

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING  
DRAFT MINUTES: Thursday, March 18, 2021  
Greenfield MA**

*Note: This meeting was held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20.*

**Present:** Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson-Mussad (GJM); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** Judy Houle, Interim Superintendent; Liz Lafond, Mass. Association of School Committees; other school staff and citizens.

### **I. Call to Order**

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, GJM, AP, JW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

JW moved to approve the minutes of March 10, 2021. GJM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

### **III. Public Comment**

Michael Sustick, Four Corners teacher, described teachers' anxiety re: return to in-person instruction; need to reintroduce students carefully, especially Kindergarten students.

Edin Thompson, Greenfield parent, complained about Committee's disdainful comments, urged respectful disagreement.

Johanna Smith LaClaire, Greenfield parent, requested morning and afterschool care for children of essential workers, especially special-needs children.

Rudy Renaud, Greenfield, commented on newspaper article, complained of lack of plan to return to school, supported GEA grievance. Chair stopped further comments because topic was not on agenda.

Sheila Gilmour, Greenfield, stated support for School Committee member Glenn Johnson-Mussad.

### **IV. Awards and Recognitions**

#### **A. Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Academic Excellence Award**

Supt. Houle introduced award-winner GHS Senior A.O. on her award based on GPA, class rank, and selection by GHS Principal Patenaude, and described her academic achievements, awards and scholarships, and many extracurricular and volunteer activities. She will attend Yale to study linguistics.

#### **B. Greenfield Public Schools and Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards**

Supt. Houle introduced all nominees as Greenfield Teachers of Excellence:

- Judith Bennett, Grade 8 Science Teacher at Greenfield High School
- Brooke Mele, Library Media/Reading Specialist at Discovery School at Four Corners
- Samantha Slater, Reading Specialist at Federal Street School
- Erik Stone, Grade 4 Teacher at Newton School
- Brian Tucker, Grade 7 Social Studies/Literacy Teacher at Greenfield Middle School

Supt. Houle announced winners of Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards: Judy Bennett and Samantha Slater.

#### **V. Approval of Special Education Handbook**

Supt. Houle, in preparing for upcoming program review by DESE, noted Special Education Handbook is out of date. Request for Policy & Program Subcommittee to review approx. 15 special education policies, bring to full Committee for approval.

#### **SE moved to charge the Policy Subcommittee with a review and update of the Special Education Handbook, as outlined by Interim Superintendent Houle, and with the guidance of Dr. Nadine Ekstrom. KC 2nd.**

Supt. Houle will provide to full School Committee the list of policies to be reviewed.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VI. Update on Return to In-Person Learning (IPL) Plans**

Supt. Houle listed preparations being made, including vaccine availability. Video being prepared showing classrooms and busses, to share with families.

- IPL Command Structure
- DESE Commissioner's deadlines: April 5 elementary; April 28 middle school; April TBA high school
- Remote learning choice available this year
- Hours of operation: 8:30-2:55 for AEL, elementary schools; 7:40-2:20 for GMS; 7:15-2:10 for GHS; grab & go breakfast for all students
- Mitigation strategies, including Daily Four (masks, wash hands, stay apart, stay home if sick), pooled testing; air purifiers; transportation safety
- Continued engagement with community and decision-makers, and surveys
- Gratitude to GPS staff, Kuzmeskus transportation

#### **GJM moved to approve the In-Person Learning Plan as presented by the Superintendent. KC 2nd.**

Discussion:

- Much appreciation for work of Supt. Houle and staff
- Concern for Governor's top-down timeline without consideration of varying resources in communities. Is MCAS cause of urgency?
- How to provide morning and afterschool care? GPS cannot at this time. Request for community providers to contact Superintendent.
- Consider delayed start date for Kindergarten
- Plan for students who stay remote depends on number of students, grade level

**Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VII. Executive Session**

**MGL c 30A, §21, (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.**

**RW moved to enter Executive Session. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

Returned to public session at 8:03 p.m.

*Mayor Wedegartner left the meeting.*

## VIII. Superintendent's Search

Liz Lafond (LL), Mass. Association of School Committees, presented process and timeline.

### **Brochure** (first step)

Consensus: preference for Clinton example, with focus on people not buildings

"Pamphlet" seems outdated; prefer interactive online/mobile-friendly wiki

LL will select photos (previously published with media release)

### **Basic qualifications**

Consensus on what to list, including:

- Master's required, advanced degree preferred, in education-related field
  - Preference for advanced coursework that includes school law, statistics, other topics not in typical master's degree
- Certified or eligible for certification
  - Be aware of different paths to certification.
- 10-15 years in public education, including classroom and building administration, preferred 3-5 years' experience in central office administration
  - Preference for experienced superintendent
  - Longtime administrator in same district can be good candidate
- Demonstrated experience developing & implementing school district budgets
  - Not expecting candidate to have municipal budget experience, too narrow qualification
- Breadth of understanding of school law, including special education law
- Ability to communicate and collaborate with large and diverse group of stakeholders; strong written & verbal communication skills, including public relations and community-level communications

Some qualifications to be judged in interviews; e.g., skilled communicator; team-builder; solution-oriented; competent with difficult conversations.

Expertise in some areas not necessary, can be covered by other administrators/consultants – e.g., curriculum development

### **What sets Greenfield apart?**

LL will draft based on available web resources

Request for School Committee members to email suggestions directly to LL. Include outstanding school qualities, such as dual enrollment with GCC

Suggestions: Engaged community; fewer turf battles – people work together; vibrant downtown; Play City, parks & recreation.

**District Profile** – LL will draft.

### **Focus groups (online) & surveys**

LL will schedule for different groups – parents, students, teachers, community, etc.

Members to email LL with recommendations for additional groups

- Racial & social justice, environmental activists

Will provide ways to include people without technology, and non-English-speaking families

### **Timeline**

April: Focus groups & surveys

Mid-late April: Orientation for Search Committee

Mid-late May: Search Committee begins interviews

Mid-June: School Committee interviews finalists

Mid/Late June: Site visits from finalists

Late June/July: Decision, with start date "Sept. 2021 or as negotiated"

### **IX. Adjournment**

SE moved to adjourn. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Farber  
Recording Secretary

### **Meeting Materials**

1. Agenda March 18, 2021
2. Draft Minutes: March 10, 2021
3. Memo to School Committee from Supt. Houle, "Special Education Handbook," March 16, 2021
4. Memo to School Committee from Supt. Houle, "Update on Return to In-Person Learning," March 16, 2021
5. Memo to School Committee from Supt. Houle, "Greenfield Teachers of Excellence and Pioneer Valley Teachers of Excellence, March 17, 2021
6. MASC Superintendents Academic Excellence Award, March 16, 2021