

ANDOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 2, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. McCready, Chair
L. Conoscenti
E. DiCesaro
T. Spruce, Vice Chair
S. Wright

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sophia Miele, SGA student representative
OTHERS PRESENT: M. Parvey, Superintendent
K. Taverna, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration
J. Riley, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute the Flag

Ms. McCready, Chair, called the Regular Meeting of the School Committee of February 2, 2023, to order at 7:30pm in the School Committee Conference Room.

A. Recognitions/Communications

Dr. Parvey reviewed her school visits including South Elementary where she attended the School Council meeting with parents, and West Elementary where she sat in on a 2nd grade math class.

Office hours were held January 25th in person and there was a good turnout of parents and Dr. Parvey reviewed the feedback she received. February 25th is the next office hour in the School Committee Room. Drop-Ins with Staff are continuing with visits to Bancroft, Andover High School, West Middle School, Sanborn Elementary, and Wood Hill Middle School. This is an opportunity to connect directly with staff in their school building and staff has been very open to conversations. Dr. Parvey shared some thoughts and ideas she has received including under-representation of students of color in high level classes, return of late buses, revision of curriculum, new elementary strings program is a success, they appreciate the class sizes and next steps for SEL.

Administrative Update included M.A.S.S. Mid-Winter Meeting where they discussed minimizing politics and polarizing topics in the classrooms. Andover High School Building Committee met on January 26th and Teacher Evaluation Training took place on January 31st. The bi-weekly meeting of the Andover High School Building Committee met January 31st and the Adaptive Leadership Network Meeting for equity training met February 1st.

Dr. Riley informed the School Committee that the Middle School teams across the district worked with a consultant from NELMS to identify goals for the Middle School schedule. Education Evaluation Training – RIBAS Associates is ongoing, supporting the Superintendent goal for instructional leadership. Data Wise District and Coaching Training was held January 9-13th. District wide data wise team training took place January 26th.

Mr. Taverna informed the School Committee that the bi-weekly of the Andover High School Building Committee included a review of landscaping concepts and educational and the space template were reviewed. West Elementary steel beams are going in. He thanked the custodians and DPW for their work during the winter months.

Ms. DiCesaro attended the community high school tour on January 26th, and the SEPAC meeting with Dr. Ryan Fielding, who did a presentation. The next SEPAC meeting is scheduled for February 7th.

Ms. Spruce informed the School Committee that there is legislation pending to continue free meals for students which is co-sponsored by our state representatives. She encouraged the community to reach out to our representatives in support of this legislation. She asked the School Committee to consider sending a letter of support, to be discussed at a future meeting.

Dr. Conoscenti also attended the Andover High School Building Committee meeting, and the next informal community forum will be February 7th at Memorial Hall Library with the design firm in attendance. At the last meeting, the Committee discussed the designs with and without a parking structure, athletic fields, and options for the Collins Center. On January 25th the informal forum with the School Committee was held with Ms. DiCesaro and the next will be held February 28th virtually.

Mr. Wright attended the musical performance at Bancroft. He thanked the custodians who turned the cafeteria around in 30 minutes to get ready for the performance.

Ms. McCready thanked Gilbaine and Nicole for the time lapse video of the construction at West Elementary/Shawsheen Preschool. She also thanked the Guidance Department for hosting Junior family sessions on college admissions. This is excellent for families.

B. Public Input – Kerry Costello thanked the School Committee for keeping class sizes down because this helps with the mental and emotional needs. She also offered suggestions to the job description for the Academic Math Coach.

C. Response to Public Input – None.

D. Education

1. Mental and Health Behavioral Update: Dr. Ryan Fielding, Clinical Director –

Last year's focus was on "Re-entry", coming back from hybrid and remote learning, reacclimating to school. Data was collected regarding mental and behavioral health challenges. This year's focus is "Recalibration". This is in line with the Superintendent's goal for a District SEL Plan including mental health support and SEL foundation. Developmentally appropriate stress response and functional impairment in expected situations was reviewed and programs discussed. APS Reflection and Development work was discussed. This includes Professional Development for both general and mental health staff, T3 programming expansion of staffing and program capacity at elementary and high school branches and developing a "playbook" with ESS. Self-Reporting universal screening from students who took the universal assessment was discussed. Universal Assessment slides were presented with grade-based comparison and same cohort comparison for grades 8-12. The intensity of self-reporting has declined from last spring. We have good staff and programming in place. Continued support of SEL planning and the roll out of RULER is important. Work continues on the "playbook" to maintain current universal assessment practices. Program growth was reviewed including expanding T3, TLC added for students who have been out for an extended period of time, and SSP, student support program. Mr. Wight asked about the difference between CBT and DBT. Dr. Fielding responded that CBT is therapy linking thought processes with how it manifests behaviorally, not

why behavior occurs, but how they think about things. DBT is emotional regulation and how to manage emotional reactivity.

Dr. Fielding added that they are noticing emotional and functional needs. The students are describing it as feeling stressed without being able to anchor the stress. It is “distress in empty space”, discomfort with time not externally occupied.

- 2. Program of Studies and Class Size Report – Aixa deKelley, Director of Guidance and Caitlin Brown, AHS Principal** – Aixa deKelley stated that the information regarding dual enrollment with Merrimack College has been removed because scheduling does not allow the time. The MA State Seal of Biliteracy was added. Digital Learning and Business is redescribed with the goals of the department reviewed and new standards. Entrepreneurship course was redescribed, Intro to Business Finance is a new course added, Web Game & Design is redescribed, and Novel Imagineering is a new course offered. ELE is redescribed to align with new language standards. English Language Reading and Writing is a new course for multilingual learners new to English language. There are now 24 English learners at AHS. Songwriting is redescribed, Philharmonic Orchestra is a new after school program and Art and Design Drawing/2D Design/3D Design is redescribed. Intro to Computer Science is redescribed, and Latin American Cinema is a new class offered.

Ms. DiCesaro moved that the Andover School Committee approve the 2023-2024 Andover High School Program of Studies as presented, it was seconded by Dr. Conoscenti and unanimously approved.

Class Size Report was presented based on data collected October 1, 2023. The enrollment has increased by 23 students to date. The average class size is 21.2 students. Aixa deKelley reviewed the various major courses with the average class size. Dual enrollment opportunities were reviewed with area community colleges and Greater Lawrence Technical School. Other additional learning opportunities were reviewed. Global Pathway Endorsement was reviewed and the number of students eligible in the senior and junior classes has declined due to COVID.

E. Continued Business

- 1. District Strategic Plan: Mission, Core Values, Vision** – The survey results were presented to the School Committee at a previous meeting. Ms. McCready reminded the Committee that this is a dynamic document and applies to everyone in the APS community. Dr. Conoscenti asked if there was a plan for reviewing it or updating it. Dr. Parvey responded that as it needs to be changed or the community desires change it will be updated.

Mission –

Ms. DiCesaro stated that people are saying that academics is missing from the mission. Discussion regarding adding education language. Ms. Spruce added that educating students is our core purpose and is implied. Students thriving as a whole student, not just academically is also our purpose. Discussion followed regarding different rewording of the Mission to add education into the statement. Frank McCall suggested

changing prepare to educate and not use excellence in education. Kerry Costello added that excellence is overused and puts pressure on the students.

Discussion followed regarding resiliency and the feedback received that the use of this word could be problematic for diverse groups. It was discussed that resilience is for every group, any student's ability to overcome and be successful and accessibility for all students.

Core Values – Sophia Miele stated that students see the word excellence as applying to a specific group of students, not everyone. Ms. Spruce added that the School Committee has the same reaction but could not find a comparable word. Discussion regarding synonyms for excellence and comments from the feedback took place. Ms. DiCesaro suggested adding inclusiveness in partnership. The use of growth and perseverance was discussed instead of excellence. Ms. Spruce added that growth is a core value instead of excellence. The meaning of growth was discussed. Discussion followed regarding the use of me/my. The discussion was tabled to a future meeting.

Vision – Ms. McCready stated that the word stakeholders was not liked in the feedback. Use partner instead of stakeholders. Dr. Conoscenti suggested removing “choice” so it will read, “We are the best place to learn”. Ms. Spruce added that the fine arts and humanities are not reflected. Sophia Miele stated that the students want to see the word creativity. It was agreed to add “creative pursuits” to the second bullet point.

Dr. Parvey stated that equity, diversity, and inclusivity should be added because it is important work we are doing. Discussion followed regarding the use of unified and cohesive. Frank McCall suggested “We are diverse, yet cohesive, collaborative, aligned and energized.” We are diverse in so many ways. It was agreed to change align to connected. “We are diverse, yet cohesive, collaborative, connected and energized”. Mr. Taverna added that all students and staff and other learners are lifelong learners. Discussion followed regarding rewording the vision statement. It was agreed to table to a future meeting.

2. Policies First Reading Fiscal Management Updates. Tabled.

F. New Business

1. Financials – December. Mr. Taverna reviewed the December financials and the changes in non-salary expenditures. Ms. McCready asked about “other student activities”. Mr. Taverna responded that it is student activity accounts, money raised by students for students.

G. Consent Agenda

1. DESE grant \$40,000 for genocide education grant.
2. DESE grant \$81,760.00 for math acceleration program.
3. Minutes from November 3, 2022, Workshop and Meeting; and January 5, 2023.

A motion to move the Andover School Committee to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Dr. Conoscenti, seconded by Ms. DiCesaro and unanimously approved 5-0.

A motion was made to adjourn the Andover School Committee meeting at 10:32pm by Ms. Spruce, seconded by Mr. Wright and unanimously approved 5-0.

Submitted By: _____ Approved _____
Lynn Viselli, Recording Secretary Date

Per the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the following is a list of documents that were either distributed to the Andover School Committee before the meeting in the packet or at the meeting.

1. Agenda
2. Mental and Health Behavioral Update
3. Program of Studies and Class Size Report
4. December Financials
5. Consent Agenda