

Newton School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Education Center, Frazier Room (#210)
October 26, 2015 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairperson Matt Hills, Vice-Chairperson Margie Ross Decter, Margaret Albright, Diana Fisher Gomberg, Ellen Gibson, Ruth Goldman, Angela Pitter-Wright, Steven Siegel, Mayor Setti Warren, Newton North High School student representatives Kathleen Martenis, Luther Evans and Gregory Brumberg

Call to Order:

At 7:02 pm Chair Hills called the meeting to order.

Presentation of MASS/Blumer Book Awards

Dr. Irwin Blumer, former Superintendent of Newton Public Schools presented Natalie Cohen, Claire McEwen and Jonah Pemstein from Newton North; David Chu and Daniel Konviser from Newton South with his book selection, "*Between the World and Me*" and a certificate from Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) for their outstanding achievements.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Fleishman reported on continued work in two areas; Growth Mindset and Responsive Classrooms, as well as looking at anxiety and stress levels of students. He also recommended a book he just read, *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be*, about the college application process.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Short Discussion and vote on the updated policy. Motion made by Gomberg Fisher, second: Gibson. Motion passed 9-0

Chapter 222 Update

Attorney Angela Smagula provided an update regarding the changes to Massachusetts discipline laws that fall under Chapter 71 (37H, 37H ½) and now include 37H ¾ which covers "all other discipline." Mandates are moving away from out-of-school suspensions, especially in long-term (more than 10 days) suspensions. The focus is on discipline vs. access to education. The new law mandates parents & students have equal access to due process and that all school work now be made available to regular education suspensions as it has been for special education suspensions. If there is a case of long-term suspension some form of tutoring/alternative setting is permitted.

Youth Risk Behavior Update

Document: [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)

Mary Eich, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning and Dana Bennett, K-8 Health, Physical Education & Wellness Curriculum Coordinator reported two important aspects that were revealed in the survey; School Connectedness and Mental Health. There are five reporting categories in total and four will be reviewed tonight. New to the study is School Connectedness which shows a stable trend and a racial gap. The data is not sampled by race. Conclusion: Highest level of school connectedness = lowest mental health issues. Questions & discussion followed.

Health & Wellness Update

Document: [Health & Wellness Update](#)

Health & Wellness Policy Statement review presented by Mary Eich, and Dana Bennett. We are conforming to changes in State mandates. Questions & discussion followed.

High School Start Time Working Group

Document: [High School Start Time Working Group](#)

Toby Romer, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education & Special Programs and Julie Kirrane, Long Range Planning Manager presented an overview of the process and the proposed timeline. Questions & discussion followed.

Fiscal & Operational Update

Document: [Fiscal & Operational Updates:](#)

Sandy Guryan, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Administrative Officer stated that as of September 28, 2015 the district has spent 21% of its annual budget. Actual costs are within projected budget so far, except for electricity. Rates increased after budget was finalized.

Facilities Update

Document: [Facilities](#)

Sandy Guryan, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Administrative Officer stated that currently there are four building projects. Angier is proceeding well. The Zervas construction documents have been approved to go out to bid. The work at Cabot is focused on parking and access/traffic.

The Aquinas project has a bid out for windows so in the short-term it will be ready for September 2106 and the preschool can move in.

Budget Guidelines:

The Budget Guidelines Sub-Committee members, Ellen Gibson, Margaret Albright and Margie Ross Decter listed priorities.

Future Topic Discussion: Elementary Principals' Goals Discussion

Dr. Fleishman briefed the committee on the future topic of Elementary Principal's Goals. He stated that Principal's Farag-Davis, Chitty & Uretsky will attend to discuss the following system goals: Datawise (course) differentiated & small group instruction); Response intervention; SEL; Faculty work; School Improvement Initiative.

Discussion & Vote: MASS/MASC Resolution

The last remaining resolution has to do with McKinney/Vento and the Cape Cod districts in relation to line item costs and reimbursement for McKinney/Vento, homeless/transient population. Recommendation to Abstain.

A motion was made (Goldman), seconded (Gomberg Fisher) and accepted 8-0 (Siegel absent for vote) to Abstain.

Vote to Appoint School Committee Secretary: Lisa Mazzola

Motion was made (Fisher Gomberg) seconded (Goldman) and accepted 8-0 (Siegel absent for vote) to appoint Lisa Mazzola School Committee Secretary

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 pm