

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, July 30, 2014
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 08.13.14

Present: Margaret Betts (MB) (arrived 5:53); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Jeff Comenitz (JC); Donna Gleason (DG); William Martin (WM) (arrived 5:40); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Francina Wisnewski (FW).
Absent: none.

Also present: Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Tom Bevacqua, GEA president; Paul DeMarco, Mass. Teachers Association; Atty. Peter Smith; other school staff, citizens and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (MC, JC, DG, AN, FW), Chair Calderwood called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Public hearing on district's preferred standardized measurement (MCAS or PARCC). Purpose to hear from community. School Cte. will not vote tonight.

Supt. Harper gave overview of MCAS/PARCC.

III. Public Comment

Mary Ellen Bricker, 4 Corners teacher: computer-based tests are difficult for young students; concern for Pearson's share of education market.

Suzanne Schropfer, GMS special education teacher: delay introduction of new test to provide students continuity of familiar test; concern for Pearson's share of education market; quality of PARCC vs. MCAS alternative tests.

Gabrielle Nagy, GMS teacher: prior teacher at PARCC pilot school; lost "vast amount of instructional time"; test is not ready – terminology unfamiliar to students, computer glitches; test disadvantages students who don't regularly use computers.

Tom Bevacqua, GHS teacher, recommends another mtg after summer for better community response.

Deborah Keisch, parent: opposed to high-stakes nature of test; not being ready for college/career could be due to so much time/resources given to testing; corporate influence in education.

Discussion: Additional costs (analyze cost of both choices); % of special education and ELL students. Without a vote, MCAS is default choice. Next year, state will adopt new test.

IV. Executive Session

WM made a motion to go into executive session for purposes of hearing a grievance. FW 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously. Moved into executive session at 5:55 p.m.

WM moved to return to public session. 2nd DG. Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Public session resumed at 7:35 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

DG made a motion to adjourn. 2nd WM. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary