

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MINUTES: Wednesday, June 20, 2015**  
Greenfield Middle School, Federal Street, Greenfield MA  
(Approved 08.12.15)

**Present:** Margaret Betts (MB); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Donna Gleason (DG); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Francina Wisnewski (FW).

**Absent:** Jeff Comenitz (JC)

**Also present:** School personnel, citizens, and the press.

**I. Call to Order**

With a quorum present (MB, MC, DG, WM, AN, FW), Chair Calderwood called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

MB read a statement encouraging respect, civil discourse.

**II. Public Comment**

Heather Evans, MSA principal: unique MSA goals, curriculum alignment.

Carolyn McDaniel, parent: MSA students' "passion for learning," need to continue MSA experiment without changes.

Claudia Hernandez, parent: need for smaller school.

Gina Fasoli, parent, teacher, former associate principal of MSA: both MSA and GMS are excellent; desire for accelerated curriculum available to all students.

Lisa Bostrom, parent: moving MSA to GMS building would alleviate concerns re: transportation, ELT, support staff, extracurricular activities. Desire for standards for admission to MSA and to continue in MSA program; limit # of students

Scott Cote, parent: lack of details and involvement staff, parents. Don't move MSA; keep curriculum intact.

Ruth Witty, paraprofessional: positive environment, discipline, staff at GMS.

Gary Tashjian, GMS principal: importance of choices for students; against tracking.

Susan Hollins: MSA improves district enrollment, choice for parents; concern re: end-of-school timing of decision.

June Caloon, parent: against moving MSA, need for acceleration in math, science.

Tim Blagg: strong support for math/science education; against "dismantling" of MSA rigorous program. MSA's small size, isolated environment helps some students. Need for long-range plan.

Karen Patenaude, asst principal at GMS: MSA program can exist in GMS building; wants opportunity for all students.

Adelle Ferreira, parent: concern re: late date of discussion; need for long-range plan. Don't damage what's good at MSA (small-school culture); opposed to splitting MSA; need to resolve support issues.

John Passiglia, high school teacher, parent: praised MSA program; concerned re: late date of decision.

Francesca Passiglia, parent: requested postponing decision, set up process to involve staff, parents.

Michael Cocco: proposal lacks facts, data. Why is MSA successful? How will move affect it? Cost-benefit analysis? Need for long-range planning. Concern that choice (small size, location) is being removed. Choice out to school with more stability.

Donna Woodcock, GHS principal: similar to moving 8th grade from GMS to GHS building; MSA students don't always successfully transition into high school accelerated math programs.

Barbara Tardif, parent: Don't create "feeder school" for PVPA. Need for small school. MSA is choice-in magnet.

Jessica Day, parent: need for program that "pushes" students in math, science; desire for small school; let first group of four-year students complete program; concern for late date of decision.

### **III. Business Topics**

#### **A. Review of Math & Science Academy Program for 2015-2016 School Year**

JH described planning and discussions on MSA; need for strategic plan; concerns re: supports for MSA students; desire to provide opportunity to all children; proposal has changed based on discussions, state requirements. Expected July 2: state draft report on ELT site visit on May 27-29.

MB moved to adopt Superintendent's proposal dated June 5, 2015, District Configuration relating to Green River School / Math & Science Academy. Motion failed for lack of 2nd.

Discussion:

- State data combines GMS/MSA; desire for separate data available to evaluate programs.
- ELT funding in jeopardy.
- Memo (June 8) from Wm Bazyk, Director of Pupil Services: concern re: small number of special-education students at MSA, need for program to be accessible to all students.
- Late date of decision: Responding to problems, need to protect district.
- ELT grant proposal due July 16, not yet submitted.
- Adjustment in hours for ELT schools: MSA start time next year: 7:30am, breakfast in classroom, counts as instructional time.
- MSA – 4 full-time teachers for 4th-5th grade; 5 teachers (3 full-time) for 6th-7th grade. 115 students.
- Suggestion for ad hoc committee to study, make recommendation.
- Construction closes access to Green River building next week.
- Is MSA program working? Need study to find out.
- Concern with term "academy" as "private-school speak"
- MCAS grade 8, 2014: 0% at advanced level. Would expect more from students from accelerated-math program. Consider intangible benefits (e.g., love of learning).
- District goal for coming year: K-12 curriculum alignment.
- 2015-2016: 4th grade moving back to elementary; kept 4th grade at MSA to avoid disrupting MSA program.
- \$60,000 transportation cost for MSA.
- Suggestion to move MSA to GMS building to 2016-17 school year: access to services, save transportation costs.
- Accessibility includes special education, ELL, Title I.
- Suggestion to make Green River K-5 pilot school.

**WM made a motion to defer any further relocation discussion on MSA until the end of October 2015, and to direct the Chair of the School Committee to form an ad hoc committee including all interested parties. MB 2nd.**

Discussion:

- Motion includes analysis of MSA program.
- FW described her experience as MSA parent. Need for student supports (counselor, special-needs). MSA is too overwhelming for some students. MSA 9-hour school day includes 2 hours of transportation.
- Ad hoc committee to report back by October.

MB called question. MG 2nd. Motion to end discussion passed unanimously.

**Original motion passed unanimously.**

MB moved to extend meeting. time. FW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

Carolyn McDaniel: MSA is not “segregated.” Green River’s program for autistic students; MSA students had ELT at GMS; students visit Arbors. Need to know whether MSA program is working.

Lisa Bostrom: Grateful for postponement of decision. Consider qualitative and quantitative data. If K-5 at Green River, can students from other elementary schools get into MSA? (JH: yes).

Leah Appell: If data doesn’t show MSA difference, don’t dismantle program; improve it.

Paul Babineau, parent: Don’t leave advanced students behind.

Ana Paul: Thanked cte for postponement. Desire for parents to be involved in ad hoc cte.

Donna Rivers, parent, teacher: MSA needs for support services in the coming school year; grateful for open process, discussion.

June Caloon: Thanked everyone, especially parents. Good to have choices.

Adele Ferreira: RE: Proposal for K-2 and MSA 4-5 at Green River: What happens to grade 3? What happens to students from other elementary schools who want to enter MSA? Small school size, small class size are different. Importance of having programs for accelerated students. Look at full four-year program to judge 8th grade results. Concern for children w/ allergies re: breakfast in classroom. Need for comprehensive allergy policy in district.

Michael Cocco: Need for careful and impartial data analysis.

Alexandra Tully, parent: Requested clarification of special ed concerns.

John Passiglia: Where are students’ certificates?

Susan Hollins: Special education support is strong throughout district.

Public comment closed.

Atty Smith: Has prepared memo to supt. re: state/federal mandates for services for special education, ELL, Title I, etc. All students PreK-12 must have equal access to services. Bazyk’s memo suggests looking at MSA students’ access. Don’t wait for ad hoc cte report: need is immediate.

MC appointed ad hoc committee to study MSA: DG, chair; AN, MB. Ad hoc committee will select additional members from other interested groups.

#### **V. Executive Session**

MB made a motion to move into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. DG 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes: MB, MC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved into executive session at 11:33 a.m.

DG moved to return to public session. 2nd MB. Yes: MB, MC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously. Public session resumed at 11:48 a.m.

**V. Adjournment**

MB moved to adjourn. 2nd DG. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Farber  
Recording Secretary