

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, April 9, 2009

Minutes

Voted and approved May 14, 2009

Present: Chairman Athey and members Aubin, Doyle, Eastman, and Mayor Forgey. Mr. Lunt arrived at 6:26 p.m. Also present: Superintendent Hollins, Principal Schell, Superintendent Lane from Franklin Technical School, members of the public, faculty, and press.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call: With a quorum present, Chairman Athey called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes: Sixteen (16) sets of draft minutes were on the schedule for adoption. **Motion by Aubin; 2nd Doyle: To accept the minutes as listed.** Comment was to be sure to include and attach the letter read into the record. Pass. Unanimous.

Minutes listed and now approved: December 3, 2008; December 11, 2008; January 8, 2009; January 12, 2009; January 14, 2009; February 10, 2009; February 12, 2009 (Executive Session); February 14, 2009; February 26, 2009 (budget hearing); February 26, 2009 (budget work session); March 12, 2009; March 26, 2009; March 31, 2009; joint meetings with Gill-Montague of December 8th and January 26th; and an all Franklin County school committee meeting on January 6, 2009.

Committee member Lunt arrived at 6:26 p.m.

3. Financial Report: Grant Funds & Recovery. Supt. Hollins shared information Regarding FY08 end-of-year grant balances. \$182,693 was returned to the state and \$106,090 was subsequently reclaimed as is the process. Reasons she has received for unused end-of-year grant funds include 1) unused funds by private schools included in the grant, 2) early resignations of teachers, 3) no administrators in place what could have been last summer's teaching training seminars, and 4) some processing materials were not available until February. Mr. Aubin asked about patterns of unused funds from prior years.
4. Communications: There was no public comment.
5. Superintendent's Report and Recommendations: The report mentioned upcoming meetings with the public to share information and ideas regarding the re-opening of Four Corners, library literacy centers and discovery science centers, and virtual curriculum use/ Smartboard technology. Mr. Aubin was concerned that the school

committee has not yet taken a policy position on a virtual school or discovery centers for elementary schools. Chairman Athey thought it was fine to continue with information. Hollins clarified that virtual courses and school were listed as initiatives in the budget materials.

6. Unfinished business.

K-3 Achievement & MCAS Testing Principal Joan Schell presented. The goal this year has been acceleration and advancement of all students at all levels. Reviewing school progress, the schools have kept structures and programs faculty thought were working well and innovations and changes have been made in areas where needs were identified. Although the September 2008 startup was quite difficult, all teachers were teaching using research-based programs on the first day of school.

Related to achievement and monitoring student learning, the elementary schools have kept: 1) Team Time (30 min at FS and 45 min at Newton (a forum for looking at data and planning); 2) coaching and mentoring, 3) literacy coordinators as FS and Newton, 4) a math coordinator K-5 (grant). New initiatives include: 1) focus on every child as an individual, 2) the Accelerated Reader program for all the students K-5, 3) the First in Math program for all children K-5.

She explained recent training she has received on using data to improve instruction and how to focus school gains in this way. Regarding MCAS, a ½-day in September is used to review results (from the prior spring testing). All the results are color coded for easy viewing of results. Elementary schools also monitor achievement using chapter tests and a special reading fluency risk assessment (DIBELS). Teachers provide ongoing progress monitoring based on need—either 2xmonth, 1x month, or more frequently.

The superintendent explained that even with a late start, structures were in place from September for improving achievement: goals in all administrative contracts, library technology initiatives, etc. She said there is interest nationally in moving from group tests such as MCAS to individual progress monitoring.

7:30 p.m. Mr. Aubin left.

Member Doyle mentioned support for the idea of having an individual IEP or plan for each student.

Franklin County Technical School: Reviewing the 1974 agreement was on the agenda and Franklin Tech administrators Lane (superintendent) and Cohen (principal) joined the discussion. They responded to questions such as: how the administration works, how they recruit, details about the formula used, and Section VII from the 1975 Agreement. The tech school is still using enrollment capacity of 600 in their formula even though this is no longer reflective of numbers of students. The formula has never been modified to reflect choice and so Greenfield's computation is based on all residents including choiced out

students. Hollins said this seems a problem as the upward moving classes have approximately 100 students and the recruitment formula was based on 250-300 students per class. There was a request for open-minded discussion about this topic since all the schools are under enrollment pressure. The visiting administrators said the concerns were valid.

7. New Business

a. Grade 8 Policy—8th-Grade Taking High School Courses

A proposed policy was read into the record (attached).

Following explanation, there was support for the policy and a request for the high school catalogue of courses for 2009-2010 to be finalized and distributed.

b. Request to Greenfield's capital Borrowing Committee

The Superintendent discussed capital borrowing discussions taking place.

Motion by Athey; 2nd Doyle: Given that the Greenfield School Committee has previously approved the re-opening of the Four Corners School and has voted to support for K-12 education services in Greenfield, to request the Capital Borrowing also prioritize these two schools in its capital borrowing program. Mayor Forgey clarified that capital borrowing is also looking at costs of redesigning GHS for 8th grade students and also has a borrowing article related to technology for the schools. **Passed: Unanimous** of 5 members present.

Members then discussed the School Building Authority and whether or not they will ever become involved supporting Greenfield's facility priorities for schools. The mayor said that immediate needs of the schools have to be addressed. Mr. Eastman said it is clear that the ESCO initiative has to be handled by the town side of government and that there is great interest in ESCO projects.

8. Adjournment: Motion by Mayor Forgey; 2nd Eastman. To adjourn.
Passed. Unanimous. 9:05 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Hollins

Next Topics: 2009-2010 Calendar
Virtual Curriculum and Virtual School