

Andover School Committee
Minutes of School Committee Work Session of January 11, 2010
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Debra Rahmin Silberstein, Secretary, Dennis Fogue, Dick Collins, Annie Gilbert, and David Birnbach.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Claudia L. Bach, Superintendent and Susan M. Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent.

Special Guests: Deb O'Connor, Norma Villarreal, Andrew Long and Bob Willard

Salute to the Flag:

Chair Deb Silberstein called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. Mr. Collins said the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Memorandum of Understanding:

Chair Deb Silberstein opened up the meeting by talking about the MOU which was due to the DESE on January 13, 2010. The Superintendent and School Committee drafted a Press Release to be sent to the papers – the Andover Townsman and Eagle Tribune on Tuesday. Both the Chair and Secretary (Dennis Fogue) stated that they had conversations with Tom Meyers, the AEA President, in hopes of having the AEA Executive Board sign the MOU. But the AEA Executive Board voted unanimously not to sign the document stated Mr. Meyers. So the Andover District will fax and send in their MOU w/out the Union's signature which may negate any possible federal funding available to the state. Teachers present at the meeting were surprised and stated they did not know anything about the MOU and the consequences associated with not signing the MOU that the AEA Executive Board had voted on.

The SC looked at the Disclosure Forms from Robert Michaud and Mary Robb in relation to their already approved Washington DC trip.

Motion: Dennis Fogue motioned to approve the Disclosure Form from Robert Michaud and Mary Robb in relation to the approved Washington DC trip. The motion was seconded by Dick Collins, voted 5-0-0 and approved.

Chair, Deb Silberstein, congratulated Superintendent Bach for her speech at Temple Emanuel. She said that the speech was well said and applauded by those who attended on Sunday. She suggested to the Superintendent to schedule another opportunity for people to see her speech since it was not taped.

Dr. Daggett's Presentation

Each SC member gave their thoughts on the Daggett presentation. Dick Collins thought on the whole he was very good. Dennis Fogue said he heard him before and thought Daggett was provocative and liked his message about the students, and the idea of creating opportunity and letting things happen. Annie Gilbert thought he was extremely compelling and exciting. She thought at times he was overwhelming, sometime didn't say how to make changes, and disagrees with Daggett in that classrooms are hands-on and not like Daggett suggested. Both David Birnbach and Annie were also intrigued with the integrating curriculum; they liked the China example. They also agreed on the thought of identifying the top 3rd of teachers so that their ideas could be used on how to use professional development. David Birnbach stated he would like to offer Chinese, expand boundaries and new way of teaching languages now and not wait until High School to offer to students. Deb Silberstein also spoke about identifying the top 3rd tier of teachers; creating change in a simple way. The SC agreed there should be a vision defined so that it could be sold to the community and move forward.

Dr. Bach said she was glad there was a representation of teachers present at the meeting and that Dr. Nicholson and she would be meeting with the Administrative Council on Thursday for further discussions. She stated that the support system should be at the top, but that the innovation should come from the bottom up. Certain points Dr. Daggett were brought up. Such ideas as to remove certain standards; remove department heads, points that she would like to see voluntarily done so that there would be no restrictions from the Union.

The teachers at this meeting gave their thoughts on Dr. Daggett's Presentation. Both Norma Villarreal and Andrew Long said they would like to see the District Goals posted front and centered and not buried in the website. It was also stated that our system can't compete with other countries when we have a 180 school day year versus a 270 school year that others now have. Andrew would also like to see foreign languages taught differently, expanded and broken up during the year. Other thoughts were that there was enough planning time, only the core subjects are included now on the Team; losing the battle in technology but isn't sure what to do. Both were disappointed in turnout by the community for such an important presentation.

Deb O'Connor stated focus should always be on the student; doesn't feel that we actually have a vision and that it needs to be further defined. She had also hoped to see a larger outcome to Daggett's Presentation and was disappointed in that.

Dr. Nicholson showed her presentation to the SC and teachers pointing out Slides 1, 2 and 3 which indicated concrete road maps from Daggett. She continued her presentation followed by some questions and comments from the School Committee members.

Parent, Bob Willard, indicated he would like to see some MCAS testing eliminated to what it is now (for example, history). He thought teaching of reading was not challenging perhaps in the elementary but less so at the middle and high school. He believed we should teach students how to write using a computer, which could much more effective instead of using the paper, pencil style. He is a strong supporter of teach teaching which he thought wasn't very well done at the middle and high school level.

Meeting ended at 7:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Phelan, Recorder