

Andover School Committee
Thursday, March 3, 2022
School Committee Room

Participants from SC: Chair Susan McCready, Vice Chair Lauren Conoscenti, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy and Shannon Scully

Others Participating: Superintendent Dr. Magda Parvey, Asst. Superintendents: Dr. Julie Riley, Dr. Sara Stetson and Paul Szymanski.

I. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Susan McCready called to order the meeting of the Andover School Committee at 6PM in the School Committee Room and the Committee immediately voted to meet in Executive Session.

II. Executive Session

Ms. Scully moved for the School Committee to meet in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A, section 21(a) for the following purposes: Purpose (2) to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, namely Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Administration; Purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with unionized personnel, namely the Andover Assistants and (AEA) Unit A because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. Motion seconded by Ms. Spruce. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P.Murphy-Y, S.Scully-Y, S.McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00PM.

A. Resume Regular SC Meeting

At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair asked for everyone's cooperation because there were technical difficulties (microphones weren't properly working).

Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag – 7:15PM

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Recognitions/Communications

Dr. Parvey introduced Greg Hurley, new Social Studies Coordinator, who comes from Malden, where he served as Director of Humanities including Art, World Languages, and Music. Mr. Hurley thanked the Committee, and said he has enjoyed meeting all the faculty, staff and students. He looks forward in helping students explore the world in the world we live in now in 2022. Dr. Parvey also introduced Thomas Howard, Exec. Director of HR who began at APS on January 3, 2022. Mr. Howard previous work was in the Sheriff's office.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent reported on her activities of the past week that included a visit to Sanborn school during the district's week in their participation of *Read for A Better World* program through a Cummings Foundation Grant. She enjoyed meeting native Andover author, Leah Henderson, who attended South, Doherty Middle and Phillips Academy schools. She now lives in Washington DC. Leah spoke to 5th graders about striving towards their goals and about her travels to over 62 countries. Dr. Parvey also spoke about the West Elementary/Shawsheen Virtual Staff Forum held on Tuesday and a SAT meeting with principals on Wednesday, as well as her upcoming visit to AHS with the new Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Administration, Keith Taverna, who will accompany her on Friday. To conclude her report, Dr. Parvey spoke of the administrators who participated in the English Asset Walk session with the Institute for Learning and the kindergarten teachers learning how to analyze the Benchmark Assessment System, which measures accuracy, fluency and comprehension in increasingly complex texts.

Dr. Riley thanked the Cummings Grant Foundation for the funds which allowed the district to put together the *Read for A Better World* program in which they hosted 4 authors in various schools during the last 2 weeks. She met today with the librarians, DLCs and the AHS leaderships team. A shout out to students who

are working on their robotics projects for their upcoming competitions. She also thanked all the teachers who are supporting this work.

Ms. Spruce gave an update on the annual English Learners Parents Advisory Council (ELPAC) meeting on Monday. They're looking for ways to engage with the Community and bring more English learner families into the group. She will support their efforts.

Mr. Murphy reminded people of the Candidates forum which will be sponsored by Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) on Thurs, March 10th at 7PM.

Ms. Conoscenti announced that the South Elementary Cooperative Theater will be performing Madagascar Jr. at West Middle Auditorium on March 11-13th; Friday, Saturday at 7PM and Sunday at 1PM.

AHS SGA Representative Justin Jin stated that AHS will be hosting their annual talent show this weekend at 7PM and he will host the show.

Ms. McCready reminded people of the upcoming Tri Board meeting which will be held at Memorial Hall Library on Wednesday, March 9th at 7PM. She also gave a shout out to the AHS environmental class and Capstone students who recently visited West Elementary School with community members, Steve Fink and West Elementary Chair, Joel Blumstein. These student interns are giving their insights to particulars of the West Elementary school building project. Mr. Fink and Mr. Blumstein are volunteering their time to these interns.

Public Input:

A number of Andover Assistants attended the meeting and spoke at Public Input. They stated that morale is at rock bottom because they have worked without a contract for 2 years. They also kept making the same statement that "they accept the Fact Finder report in its entirety even though they didn't get everything they wanted." Matt Bach, President of the Andover Educators Association, said that all educators are fully behind the Andover Assistants unit.

Ms. McCready responded that the Committee will continue to negotiate with the Andover Assistants during the upcoming negotiations this week. She also pointed out that there is a statement on the website from the Committee.

C. New Business

1. Budget Transfer Request (Asst. Superintendent for Finance/Administration)

Mr. Szymanski reminded members that a few weeks back the district implemented the electronic purchase orders. With the new electronic PO system, a purchase order can't be processed without the actual funds in the account. This past week the Business Office authorized the processing of purchase orders for critical custodial equipment and supplies in advance of a pending snow event. Administrative intervention was needed since there was a negative balance in the Custodial Services (411) expense account. After reviewing the status of all operating budget expense accounts, Mr. Szymanski and Janet, our staff accountant, concluded that a transfer of unencumbered funds from the salary account to offset negative general expense balances was necessary at this time. This amount should suffice through the month of May. The request is consistent with SC policy DBJ, Budget Transfer Authority. Ms. Spruce asked if this would be a recurring problem. Mr. Szymanski responded that discretionary funds can be used.

Mr. Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the request from the Business Office and recommended by the Superintendent to transfer unencumbered funds in the amount of \$500,000 from the salary account to the general expense account to offset negative general expense balances as needed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Spruce. Motion passes 5-0.

D. Continuing Business

1. Introduction/Vote: Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration

The Chair stated that she negotiated a contract with the incoming Asst. Superintendent of Finance and Administration, Keith Taverna, as voted by the SC on February 23, 2022. Mr. Howard introduced Mr. Taverna with a short summary of his current and past employment history which highlighted his 13 years at Danvers Public Schools in the same job capacity. He continued stating Mr. Taverna will begin work at APS on June 7, 2022 through June 30, 2022 at a prorated salary of \$11,586 for this first period and then at the stated salary of \$168,000 for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025.

Ms. Scully thanked Mr. Taverna for going through the rigorous and comprehensive process and accepting the offer of employment. Dr. Parvey echoed the sentiments and welcomed Mr. Taverna.

Ms. Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve and enter into an employment agreement with Keith Taverna to serve as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration effective June 7, 2022 through June 30, 2025 at the budgeted prorated salary of \$11,586 for the first contract period June 7, 2022 through June 30, 2022 and at the budgeted salary of \$168,000 for the second contract period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 with salary adjustments for the third and fourth contract periods to be determined per the agreement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murphy. Motion passes 5-0.

Ms. Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to authorize the Chair to sign the employment agreement with Keith Taverna to serve as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration on behalf of the Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murphy. Motion passes 5-0.

Mr. Taverna thanked the Committee for hiring him and for going through the process. He looks forward to hitting the ground running.

2. Discussions & Second Reading: EBCFA Face Coverings SC Policy

Ms. McCready briefly recapped the last meeting of February 3, 2022. Dr. Parvey made a recommendation of lifting the mask requirement in consultation with both the Town's Public Health Director and APS Nurse Director and making mask optional as of March 7th based on data. The Committee conducted a first reading of Policy EBCFA on February 3rd, 2022 and consistent with the process, after receiving public feedback, tonight the Committee will conduct its second reading and keep or change the existing policy. A copy of the proposed policy is available with tonight's SC agenda on the website. The policy subcommittee, Tracey Spruce and Susan McCready, met to discuss the proposed changes to the policy this week. She thanked everyone who gave their feedback.

The Superintendent thanked the APS Nursing Director, Rita Casper and Town Asst. Director of Public Health Amy Ewing for being present at the meeting in her [presentation](#) with her recommendation. There aren't substantive changes, just a minor tweak to align with the Town's AYS policy to make this mask optional on March 4, 2022.

Ms. Spruce spoke of the changes through the redlined document attached to the agenda. They tried to consolidate repetitive language. Added to the policy were types of masks KN95, KF95 as examples of compliant masks; changed where SC delegates authority to Superintendent to invoke or rescind changes to mask policy based on health/safety concerns and data in consultation with Nursing Director and Director of Public Health, and that SC should be notified of this decisions and the basis of such decision; added language that Superintendent can make the decision on a district, school or event/program basis; removed the masks requirement on buses and changed the requirement to follow whatever the federal or state mandate may be at the time; added language on allowing individual faculty to request masks for their own individual classrooms – but not mandated. By delegating the authority to the Superintendent, it gives some flexibility to this policy and makes it an operational decision at this point. The Chair also said that the great communication and protocols are part of the partnership with the Superintendent.

Both, Ms. Casper and Ms. Ewing, responded that the main objective should be to have individuals wear masks recommended by CDC, DPH and masks which can be tolerated. It is important that it is comfortable, properly fits well and a new daily, fresh mask. The guidance can change over time so it should be kept simple.

The Chair also reminded people that this is an individual choice so we should respect whatever choice that is for each person. AHS Senior student, Jeffrey Connors, 24 Sheridan Road, Andover: He believes that there is a substantial number of students who will retain wearing masks and appreciate the choice. He said students are part of a larger community whose choice may impact others in the community who may not be as healthy. He would encourage SC to include their policy and provide appropriate masks for those students who choose to wear masks. AHS SGA Representative, Justin Jin said he trust the health experts, he feels comfortable with a mask optional policy. He also appreciates the fact that Dr. Parvey has the authority to change the mask policy. Supports taking the step and making masks optional. Ms. Casper told the Committee she would research the mask request before deciding whether this is a feasible solution.

Rachel Baimes, 20 Corinthian Way asked the Committee how faculty requests would be handled and if they could be directed to the parents rather than the student. She was concerned that the elementary students would be hard pressed to decline a request. Ms. McCready said that the Committee would let the Superintendent handle that operational decision. Dr. Parvey will work with the Principals on how best to develop a process for this.

Rhonda Musikar Rosner asked if the faculty member would be required to disclose why they are requesting students wear masks. She feels students shouldn't be put on the spot and that the district should provide students or staff KN95 masks if needed. Ms. Scully responded that the policy provides an opportunity for the request, but it is not mandated. Mr. Jin felt that in his experience, he thought that teachers are very understanding and respectful of their students. Mr. Connors stated he would accommodate anyone's mask requests if asked.

Mr. Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve revisions to Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings as presented and amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Spruce. Motion passes 5-0.

E. Consent Agenda

1. **Grants/Donations to District** – None to report
2. **SC Meeting Minutes** – January 11, 2022, January 13, 2022 and January 27, 2022

Mr. Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Conoscenti. Motion passes 5-0.

F. Adjournment

Mr. Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adjourn the meeting of Thursday, March 3, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Conoscenti. Motion passes 5-0.