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipients:

Dr. Berman announced that 117 Andover High School students are recipients of the John & Abigail Adams Scholarship this year. This is an extraordinary achievement. The scholarship

- provides a tuition waiver for up to eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts state college or university;
- Beginning with the class of 2016 – students must score at an Advanced performance level on one of the 3 high school state assessment tests in ELA, Mathematics, or STE (Biology, Chemistry, Intro Physics, or Tech/Engineering) and
- Score at the Proficient level or higher on the remaining 2 high school state assessments and
- Have combined scores from the 3 tests that place them in the top 25 percent of students in the graduating class in the district.

3. Highlights from around the District

Mary McCarthy was welcomed as the new Interim Assistant Principal at Andover High School. Mary was at Hudson High School for many years, Principal at Hudson Catholic, and has continued to work in education. Ms. McCarthy is pleased to be in Andover working with Dr. Berman, and acknowledged Candace Hall and her staff for the warm welcome she received.

AHS Music Teacher, Catherine Hofius and members of the AHS Marching Band were recognized for their achievements in this year's Marching Band competitions; winning the Bronze Medal at the Methuen Competition on October 4th, the Silver Medal at the Billerica Competition on October

17th, the Silver Medal at the Reading Competition on October 24th, and taking home the Gold Medal at the New England Marching Band Championships on November 1, 2015.

Andover was awarded \$33,665.00 in grant monies from the Andover Coalition for Education (ACE) to build MakerSpaces in each of our schools, and West Elementary School received a grant in the amount of \$1,467 from Donors Choice to be used for school materials.

Steve Chinosi and Joanne Najarian shared highlights of the exciting work being done to improve school library spaces by building a library program that facilitates research as an act of creation, and designing library space that fosters innovation and collaboration. They are looking at a variety of ways to solve space issues and involving students to lead, provide innovative ideas for space, and explore the curriculum to create an Innovation Lab and Design Studio utilizing the Stanford Model of Design.

The November 2015 issue of the School Administrators Magazine includes an article on Universal Design Learning, "*Accelerating Access to the Curriculum*" written by Dr. Berman.

The AHS Girls' Swim and Dive Team will be competing in the Sectionals next weekend followed by the State Tournament and the 8th Grade Boys Travel Football Team has moved onto the Finals.

A Triboard Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10th and the agenda will revolve around preliminary revenue and expense assumptions contained in the CIP, options for planning borrowing, and use of Free Cash for initial CIP Requests.

C. Public Input - None

D. Education

1. Discussion on Polling Places for Election Year 2016

Town Clerk and Chief Election Official Larry Murphy, presented a request to increase the number of polling places in Andover in time for 2016 State and Federal Elections. Heavy voter turnout is expected throughout the year due to the Presidential Primary, Town Elections, State Primary and Nov 8th Presidential Election. Of the current nine precincts, six vote at the Collins Field House at AHS and three precincts vote at the Center at Punchard. In order to alleviate traffic problems and to better serve residents, Mr. Murphy suggestion is to establish a third polling venue at the Wood Hill Middle School Gymnasium. Precincts 4-5-6 and possibly precinct 2 would vote at Wood Hill, leaving three precincts voting at AHS, and two at The Center at Punchard, significantly reducing the traffic in and around the high school area. The third polling place also offers an opportunity for voter education for our middle school students. The request requires the approval of the School Committee.

Ted Teichert moved for the Andover School Committee to approve the request of the Andover Town Clerk to establish a polling place at the Wood Hill Middle School Gymnasium for election polling for four of the nine Town precincts. Susan McCready seconded the motion, which was unanimously voted to approve.

Ted Teichert suggested the School Department consider scheduling an in-service day on Presidential Primary Election Day.

2. DDM Update

Dr. Nancy Duclos provided an update on the District Determined Measures (DDMs). In spring of 2014, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) offered districts an overall extension of an additional year for data collection. The Program Coordinators have started the collection process with teachers to define and develop their DDM's in the spring. The middle schools have already used some measures, and the elementary schools have reading and math ready to go. We are on the path of completing the requirements resulting in an assessment system to examine student work. Next steps include scheduling a meeting of the District and the Andover Educators' Association (AEA) to determine how data will be stored, discussed, analyzed and reported.

3. Math Discussion

Dr. Nancy Duclos, Assistant Superintendent and Katherine Richard, K-12 Math Program Advisor presented recommendations for the math curriculum offerings. Dr. Berman said closing the math gap and having our student's reach calculus by the time they are seniors is an important issue they have been concerned about. One solution includes offering a summer program for rising 9th and 10th grade students. However, we are still in the process of looking at what will be done in the Middle and High School for student acceleration.

Dr. Duclos, Katherine Richard, and AHS Principal Phil Conrad have been working diligently to outline recommendations for the plan. Mrs. Richard explained that DESE set a new framework for math, which was adopted in 2011, and the standards represented a significant shift to what the previous standards were in 2000; the standards are more rigorous in content and include mathematical practice standards. One of the shifts included the 8th grade and Algebra I. After a Program Review was conducted it was realized that a new curriculum was needed and a yearlong search was launched, including curriculum investigations and piloting, and the decision was made to implement Math in Focus for Grades K-8 to provide an alignment of the standards. Last year was the first year of the Math in Focus K-8 program and the goal is to teach the standards.

At the same time, there was a lot going on at AHS with math – with many students enrolled in calculus due to the students doubling up in math in their sophomore year and providing a comprehensive year of Algebra I, and II also exceeding the standards. The order of the courses was changed to relate to the way the standards are setup. When it was determined that the high school was going to a year-long schedule, it required some changes to the math program. Students who wanted to take calculus would double-up in math to do so. One of the recommendations is to provide summer options for rising 8th graders and rising 9th graders so that students won't have to double-up on math courses. The other option is for students to test out of a class which has been common practice at AHS, or to work with an online course.

Audience Comments: 3 minute limit

Bob Pokkress, Cherrywood Circle, has observed a lower level of achievement by mathematics by even the top tier of students. In his opinion, the problem is at high school level because they are pushing students who are not ready into calculus. Mathematics requires a significant degree of

mathematical maturity that can't be compressed into too short of a period of time and by not mastering the core topics, students end up struggling when they get to the college/university level.

Sabina Dowell, 37 Lowell Street, is concerned about new measures being proposed in the short term. She would hate to see summer geometry be a long-term solution but thanked the Administration offering short-term measures and hopes that parents will be included in the discussions going forward.

Suzanne Earl, 21 Oak Street, said the middle schools, in her opinion, is a waste of three years for students who are very bright. This is a period of time when kids could learn at various abilities and she supports leveling in math.

YiCan Cao, 102 Sunset Rock Rd, said his son feels the middle school math curriculum offered is very simple and does not participate because class is too boring. Mr. Cao feels it would be better for the schools to have leveled math classes so kids can learn better and better utilize their time in school.

Caroline Clayman, 50 Hidden Road, said we are undertaking a period of transition and change which is challenging and this is a complex issue to offer a long-term solution to address the math track in Andover Public Schools, and a reasonable short term solution to help students most affected. Options are a great start and more dialogue is needed to consider other solutions. Implementing the New AHS Schedule is pre-mature until math scheduled is ironed out.

Heather Beaver, 9 York Street, said many smart children need a curriculum that looks different from the norm and she is collecting signatures to put common core on the ballot next year because it is a horrible set of standards. The current math curriculum in Grades 7 and 8 are far less rigorous than previous standards. Kids are not finding math challenging in middle school, it is a one size fits all approach and students are not getting what they need. A tracking system makes better use of a teacher's and student's time.

Beth Rasmussen, 19 Apple Blossom, finds the stop gap options very interesting but offering a class from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM leaves the remainder of the day open that could be supplemented with a Robotic Class in the afternoon and they should offer a bus to get to school and home. She urged the School Administrators to implement a plan sooner rather than later as time is of the essence – with summer camp deposits and the like due in February.

Floyd Greenwood, 22 Rose Glen Drive, said a lot of parents want to be part of the process and parents felt left out of the process when the changes were made.

Lisa Smith, 63 Maple Avenue, urges the Andover School District to find other solutions beyond summer school to address the problem; hopefully solutions that are more palatable to others. Many families can't afford the cost of summer school and some students won't take two math classes.

Annie thanked the audience for their thoughtfulness and comments.

SC Comments: Joel Blumstein does not particularly like the stop gap measures presented and asked that other options be investigated. More important is the long-term solutions which should be implemented by the fall of 2016 so we don't have to deal with another year of this situation and agreed that some aspect of leveling should be available.

Ted Teichert feels there is a large problem at the middle school that needs to be fixed. Katherine Richard, having come to the District just a few years ago, has done a great job of identifying the gaps in the curriculum and providing the greatest number of opportunities for all students. There has been a long history of iterations of math and philosophies about leveling and not leveling.

Dr. Berman appreciates everyone who came out tonight for this discussion. Clearly, we have some work to do and we are going to work quickly. A stop gap is a short term solution, although he doesn't think summer school is good for everyone (as a supplement, not as a requirement). All children need to be appropriately challenged and we need to schedule a parent forum before formulating a decision and to find a way to address gifted children as well as other students.

4. Satellite School

Principal, Philip Conrad and Rebecca D'Alise, members of the Satellite Committee, provided an update on the status of the Satellite School. The decision has been made to put the discussion of a satellite school on hold as there is no suitable space. When the new AHS Schedule is rolled out, it will include Maker-spaces, Project based-learning and piloting of Capstone programs and they will find a place in the schedule for these programs. There is room and momentum for innovation to be part of the schedule which will be more project-based and more interdisciplinary. Conversations aren't stopping, just taking a new path.

Paula Colby-Clements recognized the Satellite Committee for the enormous amount of time and effort put into this project, and appreciates the feedback behind their decision. Dr. Berman affirmed this is the right decision for now.

E. New Business

1. First Reading of 2016-2017 School Committee School Calendar

Three drafts of the school calendars developed for the 2016-2017 school years were provided to the School Committee for a first reading. It was noted that a proposed Columbus Day recess on all calendars is included because of the way the "low attendance holiday" falls in October in conjunction with the Columbus Day holiday. Therefore the Columbus Day recess would consist of these dates: Columbus Day -Monday, Oct. 10, Tuesday, Oct. 11, and Wednesday, Oct. 12-low attendance holiday).

As a result of earlier discussions with the AEA, Calendar C is being withdrawn leaving two calendars: Calendar A, which is in compliance with the AEA contract and, Calendar B which has teachers starting prior to September 1st which the AEA would need to vote prior to approval.

The second reading and vote of the calendar for FY-2016-2017 will take place at the December 3, 2016 School Committee Meeting.

F. Old Business

1. Updates - CIP FY 17

Updates pertaining to the FY CIP 17 and IT-2 were provided to the School Committee and reviewed by Paul Szymanski. Recommendations from the Town Manager for \$1.12 M have been allocated for Schools 1, 2, 3 by the Town but Dr. Berman feels the amount is not quite adequate. At the meeting of the three Chairs (FC/BOS/SC) there was an indication that the CIP should be expanded to include the facilities updates.

The Town Manager recommended \$600,000 in funding for Information Technology (IT) proposals: \$400,000 for 1:1 Technology for 5th grade students next year and \$200,000 to replace fairly dated technology equipment in the elementary schools (i.e. SmartBoards).

Site Improvements of \$585K was acceptable by Ed Ataide and the Collins Center work was pushed out as was much of the other recommendations for site improvements. The other sites that need attention will be revisited, but there may be some changes as we go through the budget process.

If the funds for the design work for the AHS Media Center don't materialize from the Governor's Budget, there is a warrant article for the entire project which can be used for the design portion if needed.

G. Consent Agenda

- 1. Warrants:** Warrants are in order
- 2. Minutes:**

Paula moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ted Teichert and voted 5-0 to approve.

II. Executive Session

At 9:07 P.M. Paula Colby-Clements moved that the Andover School Committee enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (interim Superintendent of Schools) and to not return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein. Roll call: A. Gilbert-Y, Paula Colby-Clements-Y, J. Blumstein-Y, S. McCready-Y, and T. Teichert-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary