

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, December 14, 2016
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 02.08.17**

Present: Don Alexander (DA); Timothy Farrell (TF); Beth Pratt, Assistant Superintendent (BP); Susan Hollins (SH); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Nathaniel Tripp (NT); Cameron Ward (CW). **Absent:** None

Also present: Howard Barber, GPS Business Manager; Dianne Ellis, Director of Pupil Services; GHS Student Representative Amy O'Sullivan; Jake Toomey, Principal, Discovery School at Four Corners; other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (DA, TF, SH, WM, AN, NT, CW), Chair Farrell opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

WM made a motion to consider item III (Public Comment) and V.B. Discovery School Innovation Project next. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Student Report

Amy O'Sullivan reported on activities at GHS including community service (Adopt a Family); planning for French Club spring trip to Montreal; winter sports. Sarah O'Sullivan received superintendent's award for academic excellence.

III. Public Comment

TF explained timing of proposed vote on Discovery School at Four Corners: School Committee must vote every five years to continue innovation program. Not connected to budget shortfall.

Speaking in support of the Discovery School at Four Corners' innovation designation, theme-based curriculum, staff, and parent involvement were:

Bharati Winston, 2nd grade teacher, co-chair of School Council

Jacki Pinger, 4th grade teacher

Andrew Lippman, Technology Specialist

Eliza Cavanaugh, parent, School Council member, PTO president, school volunteer

Sarah Ahearn Bellemare, parent and Four Corners alumnae

Stephanie Allen, parent

Pete Brown, parent

Allison Henry, parent

Speaking re: Math & Science Academy move to GMS:

Caitlin von Schmidt, parent, spoke against school-within-a-school model for MSA as creating "caste system"; desire for opportunities for all students

Adelle Ferreira, parent, shared concerns about changes at MSA: "watered-down" curriculum; loss of electives, arts, extended learning time; punitive discipline, rules. Some parents want shorter-day option for middle schoolers.

Lea Appel, parent, questioned lack of school council at GMS; requested better communication, transparency.

V. Business

B. Discovery School Innovation Project

Jake Toomey, Principal, summarized:

- history of Four Corners' innovation status
- school's growth
- Mass. law allowing innovation schools;
- Four Corners' thematic curriculum; evening events; community partnerships (Greening Greenfield, Just Roots Community Farm); enrichment opportunities; time for staff collaboration (paid stipend for 5 days beyond contract)
- Proposed 5-year plan adding specialist teachers to collaboration time; collaboration days reduced from 5 to 3 days to avoid budget increase.

Discussion:

- Concerns re: GEA. Toomey clarified that staff has formally approved 3 workdays beyond contract; innovation schools do not need union permission.
- Toomey summarized goals, how outcomes are measured. Level I school.
- No grants currently support innovation program.
- All 3 elementary schools have distinct cultures, strong parent engagement.

SH moved to reauthorize the Discovery School at Four Corners for an additional 5 years from July 1, 2016 to July 31, 2021, and to accept the innovation plan presented as a draft, to be finalized by April 2017. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes

WM moved to approve draft minutes of Nov. 9, 2016. AN 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Reports

A. Superintendent Report

Assistant Superintendent Beth Pratt highlighted her written report:

- Supt. Harper back part-time from parenting leave
- Developing budgets with principals

C. Subcommittees

1. Budget, Finance & Negotiations Subcommittee

AN reported that Subcte is focusing on FY17 budget, closing budget gap, preparations for FY18 budget. Negotiations ongoing.

2. Policy & Curriculum Subcommittee

SH reported that Subcte completing review of community use of school facilities policy; working on policies re: life-threatening allergy, revolving funds. Near completion of finance/governing policies. Will next consider education/instruction policies, philosophical guidelines about celebration, innovation.

3. Personnel Subcommittee

NT reported that the Subcte continues work on reviewing contracts, superintendent evaluation. Recommends goals of School Cte be discussed by full Cte.

V. Business

A. NEASC Update

Karin Patenaude, GHS Acting Principal, Shiobhan Fitzgerald, GHS Guidance Counselor, and Jessica Pollock, GHS Librarian, summarized NEASC 2012-2014 self-evaluation and 2015 site visit. NEASC "voted unanimously to remove from warning" and acknowledged "significant progress." Full report available on school website.

NEASC positive review cited new building, school culture, staff's dedication, 5-year plan to review/develop curriculum; School Council; professional development on Safe Schools/LGBTQ, restorative justice, use of data; new positions of assistant supt. and school adjustment counselor. Developing alternative education program

Discussion:

- GHS to submit report to NEASC March 2017. Request by School Cte to review report in February, before submission.
- NEASC issues were teacher-focused. GHS had previously done significant student-focused work.
- NEASC recommendations requiring staffing/funding: technology (teachers' computers), continuing electives
- Thanks to Donna Woodcock for shepherding initial NEASC process
- Developing programs for GHS students to earn Greenfield Community College credit, including AP classes, math/English entry exams and remediation. Using block grant funds to develop. Title I can fund dual enrollment tuition.
- Increase use of virtual school courses

D. Vote on Supplemental request to the Mayor

AN moved that the School Committee reaffirms its spring 2016 request for appropriation of \$250,000 for out-of-district expenses. Further, we request an additional \$137,060 to replace funds previously awarded through circuit-breaker funds. NT 2nd. Friendly amendment changed the motion to: **School Committee reaffirms its spring 2016 request for appropriation of \$250,000 for out-of-district expenses. Further, we request an additional \$137,060 which was included in the FY17 budget and inadvertently moved by the Department of Revenue to free cash.**

Discussion:

\$137,060 circuit-breaker funds in free cash due to accounting error. Was planned for, budgeted. \$250K is not about FY18 budget of FY17 budget gap. Reaffirms past vote.

Motion passed 5-0-1 (WM abstain).

AN made a motion that the School Committee encourages the school administration to close the remaining budget gap caused by out-of-district special education expense by means other than layoff of school employees in FY17. NT 2nd. Motion withdrawn.

AN made a motion that the School Committee affirm its 2015 vote to establish a special education stabilization account. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

SH moved that School Cte also establish a special education stabilization account controlled by School Committee. AN 2nd. Motion withdrawn. Refer to Budget Subcommittee.

E. Math & Science Academy move to Greenfield Middle School for 2017-18 school year

Asst. Supt. Pratt updated on progress. Transition Team forming to meet Jan.-March; invited staff, community members to serve. TF clarified that School Cte vote already taken in 2015 to move MSA to GMS; desire for reaffirmation or change by current School Cte.

SH made a motion that move of MSA to the middle school be put off for one year. Failed for lack of 2nd.

WM made a motion to move the 5-7 grade Math & Science Academy to Greenfield Middle School. CW 2nd.

Discussion:

- Preserve MSA's coordinated, accelerated curriculum while expanding equal opportunity to participate
- Desire for increased communication, family involvement
- Priority for Central Office, Asst. Supt. Pratt re: curriculum

- Budget Subcommittee will review ELT
- Need plan to use Green River School, fiscal impact. TF, WM to ask MSBA for time to develop plan for Green River.
- Account 1504 has \$310K remaining (beyond salary). Need plan for balance; cannot carry over.

Motion passed 5-0-1 (SH abstain)

G. Policy for First Reading

SH provided background of changes and first readings of KF – Community Use of Facilities Policy. TF directed SH to send draft to principals, county clerk’s office, rec dept., organizations.

H. Policies for Second Reading & Consent Agenda Vote:

- KBA - School & Parent Relations
- DIE - Audits
- IJOA - Field Trips
- IJOA - R Guidelines for Field Trip Planning

WM moved to accept all under consent agenda. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

H. Policy for Second Reading & Vote: JHCDA - Life Threatening Food Allergies

SH moved to table to allow attorney and parents to continue discussion. CW 2nd. Motion to table passed unanimously.

I. Other Business

A. Special Education Funding

Dianne Ellis, Director of Pupil Services, presented memo, “Factors Affecting the High Cost of Special Education Funding in GPS.”

Discussion:

- High % of families moving in/out of Greenfield
- Challenges of high-risk families, involvement by state agencies
- GPS pays \$700K for students who don’t live in Greenfield
- Efforts to move students in out-of-district placements back to district programs
- Need for systemic change
- WM arranging meeting with legislators, Mass. Municipal Association, in January
- As county seat, Greenfield has special programs and thus financial liabilities
- Desire for state-funded programs to pay for associated local education costs

F. Schedule Organizational Meeting for January 4, 2017

TF will set up meeting for election of officers.

VIII. Adjournment

AN moved to adjourn. TF 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary