

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, May 10, 2017**
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 06.14.17

Present: Don Alexander (DA); Timothy Farrell (TF); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Nathaniel Tripp (NT).

Absent: William Martin (WM); Cameron Ward (CW)

Also present: Howard Barber, GPS Business Manager; Tom Bevaqua, GEA President; Paul DeMarco, MTA; William Diehl, Executive Director, Collaborative for Educational Services; Gina Fasoli, Associate Principal, GMS/MSA; Siobhan Fitzgerald, GHS guidance counselor; Hannah Marhefka, GMS teacher; Paul McNeil, Coordinator, Safe Schools, Safe Streets; GHS Student Representatives Amy and Sarah O’Sullivan; Gary Tashjian, Principal, GMS; Caitlin von Schmidt, parent; other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (DA, TF, SH, AN, NT), Vice-Chair Nunez opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

TF moved to approve minutes of April 12 and April 18, 2017. NT 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Tom Bevaqua, GEA President, spoke to Supt. Harper’s evaluation, noting constant improvement in schools in the 3 years she’s been here and improved morale particularly at GHS, praising her as an “accessible, attentive, and supportive administrator,” “reliable and transparent.”

Paul DeMarco, MTA, announced forum on Chapter 70 school funding at GCC, May 16, 6 p.m. DeMarco also noted GEA/MTA awaits response on Dept. of Labor Relations charges, need to discuss settlements.

IV. Reports

A. Student Representatives

Amy and Sarah O’Sullivan reported on activities at GHS including Student Council fundraisers and community service; Drama Club play May 24-25; AP testing and Math MCAS; spring sports; seniors’ schedule leading to June 2 graduation.

B. Chair’s Report

none

C. Superintendent’s Report

Supt. Harper highlighted written report:

- Celebrating teachers (Teacher Appreciation Week) and paraprofessionals
- \$8,237 award for summer food program
- GMS equestrian program
- Marketing: Newton School
- Schools’ newsletters, with focus on MCAS testing
- Financial forecasting: spending freeze, prioritizing expenditures for end-of-year close-out

D. Subcommittee Reports

1. Policy and Program

SH reported on:

- Continued discussion of Kindergarten admission policies: entrance age, alternatives for K-age students not yet toilet-trained
- Policies in governance; finance (revolving funds); facility use; life-threatening food allergies.
- Selecting and starting review of policies re: instruction, students
- On agenda for next Committee mtg: approx. 10 policies, including walkers/riders

AN: Special School Committee meeting scheduled for May 30.

2. Personnel & Collective Bargaining

Report (Supt evaluation) to be considered later on agenda

3. Budget & Finance

AN highlighted Subcte's work:

- School lunch prices increasing 4%. Consensus: support.
- Supt's request to increase pay for substitute teachers: \$75-\$85-\$95/day pay scale. Subcte support for higher pay. Discussion to continue.
- \$500K reductions in budget. No consensus. Discussion to continue.

SH: Subcommittee discussions addressed reasons for staff absence, resulting in greater call for subs.

V. Business

TF made a motion to discuss D: GMA/MSA Transition Team after A: CES. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

A. Bill Diehl, Collaborative for Educational Services

Diehl described history of collaboratives; reviewed list of CES programs, noting those utilized by GPS; strategic goals; Low Income Education Access Project; licensure; summer academy; "Proud of Western Mass Public Schools" initiative. Requested ideas for new services.

JH: CES helpful with restorative justice program, GPS website.

TF: Need for position papers, outreach to state leaders on impact of special education funding on school districts

SH: Need for specialty programs for special education students; outreach to parents re: literacy, nutrition, etc. (early childhood education); research and development support for unique district programs.

Diehl: Some staff PD is free (grant-supported); 10% discount for member districts.

D. GMS/MSA Transition Team

Report from Gina Fasoli, Associate Principal, GMS/MSA; Hannah Marhefka, GMS teacher; Gary Tajshjian, Principal, GMS; Caitlin von Schmidt, parent.

- Transition Team (GMS/MSA teachers, administrators; parents from elementary, middle, high schools), approx. 20 members, met for 5 months. Positive community conversations, productive team.
- Communication to families re: MSA/GMS choice for coming year.
- Family survey: support for ELT, request for more community forums, request for info on curriculum. Team developed successful Curriculum Night.
- All 5th grade to be on 2nd floor
- Maintain identity of MSA program

Discussion:

SH: Concern whether MSA accelerated math-science program, as approved by School Committee, is being followed. Plan was prepared for MSA Innovation School. Concern that some MSA parents will choice-out. Request for more information (e.g., robotics team?) and vote to approve new program.

Tashjian: MSA program always part of middle school, not standalone school. Curriculum offered 3 years of math completed in 2 years (grades 6-7); data from high school showed that caused gaps in math skills. GMS/MSA together offers social, emotional, financial gains (e.g., need one less teacher, eliminate staff driving time). MSA students get more science, less time in unified arts. MSA will have own classrooms but grouped by grade next to GMS classrooms. All students together for lunch, bus, community service learning.

JH: Successful focus on logistics, climate, communication. Changes improve both GMS/MSA. Desire for group like Transition Team to continue.

TF moved to support this letter being sent to parents of GPS children. NT 2nd.

Discussion:

JH: No attempt to dissolve MSA program. Change provides MSA students with legally obligated services previously denied; more math/science instruction; more access to integrated arts; and saves GPS money.

Von Schmidt: Supports unified culture of middle-school students. Parents choose GMS or MSA; all parents care.

Motion passed.

B. Safe School Summer Conference

Paul McNeil, Coordinator, Safe Schools Safe Streets, and Siobhan Fitzgerald, GHS guidance counselor, presented request for students to attend CADCA Mid-Year Training Institute with chaperone Kara Younger, Youth Engagement Coordinator, July 23-27, Atlanta GA.

Discussion: Costs covered by grant. Praise for thoughtful selection of students to attend. Has Supt's support.

TF moved to approve training for Safe Schools Safe Streets summer trip. 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Superintendent Evaluation discussion

NT summarized Personnel Subcommittee's evaluation:

Goal 1, Instructional leadership and educator evaluation = significant progress

Goal 2, curriculum alignment = significant progress

Goal 3, parent/community engagement = met

Standard I: Instructional Leadership = proficient

Standard II: Management & Operations = proficient

Standard III: Family & Community Engagement = exemplary

Standard IV: Professional Culture = proficient

AN underscored Supt's achievements: transparent budgets; efficient allocation of resources; "stellar" communication; knowledge of local, state, national issues; strong skills in IV-B Cultural Proficiency. Recommends School Cte do self-evaluation at summer working meeting, to include discussion of curriculum alignment, data, district goals.

NT moved to accept the [Personnel] Subcommittee's recommendation for superintendent evaluation of Jordana Harper. TF 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

E. School Choice vote

JH presented recommendations for choice-in seats by school and grade. Adding choice-in students will not increase number of classrooms, teachers. Once submitted to DESE, cannot add more seats. No seats offered for grade 4. Lottery selection.

Discussion:

- How to offer choice-in seats if GMS/MSA selection not yet done? JH: There is flexibility to adjust number of MSA or GMS sections.
- GHS can hold more than 465 students (anticipated enrollment for 2017-2018).
- Timeline: Notify DESE in May. Lottery in June. 2nd lottery later if seats remain available.
- Once choice-in student accepted, student can remain in GPS. Obligation does not apply to out-of-district AEL students (preschool).
- GHS choice-in requests increased this year for all grades; expect increase to continue.

TF moved to approve available choice seats for 2017-2018 school year. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. New Business

A. School Lunch Price Increase

Presentation of letter to families from Madison Walker, School Nutrition Director, announcing increase in school lunch prices: elementary \$2.75; middle school \$3.00; high school \$3.25; reduced lunch \$0.40.

TF moved to accept letter as written. NT 2nd.

Discussion: Increase required by federal regulation. Of 2 levels of increase, GSP implementing lower % increase to allow compliance for next 2 years.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Old Business

A. FY2018 Budget Update

Supt. Harper's recommended changes to meet \$500K cut preserve teacher positions; some staff positions eliminated. Discussion to continue. Vote to approve revised reduced budget to follow Council vote.

VII. Agenda item requests for upcoming meetings

SH presented 3 requests: School grounds (e.g., no gate in back fence at Federal Street); Academic teams; School Committee/City Council meetings. AN will forward to Chair Martin.

VIII. Adjournment

TF moved to adjourn. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda: May 10, 2017
2. Draft minutes: April 12 and April 18, 2017
3. Superintendent's report:
 - a. Superintendent's Report (May 8, 2017)
 - b. School newsletters
 - c. Governor's letter awarding \$8,237 for summer food service program (April 21, 2017)

- d. Invitation to GMS Equestrian Graduation
- e. Marketing: Spotlight on Newton School
- 4. Financial Forecasting, memo from Howard Barber, Business Administrator (May 1, 2017)
- 5. GPS Proposed FY18 Superintendent's Budget (May 1, 2017)
- 6. "FY18 Budget Development, Ways & Means Hearing," from Supt. Harper
- 7. Flyer: "The Schools our Communities Deserve," from Paul DeMarco (May 16 event)
- 8. Minutes: Personnel Subcommittee, May 2, 2017
- 9. Minutes: Policy and Program Subcommittee, May 4, 2017
- 10. Minutes: Budget and Finance Subcommittee, May 2, 2017
- 11. End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent (May 1, 2017)
- 12. Memo to DESE re: school choice seats, from Supt. Harper (May 1, 2017)
- 13. Letter to families from Madison Walker, School Nutrition Director, re: increase in school lunch prices
- 14. CES brochure and info packet
- 15. Draft Report "Better Together!" from GMS/MSA Transition Team (Spring 2017)
- 16. Letter to Parents grades 4-5-6 from Gary Tashjian, with FAQ, class grid, choice form (May 10, 2017)