

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Thursday, October 10, 2019

Members in Attendance: Chair, Joel Blumstein, Vice-Chair, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, Susan McCready, and Shannon Scully

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Berman, Paul Szymanski Assist. Superintendent Finance & Administration, Assist. Superintendent Teaching & Learning Sandra Trach, Asst Superintendent of Student Services Dr. Sara Stetson, and AHS Liaison Ben Roldan.

I. School Committee Regular Meeting- Call to Order

Joel Blumstein called the School Committee to order at 6:04 P.M. in the School Committee Meeting Room located in the School Administration Building.

II. Executive Session

Shannon Scully moved for the School Committee to enter into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purposes: **Purpose 3:** to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Andover Education Association and that the Chair declare that an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and to return to open session. The Chair so declared. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call vote: S. Scully-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy -Y, J. Blumstein-Y.

III. Regular Meeting resumed at 7:00 PM

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag

B. Recognitions & Communications

AHS Science teacher Lindsay L'Ecuyer accompanied two of her students from the AHS Bio-Build Club who explained their biology project, Bottles be Gone - A Bottle for the Future. The students will be competing in the Bio-Builder Synthetic Biology Projects in New York City and are seeking sources of funding to make their project a reality.

Communications by Dr. Berman:

~Thanked Director of Nursing Rita Casper for her initiative in providing flu vaccines to all staff.

~Received a message from DESE regarding a change in their tiered monitoring system and have placed Andover in a Tier Monitoring Level of 1.

~Attended a meeting at MSBA with Paul Rollins and the Town Manager to refine the list of architects for the West Elementary School Building Project and will meet next week to confirm the finalist.

~Information on attendance data from the Jewish Holidays will be provided at the next School Committee meeting.

~Received a clarification on communications from the Andover Educator's Association which indicated that the current president of the AEA, Matthew Bach, is the sole representative of the AEA; the past president, other AEA officers and other members no

longer have authority to speak on behalf of the AEA at any time.

Sandy Trach reported the following: Spring 2019 MCAS results were mailed home to parents earlier this week. Friday, October 11th is an Early Release Day, teachers will be working with the recently launched Frontline Evaluation System to assist with their goals and action plans. ALICE Training will be offered for instructional assistants, cafeteria workers, and custodians at the Collins Center.

Susan McCready met with Karla Kohl and Nicole Kieser to begin the process to cleanup and restructure the APS website to make it more accessible. Susan also reported hearing that accommodations for students observing the Jewish High Holidays were not as sensitive to students as they should have been.

Paul Murphy and Shannon Scully hosted an informal School Committee Forum on September 25th at Memorial Hall Library with one person in attendance who is concerned with the depth of math and how far a student can go.

Ben Roldan was appreciative of the H-Block activity led by Ms. Robb for her Democracy and Media Literature students. Our state representatives were invited to participate in the forum to engage students in the civic process. The Student Council is working on the EMPOWER Act to lower the voting age for local elections. Chairman Blumstein was the moderator of the panel at the forum attended by approximately 40 students. Voter registration for students age 18 was held during lunch period.

Joel Blumstein also received emails and comments from parents frustrated with the lack of follow through on accommodations for students during the Jewish Holidays.

C. Public Input

Roman Pichardo of Lincoln Circle is very concerned with the delay in response to a medical emergency (Epi-pen) at one of the schools. Dr. Berman will check on the instance of the medical emergency.

D. Response to Public Input

None

E. Education

1. School Start Time Report

The Chair thanked everyone who submitted comments on potential changes to School Start Times (SST). The School Committee is still in the information gathering stage with no decision or deliberations made to date. The Committee is charged with doing what is best for the greatest number of children.

Shannon Scully developed a list of frequently asked questions in response to inquiries that arose at the SST forum that will be posted to the school website. The focus of the SST initiative (started in May 2018) was to allow adolescents to get more sleep to improve their physical and mental health and academic performance. There have been regular meetings of

the School Start Time Working Group under the guidance of Sandy Trach and several discussion forums and PTO/PAC meetings at individual schools.

A community SST forum will be held on October 16th. Informal School Committee forums will be held on October 29th and November 16th and the issue will be on the agenda of the October 24th and November 7th School Committee meetings. Additional information can be found on the APS Website schoolstarttimes@andoverma.us.

Sandy Trach provided an update on School Start Time (SST) efforts and where they are in the process. SST will be an agenda item for the next few School Committee meetings in preparation for the potential vote on November 21st. Transportation is a large component of the study. An RFP was generated for an in-district student transportation routing analysis and review of route scenarios and options. The contract was awarded to Edulog Logistics, Inc, Missoula, MT. Andover anticipates receiving an in-district analysis summary from Edulog at the end of October. The School Committee expects to vote on the change to school start time at the end of November.

Public Comments:

Amelia Condon, Coventry Lane, a Grade 6 student at DMS, is in favor of switching school start times; her bus pickup is at 6:45 am.

Alison Fecht, 66 Burnham Road, spoke about the significant changes the flip option will have on families with an increased length of the day for elementary students. Changing the start time is not reasonable and benefits only one school level (secondary). Many other school districts achieved start time without any compromise to the elementary start times.

Leila Brickman, Locke Street, has a Gr 7 Student at DMS and agrees with changing times for middle school to provide students with an extra hour of sleep.

Kerry Costello (former AEA president) served on the SST Committee and spoke about the factors taken under consideration by the SST Committee. She believes the bussing component is critical. How would the extra cost for bussing affect the school budget and when might the School Committee make a final decision?

Sarah Sudman-Farese, Cassimere Street, has two children in Grade 1 and a preschool child. She is concerned with the shift time and the affect it will have on scheduling the 15 hours per week of physical therapy for their autistic child. It would be difficult to change their schedule. Another parent was also concerned about the effect of scheduling her child's ABA therapy; a shift would make it almost impossible to allow for the time needed for their therapy.

F. Continuing Business

1. MCAS Analysis

Sandy Trach and Hannah Tolla have worked extensively on the MCAS analysis presentation and discussed with school principals at the SAT meetings. Hannah provided a report on the Spring 2019 MCAS and Accountability Results and distributed a hand-out. The presentation is available on the APS website <http://www.aps1.net/893/presentations> and

information on the Massachusetts DESE School and District Profiles at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>.

Congratulations to High Plain High Elementary and South School who were recognized as Schools of Recognition: High Plain for high growth and exceeding targets and South School for high achievement.

Elementary MCAS ELA/Students with Disabilities

The MCAS report showed reading gains in students with disabilities at the elementary level. Changes in scores have continued to improve and can be credited to the strategies implemented by the Student Services Team along with the major investment by Andover in literacy.

One should look at the data on what we are doing well, not at the deficits. Our goal is to focus on what structures we have in place for children and how to support their strengths. Collective efforts of the District will provide help for our economically disadvantaged students and Hispanic/Latino students. The Growth Instrument is a testament to the several years of work and support provided to the schools/students. Students at all levels responded well and the attendance piece has improved.

These are diagnostic tools to evaluate what lessons we can learn to better support our students. Asset based focus is key and data from NWEA assessments will benefit our students. There are plans to address areas of growth and to talk with students and parents about how we are using these assessments.

2. October 1 Enrollment Preliminary Report

A preliminary October 1 Enrollment Report shows a decrease from last year of 118 students at this time. Andover is under in its enrollment projections with major changes in kindergarten (this year class of 340 vs 406+ class last year). There is a decrease in students at the Middle School level but enrollment is consistent at the High School. Our out-of-District students have decreased from 97 to 87 students which supports the data that our internal programs are working. The average class size at the elementary level is in the 19-22 range which is a great improvement over the 2015 class sizes of 22-24. The Enrollment Report will be finalized by the Information Technology Department after all of the school's data is received.

G. New Business

1. All Day Kindergarten Funding

After several years of effort to decrease tuition for All Day Kindergarten, Andover is finally on a path towards eliminating tuition in the 2020-2021 school year by using the balance in the ADK revolving fund in FY21 and, in subsequent years, using the additional Chapter 70 Aid that will result from having all kindergarten students counted as full-day students under the Foundation Budget formula. This proposal for eliminating tuition for Full Day Kindergarten can be accomplished goal at no cost to the taxpayer was explained. The School Committee feels very good about supporting this plan and doing the right thing for the community.

2. **SC Approval: Eye-to-Eye Stipends**

The AEA Stipend Committee met on September 18, 2019 and approved two advisor stipend positions: one for the high school and one for the middle school. The \$2,400 stipend is being paid through a grant this year for each of the advisors.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Eye-to-Eye Chapter Advisor Stipend as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy and voted 5-0 to approve.

Superintendent Goals – First Reading

A discussion on the Superintendent's goals was led by the Chair in conjunction with the Superintendent. Joel said the goals are ambitious and asked the other Committee members if they have any changes to make to any of the seven major goals: strategic plan, facilities, literacy, data analysis, communications, budget, and school start times.

Paul Murphy would like to see more improvement in the low income and Latino MCAS numbers, and as focus areas for next year. Susan McCready said it is the Superintendent's team who are working with the goals and important to have a conversation if goal(s) become too aggressive for the team/staff. One of the goals she is concerned with is having report changes to MAP. Susan would like there to be an equal focus on math as much as reading; we have reading specialists, but we do not have math specialists.

H. Consent Agenda

1. Grants/Donations to Andover Public Schools N/A
2. Minutes N/A

I. Adjournment

At 9:35 P.M. on a motion by Paul Murphy seconded by Susan McCready, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting of October 10, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo

Recording Secretary

Documents: MCAS Analysis

In-District Transportation Routing Analysis

Preliminary Enrollment & Elementary Class Size Chart