

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD  
AUGUST 24, 2022  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, August 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present:       Karen Jew, Vice Chairman  
  Colleen Micavich, Secretary  
  Alison Marsano

Members of the Board Absent:       Kelly Zakar

Also in Attendance:                   Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
  Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
  Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School  
  Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy

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**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS** – None

**CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS** - None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Special** Brookline School Board ..... [July 21, 2022](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3-0-1**

*Member Marsano Abstained*

Brookline School Board ..... [June 22, 2022](#)

*The following amendments were offered:*

Page 6, Line 20; delete the “b” before “because”

Page 19, Line 2; capitalize “Tier I”

Page 21; Line 10; correct spacing

Page 23, Line 5; delete the extra period at the end of the sentence

Page 34; Line 7; replace “of” with “on” following “based”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

Brookline School Board – **Public Hearing** ..... [June 22, 2022](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**4-0-0**

Brookline School Board - **Non-Public**. ..... [June 22, 2022](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**4-0-0**

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Chairman Haag noted a change in State RSA (SB410), effective September 6, 2022, which requires 30 minutes for public comment. The district’s current policy will be amended. Chairman Haag read aloud the language included in Policy [BEDH](#). He reminded the viewing audience that the intent of the public comment period is for the Board to receive input from the public. It is not intended to be a back and forth discussion. The Board will consider the input provided during the deliberations portion of the agenda.

Katherine Leavitt 2, Birch Hill Road

Expressed her support and gratitude for the staff, administration and Board. She teaches in the Nashua district and is heading into her 15<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. Often times a school reflects the community. The students bring their attitudes towards school with them. Sometimes that is fantastic for building a collaborative school environment. She expressed the desire to provide support to the schools.

Gregg McHale, 42 Westview Road

Was unable to attend the June meeting where concerns were raised regarding the termination of Ms. Gordon. He spoke of how exemplary her performance was as a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher. His son thrived on every dimension in ways that proved she delivered a uniquely positive educational experience for each child in that classroom. Teachers like her are the ones upon whom the reputation of this district has been built. He read the detailed minutes and watched the live stream of the meeting. He has read Superintendent Corey’s response to the meeting and has tried to contemplate the question if everyone says we have a cultural problem what exactly are the factors in play.

He spoke of the chaos surrounding the resignation letter and the decision of the Board not to permit Ms. Gordon (non-resident) to speak at the meeting.

Unanimously adored by parents and students, given proficient ratings at every turn. Physically intimidated, inexplicably pushed out and ultimately muzzled. He cannot imagine anyone supports that kind of culture for our teachers.

He spoke of Mrs. Milewski’s resignation letter stating that only a portion of the letter was read into the record. Paragraphs were completely skipped. One of her chief complaints was “negating the vital voice of

teachers and support staff". The paragraphs skipped over showed someone who spent years trying to get through to her superiors and ultimately had no choice but to give up.

Failures of leadership caused one of our best to withdraw from her lifelong passion, and the reason she provided should never have to be written by an employee of this district. One key section that was not read stated "The current pattern of hiring and firing shows failure to successfully implement and support these crucial systems. If one considers the resignations that have transpired over the course of the last 5 years, many of them have been due to the disfunction within the district. Multiple attempts by multiple people and groups have been made to communicate and resolve the issues that are impacting staff and students. These attempts are met with denial, defensiveness or silence. It leaves one with a sense of hopelessness as they watch things crumble."

The spiderweb that has been woven has our district in a complete stalemate. We are positioned such that supporting teachers, supporting administrators, and supporting school board members are somehow concepts that are at odds, and it feels awful. A healthy culture would have no friction in our ability to support all of these groups, but when great teachers are literally running out of our doors and taking our leadership to task in their resignation letters and the heart of your response is that everything you are doing is perfectly legal, the tone deafness these teachers speak to is validated and we have no choice but to focus on a failure of leadership and demand change.

To the School Board, it seems you have trapped yourself in the flawed thinking that our teachers are infinitely disposable, but our administrators are untouchable. A balanced approach would say we want the best we can get at every level. Our teachers are telling you we do not have that today and it is our best ones that are saying it. Our administrators are not even batting an eye at the turnover their actions create. You should be asking a lot more questions and be willing to make changes that ensure these scenarios are never repeated.

He stated the need for the Superintendent to lead with transparency. He suggested if he is serious about that he would apologize for misleading in how the letter was presented.

He requested the Principals listen to their teachers who are screaming for help. He requested teachers help untangle this web and move forward with the no confidence vote they have been considering. That process is meant to ensure that all parties treat this cultural issue with the seriousness it deserves. There are countless parents who will do whatever it takes to ensure the experiences of Ms. Gordon, Ms. Healy, Mrs. Milewski and others are never to be repeated.

That is the culture our teachers signed up for when they decided to come work in our town and is the minimum anyone should expect in a destination district like ours.

Patrick McGoldrick, 17 Wildwood Drive

Spoke on behalf of his wife. She served as the PTO Treasurer during COVID and during that time planned and/or volunteered for every school visit, school event and PTO community event. Even after her resignation many events that she had planned or coordinated still took place. Through this experience she created special bonds with some of the teachers. As she read Ms. Milewski's and Ms. Gordon's resignation letters, she realized the voice of the teachers need to be heard.

Ms. Milewski refers to the last 5 years of hirings and firings, and although the Superintendent decided to omit those words and the School Board allowed it, she read it.

She conducted her own investigation to find out more about what was pointed out in the letter. She interviewed 12 people including current and past teachers, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers to find out more about what is happening at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS). Some of these people had experiences in both Hollis Primary and RMMS. They feel unsupported when it comes to behaviors. One professional shared there are times when the students exhibit extreme behaviors and the disciplinary actions do not match that behavior. There was one that said behaviors get punished by playing basketball or eating lunch with the Principal, which the students thought was the greatest thing. Another noted by comparison bad behavior was not tolerated in Hollis. One teacher said they are tone deaf to what is going on in the classrooms. Even though we have weekly PLC meetings to discuss the issues, the administration never showed up to them. They take notes in hope that someone will look at them.

Another teacher shared I have escalated certain issues and in turn the Principal gasps at me and pretends I did not receive specific direction from him. They feel their concerns about students are not handled properly. One professional stated she recommended students in her classroom be tested for certain special needs issues and was told we do not have the resources to test those students. They did not receive the services she believed were needed. Another professional stated unless parents request a special needs evaluation the children will not be evaluated.

Most requests by teachers and staff are ignored or denied. As another professional stated the Principal told me that a student in my class would not receive and qualify for special services even though he had never spent time with that student. It turned out the student not only qualified but also had a learning disability.

They feel they have a lack of resources. What the teachers cannot understand is why there is no longer a tech specialist, only 1 music teacher and 1 art teacher shared between the buildings, meanwhile the SAU continues to receive more and more administrators. In addition to this, another one of their resources is their planning time, which was taken away from them. They used to be able to plan during 1 of the 2 recesses, but now they have to be outside for both. This was particularly surprising because when the PTO created sign-up sheets for lunch duty and other volunteer positions, volunteers who asked for recess specifically were told recess was all set and they had coverage.

They share that the management and culture is poor. One professional stated if you get on the Principal's bad side you will know it. He will ignore you and not make eye contact. Another said after I turned down an assignment that he had hoped I would take he ignored me for weeks. Another went on to say if you challenge him, you will be fired.

The actions of the administration and Principal are retaliatory. Mrs. Gordon's letter speaks to physical intimidation as well with a hand raised to her face.

Mr. McGoldrick stated members of the School Board need to be meeting with the teachers, listening to their concerns, and acting on them.

To the teachers he suggested the number one thing they could do is unite and move forward with the vote of no confidence they have been considering. He remarked make strong relationships with the parents and they will support you. He suggested having the union back strong pro-teacher school board candidates.

To his fellow parents he suggested they volunteer, get involved, and know what is happening at the schools.

Kristine Murray, resident and teacher at RMMS

Suggested interviews with teachers who have been with the district for a significant amount of time. She is entering her 20<sup>th</sup> year. She believes that the Board should check with teachers that know what the culture has been in our district, not only now, but then, who also can speak to the support they receive emotionally, socially and supporting our students first and foremost in our schools.

She is saddened and actually thinks there is a lack of understanding of some parents. Unfortunately, it is that 1% that knows very little factually. Those who referenced specific individual should perhaps look to gain a bit of background information. If you think about individuals who have been let go, perhaps we need to understand who they are and why they are no longer with us or their many previous districts.

She encouraged the Board to speak with teachers who have been here for longer than 2 years and would state very strongly that one teacher that left us did leave perhaps because the culture was not what it was. However, she stressed if you look anywhere in the district or country, the last two years have been awful in education. It has been trying for parents, for teachers, administrators and students. She asked that they not look at what they might have seen or believe they have seen or think they know better than those that are living it daily who continue to be 100% in support of our administration, and to those who are speaking ill of them she would suggest they do a little bit more delving in themselves with people who do believe that we are working with a fantastic administration.

Rebecca Leeberg, 5 Clover Hill Way

Proud wife of a middle school math teacher who has taught for 14 years and who was Coach of the Year after 14 years of coaching two sports at a school in his teaching district. She is a Clinical Oncology Specialist. She is passionate about supporting teachers and students. She was present to discuss some of the information the group has, now that they have had time to gather and come together to recognize there is a problem, so that they can fix it.

Resist the urge to judge and criticize those parents who have dedicated time and energy to identifying these problems and making others aware. They were not present to point fingers but because they bought into the reputation of this destination district and their experiences have contradicted their most basic expectations. They were there because once they make the Board and Administration aware of these problems, they are going to come up with a plan to fix them.

She suggested the Board review the test score graphs. She noted the ELA State Assessment scores for reading, the only State standardized test at the early elementary school level that provides an insight into how our students perform in language arts as it compares to other schools in the State. The first graphs show a set of schools that we used to be in line with; Bedford, Hollis, up at 85% proficiency in 2016. We slowly dropped year after year, from 85% to 55% proficiency in ELA on the State assessment for 2021. The second graph is a set of schools that, as of 2021, we are now falling behind. She questioned where the 2022 data is. Our RMMS students declined by 30% in 5 years. What has changed at RMMS in 5 years? Prior to this timeframe our scores were in line with our destiny student district reputation.

She commented on the increased taxes from Nashua to Brookline (more than double just to have her child in this school district). She suggested one might argue that since the Board is representative of the parents, students, and teachers that they should really be presenting this information to us. She questioned why they are not as she believes oversight to be a part of their job.

She questioned if the Board supports the teachers, parents, and students. If so, following the June meeting, when concerns were raised surrounding culture, bullying, and special education, why did the Board take July off and turn over hiring and firing to the Superintendent? The teachers are begging for your support, but you take the month off. Many of our RMMS teachers do not have confidence in the administration, their union or the Board. They fear speaking up because they will not be renewed if they are not tenured. She spoke with a tenured teacher who said she left the teachers' union after paying into it for many years because it did not support her. The same teacher said she was so glad to see that there were parents who were looking into this and told her she was headed down the right path that tenure was a factor.

The national attrition rate for teachers is 8%. The data they collected from 2019 to 2022 reflects anywhere from a 20% to 22% rate. In 2019 to 2020 the Brookline overall attrition rate was 17.46% (RMMS was 21.87% and CSDA 12.9%). The attrition in 2020-2021 was 17.19% in Brookline but at RMMS it was 20% in comparison to the 8% national average. CSDA was 13.8%. For 2021-2022, the Brookline statistics reflect an attrition rate of 15.625% (RMMS professional staff 21.21% and CSDA 9.6%). The past three years' attrition rate is anywhere from 20-22% when the national average is 8%.

Many parents were the strongest supporters of the school and the administration. Some of the parent association group members are former PTO staff, volunteers, parents who donated or help the school and staff. One might argue that they are the ones aware of these issues because they were made aware of it due to their level of involvement.

If you are not alarmed, then you are not paying attention. Teachers both past and present state a common thread of concerns and one common theme is that they feel a lack of support. Yes, with more support staff but also listening to those who interact with the students on a daily basis to ensure our children's best interests are at the core of the decisions within the district. Ms. Milewski describes the cause for her resignation and other exiting teachers as a dysfunction within the district that multiple people and groups have tried to remedy with no success.

As parents and taxpayers, they are hoping that this time it will be different. Teachers cannot stand before the Board and speak as many are not residents. If they are brave enough, what do they face afterwards. The Board remarked during the June meeting that they do not read all of the teacher resignation letters. Why not? Mrs. Milewski's letter describes that those who have tried to improve these problems have been met with defensiveness, silence or denial. That has been her experience as well.

The Principal did not respond to her last email, she met with the Superintendent before the end of the school year and has yet to receive a response on her general education concerns. If she does not get a response from the Principal because he says that her email "didn't warrant a response", and then the Superintendent does not respond to her after an hour long meeting, she too is met with silence. The Superintendent will have you think that he has a policy and procedure to remedy all of these things. If everything is going great, why are teachers, parents and staff saying these things? We have to work together and recognize that there is a problem we need to fix.

Lori Annagarvis, North Mason Road

Moved here last year. Her child is special needs. She wished for anyone who may have had issues with special needs at RMMS to come and speak with her. The difference of care that her child has received in comparison to Nashua is substantial. She has never before experienced a Principal take someone's child to every single bathroom because they were afraid to use the bathroom.

She does not know all of the experiences of others but does believe with a special needs child it is not all on the school, it is on you as a parent to step up and figure out what needs to happen. She spoke of the desire and willingness to speak with anyone having difficult with special education issues as she has had experience in Washington State, Virginia, Washington, DC, Nashua, and now in Brookline. No child whether a physical handicap, mental handicap, etc. needs to be washed underneath the rug. She has dealt with nearly every person in Nashua and Brookline who is handling special needs cases and is happy to help anyone else working their way through the process.

In her experience with her son, it was like a light switch went off when they came to Brookline. Her 5½ year old was screaming and crying that he did not want to go to school when he charts off as a 13 and 14 year old in a lot of the studies. He did not want to go and sit in kindergarten because of how he was being treated. If something was happening behavioral wise, in Nashua, he was literally brought to and sat in the front office and told to be quiet. He is a 5-year-old with Asperger's. You cannot just do that to a child. People here have already helped him in many ways.

She spoke of her appreciation for RMMS. She has seen the Principal walk her hysterically crying child through that school to different bathrooms to try and get him to use them. She knows that he has changed her son when he has had accidents at school, and told him that it was okay, He applauded her son and did a quick little party with stickers when her son went and used the bathroom by himself. He made it a big deal and made him feel whole.

Miranda Terry, 1 Laurence Way, PTO President

Has been a resident for 7 years. Prior to her time as PTO president, she was involved with the Women's Club. She is very involved in Town. Even before her children came to RMMS she already knew the Principal very well. He is an involved community member who resides in this town, chose to live in this town so his own children will attend here. She has seen him always pour himself into this community.

We have dealt with COVID the last few years. It is an unprecedented time. You cannot judge what has been going on these last couple of years. She is also in education, and it has been awful. For these administrators to have to deal with what they have had to deal with, the parents alone and the calls. The Principal probably gets 100 calls/day. Every time she is in the building instead of being at his desk the Principal is running around with a student, acting as a paraprofessional, lunch duty aid or out at recess. He is literally never at his desk. They are understaffed; there are not enough paraprofessionals. That is not the fault of anyone, that is the case across the whole country.

People make mistakes, people make the wrong decisions, but she knows for a fact that the Principal does his absolute best.

There are members of this new committee for whom it is not just innocent and trying to help the teachers, there are personal vendettas there and that is not okay. These parents need a reality check. We are still

very lucky in Brookline. She has many teacher friends in neighboring towns and across the country; it is very difficult where they are. We are still in a place where our kids are happy and thriving. That is all she cared about during COVID. At the end of the day if they come home and they want to go back that is all she can hope for right now.

We are all forgetting how these two years have affected all of us. These people are human. These administrators are human and have families just like we do, and they have concerns and fears. We are all in this together. We are so divided and do not need to be. She moved to this town wanting a small community where people worked together to make the community what it is, and she has had a very good experience up until recently. She has loved being involved in this town. It is so rewarding, but right now the way people are behaving is disheartening.

We have to realize that we have it much better than most towns. Do we have work to do, are there other problems; obviously. But it is like a witch hunt. It is not okay. We need to support these teachers, find out how we can help, support our administrators. This year should be about building back up community. The PTO has much planned to bring the parents and families back in the building.

Tom Solon, 2 Shady Rock Road

Did not know any of this was going on. Although a school board member in a different district, he does not go on social media, and was not aware of the proceedings. The reason he became aware of what was occurring tonight is because a friend called to ask him what is going on and suggested he look at the video of the last meeting.

Addressing the School Board he remarked you are doing well. You are doing the right thing and it is important that you remember your role, which is to make policy, hire a Superintendent, address a budget, and make sure the schools are running. You are not the managers of the school. You are not the bosses of the teachers. We have one of the finest administrative groups in the country. We have people coming to our administrators asking them to instruct them on how to get results such as those that are achieved here. One of those results is hiring and retaining great administrators. One of those is hiring and retaining great staff. We have wonderful teachers, and they are teaching in a really horrible environment right now that is not unique to Brookline or New Hampshire or even the United States. Trust yourself.

He suggested avoiding the temptation to get brought into the weeds. Speaking with parents is a very slippery slope. Speaking with teachers is even more dangerous because it puts you in a position that compromises your objectivity. You really need to be able to hear all sides, and when you develop a personal relationship with someone who has an exclusive point of view you run the risk of losing that objectivity. If you think you have good administrators, let them do their job and allow them to make the decisions about how things are going with the staff in the building. You need to have trust. Just like we want the community to have trust in us, we need to have trust in our administrators. If you have a problem with an administrator, SAU level administration, bring it up with them. If they ask you to get involved in the buildings great, but if you start inserting yourself and circumventing the system it undermines your ability to be a school board member.

A school board member and a parent at the same time are two tough hats to wear. Remember how to be a school board member even when it is tough.

He spoke of something stated by a parent during the last meeting that really scared him. They were talking about the degree to which a teacher was, for lack of a better word, going rogue. Although the intentions may be wonderful, he does not think that many people recognize the impact that an individual teacher taking a path that deviates from what the school as a whole is trying to do makes it more difficult for the school to be successful. You will get the information you need, more than you want, but try to resist the temptation of jumping across lines. If you want to hear input from parents or teachers work with your administrators to set up an appropriate forum where all of you get the same information at the same time and you do not compromise your objectivity or ability to look at the big picture.

Chris Cospedo, 5 Birch Drive

Is among the quieter community members but believes the bulk of the community that is supporting the administration. She believes it can be hard to be heard or felt sometimes when there are a loud few. We are here and we support you. You are the best of the best. It is really important to touch on that. She is one of those that have been a part of the past 3 Principal and Vice Principal selection committees in Brookline (two before and one after the pandemic). It is a different hiring world out there. During the last Vice Principal search everyone they offered a position to received at least 17 other offers. It is hard to get the best of the best right now. In her opinion we have the best of the best. We should not mess with that.

She asked the administrators to weather through this noting there are many who love and support them. Do not allow a few to push you out.

*The period for public comment was declared closed at 6:51 p.m.*

#### **PRINCIPALS' REPORT**

Principals Bouley and Molinari highlighted items from the report, provided as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

Patricia Bouley, Principal, CSDA, spoke of enrollment history; overall June enrollment was at 591. Projected enrollment for this year is 580. At CSDA, 7 families moved out of district and 7 families moved in. She learned earlier in the day there are 3 additional students coming to CSDA.

Daniel Molinari, Principal, RMMS, spoke of the work being conducted at RMMS. He expressed gratitude to the community for the support provided and for those who have been conducting the work over the summer. The area has been cut out and the elevator will be installed in the fall. The hope is to have the project completed by the January/February timeframe. The lower level has transformed. The library is being renovated. When entering the main entry level what will be seen is the security office/reception area to the left. Further down to where the double doors were previously, the library entrance is on the left. When looking to the right will be the elevator. Behind the elevator is where the music room will be. If continuing straight from the main entrance, space is being transformed into flex space along with a staff meeting room and a small storage area.

The remaining stairwell will lead you to the upper level where a conference room will be seen to the left, which is where all special education meetings will be housed. The former learning commons area has been transformed into two 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms. LED lighting has been installed. Two flat panel screens have been added resulting in all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers having flat panel interactive smartboards. New windows have been added in the far end of the room. The former computer lab area had cabinetry and tables removed and became the special education classroom. All special education classrooms are now in the central part of the building.

All of the rubber mulch was replaced on the playground. Earlier in the day work was done in the playground area to remove rocks/add loam. The parking lot was sealed.

Chairman Haag commented on having had the opportunity to tour the facility. Every classroom at RMMS has been emptied, the entire place is being rewickered, all floors have been redone, all bathrooms have been redone. He expressed gratitude to everyone who worked to get this done. He has deep appreciation for how much work has been completed over the summer.

Principal Bouley noted at CSDA, the front walkway was made ADA compliant (ramps installed). The playground area was excavated for new hardtop access and an ADA compliance swing. Unfortunately, it appears the swing may not arrive until October. Phase I of the replacement of exterior classroom doors began (3 doors completed). Ramps have been created at the exterior of each classroom door (ADA compliant). New coating was placed on the gym floor.

Upcoming events were noted including the presentation by Lynn Lyons on August 30<sup>th</sup>. She will help our families for emotional health; dos and don'ts as we move forward. This is for parents and educators to help all students in the community.

Principal Molinari noted an item not included on the report is the flagpole ceremony planned for September 2nd. Evelyn Maghakian will be invited as it is a remembrance on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Mr. Maghakian.

Asked about the NESDEC forecast for kindergarten, Principal Molinari noted the enrollment in kindergarten last year was larger (approx. 80 students). The NESDEC report was pretty accurate this year (we are at 53). There were 5 teachers last year with about 17 students/class. It was reduced by 1 teacher. There are now 4 kindergarten teachers.

Vice Chairman Jew noted the staffing needs identified in the report; 3 Paraeducators and 1 Custodian at RMMS and 1 Case Manager and 1 Paraeducator at CSDA. She commented although it may feel onerous, volunteer training is important and legally required. The schools could really use volunteers.

Member Marsano spoke of the removal of the storage area and questioned what is being done for storage space. Principal Molinari spoke of the removal of some older/outdated furniture. There is a storage area located in the gymnasium where chairs were stored for events. A few racks were taken out and deployed to other areas. Second level storage was added to that room. The amount of storage area has improved.

## **DISCUSSION**

- Brookline Board Memo – June Follow-Up

Superintendent Corey read into the record the communication he provided with the agenda packet.

*“I wanted to take this opportunity to clarify a few items that were discussed during the June Board meeting during public comment. Much of the discussion/comments involved personnel matters, discipline incidents, special education and funding. The nature of these items (personnel, special education and discipline) limits what I can state but I wanted to provide details regarding our practices and procedures as they relate to these topics.*”

### Discipline

*During the pandemic, we experienced an uptick in inappropriate behaviors. Improper language, unkind acts and bullying all increased over the past two school years. Oftentimes inappropriate language and roughhousing get lumped under the topic of bullying. Our bullying protocols and procedures are clearly outlined (see attached). When a report of bullying is provided, the administrator has a set timeline and clear direction of who should be notified. The law requires both families to be contacted unless there are compelling reasons why this should not happen. During my tenure we have always notified both families of an alleged incident of bullying. The building Principal is required to either substantiate or unsubstantiate the claim of bullying. Oftentimes it is difficult to clearly define an incident as bullying. Many times it can be roughhousing, inappropriate language or an unkind act that requires intervention or discipline consequences, but which based on developmental understanding, is not bullying. Young children often do not comprehend that their words or actions are causing harm and therefore struggle to understand why there is an issue. If a claim of bullying is unsubstantiated, it does not mean that appropriate discipline consequences will not be issued. On some occasion where physical contact or a fight occurs, though rare, the Brookline Police Department is involved and determines if an assault occurred. Police involvement often raises the level of anxiety for the students and families involved. Bullying investigations are required to be sent to the Superintendent and a family has the ability to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent."*

As has been discussed at Board meetings, this has been difficult. It is very difficult for a student who has been perhaps remote and then not in school for almost 2 years to return and quickly conform to rules and regulations at a very young age. Teachers spend almost the entire first quarter developing those habits. We have seen an uptick as he believes every school in the country has. For a situation to be classified as bullying, the child has to have some understanding of what they are doing. When you are 7, 8, and 9 you don't necessarily understand the concept of personal space. Many will recognize the P.E. teacher uses what he calls his bubble space. In Hollis they use hula hoops just trying to teach little ones what personal space means. Our teachers have been frustrated because discipline has increased, and it does appear that more and more is being tolerated. However, at the same time, as the Administrator we have to take into account that all children are presenting a little differently because of what they have experienced as a result of COVID.

We fully expect between the new teacher training and professional development and programs that will be offered, to be able to swing back to environments that had very little discipline problems. He spoke of having come to a district where if having a single fight at the high school level it was a bad year. This year there were more than a handful. This pandemic has not been kind to kids. The administration will work with the teachers, respect this is being seen, and it is understood. He aggravated some teachers when some bullying issues came up where he felt child A and child B could no longer be together. He has an obligation to solve the issue. If that means he needs to move one of the children to a new classroom he will do it. It's not popular with teachers as they get into their routine and are used to their students. It did happen this year more than any time during his tenure.

### "Special Education

*All special education decisions are made by an IEP team. The parent is part of this team and may choose to have an advocate attend or experts be present if they so choose. Parental rights are provided to parents at every meeting to ensure the family understands their rights regarding how*

*the meeting is conducted. Personnel decisions are not linked to any student's IEP team decisions. The District is required to provide FAPE (Free, Appropriate, Public, Education), and the IEP process has many safeguards and appeals processes built in should the parent and the District disagree."*

At every single meeting, a parent receives their rights and can reject what the IEP team is saying. There is a wealth of safeguards for them in that process. They can go to due process, can contact the State, go to mediation. We would never make a decision about an individual because of what was said in an IEP meeting. We offer services and do everything we can to work with families to ensure we do provide FAPE. Sometimes it can be contentious and difficult and that is understood. Part of his responsibility is to represent all of the other students as well as the students who need services.

### *"Personnel*

*The teachers are represented by NEA NH and their rights and responsibilities are outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The District views human resources as the essential component in the education of a child. To that end, the District provides a wealth of supports to ensure a high probability of success for the individuals we hire. The last couple of years the pandemic has shrunk the applicant pool for positions, but overall our SAU and Brookline is still a destination District. Each August the District provides two days of orientation where staff is provided with training, a broad overview of the curriculum, as well as time to acclimate themselves to their building. Each new hire (novice or veteran) is provided with a mentor to assist the staff member. Each building has a Building Coach to provide another layer of support for new teachers. In response to the increase in new teachers, we have created a new, grant-funded position. The role of this instructional coach is to support teachers with instructional strategies, pedagogy, and organization of learning space.*

*Staff members are provided professional development at internal sessions, and they have the ability to seek out and attend sessions they believe will enhance their classroom instruction. Each year all staff meets with the building administration to establish goals for the school year. The administration periodically checks in on progress and formally reviews progress at the end of the year. Each new hire is observed four times per year, and the teacher is not aware when the observation will occur. Each of these formal observations is documented and each observation is followed by a post-observation conference. The post conference primarily focuses on the observation, but the administrator can raise concerns regarding any other matters such as attendance at grade level meetings, participation in professional development, or punctuality just to name a few.*

*The non-renewal decision encompasses a wide variety of employment issues not just teaching. The building administrator provides the SAU administration with regular updates regarding staff at their regularly scheduled bi-weekly meetings. From December – March there is a clear focus on who will be offered a contract for the upcoming year. The teachers who will be nonrenewed are invited to a meeting with the building Principal and a second administrator. There are always two administrators in attendance at the non-renewal meeting. The Principal provides the staff member with the non-renewal notice and no reasons are provided based on the RSA's that govern teacher non-renewal. The written notice provided to the teacher informs them they have the option of accepting the non-renewal or resigning. In some instances teachers select the non-renewal to*

*ensure they are eligible for COBRA insurance or if they believe they will be collecting unemployment.*

*This choice of accepting the non-renewal results in no letter of resignation being provided. The School Board is provided with recommendation by the Superintendent in the form of a renewal list. This list is provided to the Board in non-public session and then during the public session the Board votes to affirm the nomination list. An individual who chooses to resign or simply to take no action after the Board had accepted the nomination list would not have that ability to resign at a later date since they no longer have an option for future employment with the District. As an SAU we understand our decision creates anxiety and oftentimes human resources will reach out to answer any questions an individual may have regarding the non-renewal/resignation process.”*

Every year we make difficult decisions. This year, on Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup> or Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, we notified staff they were going to be non-renewed. Non-renewed is the term in education where we are not inviting you back. We have made the decision. That is based on what we have observed. Our Principals do 4 follow observations, they are in and out of classrooms all the time. He and the Assistant Superintendent are in the buildings on a regular basis and are in classes regularly.

It is not something taken lightly. During that meeting they inform the staff member that they are being non-renewed and are unable, under the RSA, to provide them any reasons. It seems as though you don't care, but we are governed by the RSA. The staff member is provided with a written explanation of the rules and regulations governing it and their options. Each letter is signed by the Superintendent. He is the only individual who can make nominations to the School Board. Those individuals were provided the information on those two dates. Some chose to resign, some to accept the non-renewal and some chose not to do anything. In the document it tells you that if you do nothing, on April 14<sup>th</sup>, which is the day before we are legally required to give out contracts, you are officially non-renewed.

The pandemic made it very difficult for hiring. Nine years ago if we had a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade opening, we would have had 50 resumes; 50 qualified people many of them wanting to come here from other districts. This year we are looking at a handful of people. It is a completely different hiring environment. Many of his colleagues have chosen to leave teaching because it has been very difficult.

Teachers are accurate when saying the last two years have been very top down. That is a fact. Board supported his recommendations to wear masks, we had desks 6' apart, we didn't have anyone close together. We weren't in groups of 3 or 4 like had been the case. Instruction became direct instruction, and if you know the elementary level, direct instruction is not the best form of instruction for those children. When you are trying to protect a teacher and children from COVID, you mandate that.

We also went through the reality of what was passed at the State, and concerns around Critical Race Theory. The State passed a law that we had to advise teachers how they needed to conduct themselves. As many know at one point there was a bounty list put up to identify teachers who were violating that. Many of our teachers were scared. Many of our teachers didn't want to misstep. They love children and what they are doing, but this is their livelihood. It is difficult when you are dealing with a pandemic and a curriculum change like that and not being able to do some of the things that we have always done. He provided the example of his going into the elementary schools and that the 3 or 4 year old programs are some of the best places to stop. Those children don't know with COVID you are not supposed to hug. He would walk in the door, and they would come running over and before you knew, it had already happened. Everybody was in a learning curve, every teacher, child, para, etc. Many of the things we have done in the

past that made us successful were put on hold. One of the things that hurt us is we typically, across the SAU, have about 500 people sign up to be parent volunteers. They go through the training process. Those 500 people are in and out of our buildings half an hour here, a day there, an event there. None of that occurred.

He is a parent as well, and when suddenly you cannot see something with your own eyes you start to wonder. We were not welcoming; you signed in, got your child, you went home. The days of being able to wander around and spend time with kids, that is all returning. We heard from the PTA President tonight, and he cannot count the number of forms he has signed, and the number of events planned. Everyone is trying to do something to normalize the experience for the kids in these two towns.

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> there is a non-public meeting during which he provides the nomination list to the School Board identifying everyone who will be brought back. They ask questions, e.g., is anyone on the list on an improvement plan, is there anyone on the list that we have concerns over. They do their job. Their questions are answered, the Board returns to public session and ratify the list. That list has been in the minutes since March. There has been no secret about who was asked back. We don't put a list up of who we don't ask back. He is regularly in the building, and as a result of that talks to teachers all the time. He stated for the record he believes Katy Milewski is a fabulous teacher, and if she called him tomorrow wanting her job back, he would do everything he could to bring her back. The difficulty is when the Superintendent reads a letter that maybe isn't 100% accurate, it takes on a different meaning. He has been cautioned on many occasions by legal counsel that he cannot do that.

We have a unique system because we are four different legal entities; the SAU, Brookline, Hollis, and Hollis Brookline Cooperative. It is 100% accurate, he did not read all of the components in that letter. He did that based on legal advice. He wished for those watching to understand he knew Katy Milewski. When he arrived, she was the computer teacher. She told him she wanted to become a classroom teacher, and they made that happen because she was good for kids. He would like nothing more than for her to call him wanting to come back. But she has made a decision, and one that he supports because he respects her. Please don't confuse a veteran long standing teacher with someone who is on the non-renewal list.

When he arrived 9 years ago one thing the Board stated they desired was to ensure that if you were reaching continuous contract status, which many call tenure, that it had a value. Every teacher that has that status appreciates the value we put on that status because they have put their time in and paid their dues. It is not just about what we do in the classroom that makes us a teacher.

### *Funding*

*Community members voiced concern that Hollis was significantly outspending Brookline on school support. The Hollis budget contains a number of significant debt payments based on their recent renovations to Hollis Primary and Hollis Upper Schools. Both Districts have approximately the same class size policies and staffing levels. One area that Hollis has more employees is Para educators. Hollis also has a curriculum administrator, a community resource officer and a full time Spanish teacher which account for roughly \$300,000 in additional payroll. Contract-wise, teachers in Hollis earn more in salary but have a smaller percentage allocated to health care. In Brookline, teacher salaries are slightly lower than Hollis, but the District contributes a higher percentage to healthcare. From an overall compensation package both districts are comparable and both districts offer the NH Retirement system to their employees. Should Brookline continue to make capital investments to their schools, they will see this budget gap close."*

If you want to spend more money, he is happy to do that. It has been very difficult because we have a very small taxbase. He knows residents chose the schools and want what is right for their children, but he has to balance the needs. Last year we had about \$350,000 worth of costs that we started the budget with because families had moved into the district requiring services. On top of that are the needs we had at RMMS. He was advocating for \$2.9 million not \$1.5 million, because of the needs at CSDA. RMMS is probably 60 years old and this project this summer is the first major renovation since the building was constructed. It is made up of residential boilers; 7 different rooms of residential boilers. We are not very efficient. We have a number of maintenance issues coming up. We are using the same approach used in our neighboring district. To construct a new elementary school comes at a cost of approx. \$55 million. In Hollis, we are wrapping up about 5 years of renovations at a cost of approx. \$13 million, and we have added likely 25-30 years of useful life.

These two individuals, Dan and Trisha, during the pandemic, allowed us, on countless days, to be open. We didn't have to call you at 5:30 a.m. and say we are closing. They covered lunches, they covered classrooms, they did whatever needed to be done along with every other staff member. A lot of times he would turn on the news and hear stories about unions. He asked the residents to please not think of our teachers as the individuals you may hear about because our teachers did everything they could to make sure we could open.

We opened in 2020 because it was the best thing we could do for kids. When he sees ELA and math results go down a little bit, he is expecting that. When you are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade he has until you graduate from the Hollis Brookline High School to catch you up. He has time, can be methodical and has experts who do it really well.

Perhaps he should have read Katy's entire letter, he does not know. He wished for the residents to understand he had a reason why and it had nothing to do with her. She is an outstanding person. He was disappointed that he didn't get to say good-bye to her.

Superintendent Corey stated his recommendations to be for him to return to the Board in September with a proposal for a climate study. He would like time for the students to get settled and to ascertain an exact cost.

He will be evaluating the budget to determine if temporary help can be secured on the administrative level to take some of the evaluations off our administrators, some of the 504 meetings off our administrators so that we can ensure that they are out with kids. He will be looking at people that he is aware of that would look to do some part-time work.

In the FY24 budget, he will be again proposing a 4<sup>th</sup> administrator because it is a known need. He cut that administrator back when times were difficult, and cuts had to be made. Enrollment has grown. We have needs. Noted was that a fully loaded administrator position (health benefits, NH retirement, salary, etc.) will cost about \$139,000. He has been meeting with Police Chief Quigley as the district will be proposing a School Resource Officer (SRO) to be shared between the two buildings. We moved the teacher added to grade 4 (through ESSER funds) based on the ELA data, up to grade 5 with that group because they were struggling (funded through REAP funds). There are no ESSER or REAP funds remaining. Next year the cost of the position will have to be included in the budget.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug clarified on March 23, 2022 a presentation on the data was provided in the district. Discussion was around NH SAS data as well as Aimsweb, which provides

more information starting with kindergarten. She had a data presentation on January 13, 2021 where all of the information was shared. There was also a data presentation on November 28, 2018 where she shared historic data from 2016 until that point. What is really important to understand when reviewing data is it is not just one piece of information.

Looking at the presentation provided in 2018, she discussed how we are really looking at apples, oranges, and bananas. In 2016 we were the last district in the State to do a paper and pencil administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Our test was paper and pencil while everyone else had a computer adaptive test. Our results weren't necessarily comparable to the rest of the districts in the State. In 2017 there was no longer an option for paper and pencil. We took the Smarter Balanced assessment on the computer for the very first time where other districts had been doing it for a few years at that point. It was also computer adaptive. In 2018, they issued NH SAS and replaced the Smarter Balanced. For three years in a row we have data points, but they are not necessarily comparable.

When she took a look at some of our data, she identified that we had a sort of out of the ordinary result for our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students for 2021 with 55% proficient in ELA and 52% proficient in math. She wrote her ESSER grant to describe the need to address those learning needs in that particular cohort and rather than moving along with 4 sections of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, which met the class size specifications, we added a 5<sup>th</sup> section so that we could reduce class size and all of the students could get greater one on one support. What is not told in some of these graphs, but what we do look at very carefully and closely, is that if you look at that cohort in 2021 which was 55% proficient in ELA, as 4<sup>th</sup> graders they bumped up to 72% proficient. It does not matter what we see in one day, it matters what we see over the course of their education with us. That much growth was experienced as a result of our teachers spending quality time doing quality instruction with them over the course of a year. Their math scores went from 52% proficient to 67% proficient this year in 2022. That tells a better story than one little isolated point in time.

It is really important to take a look at that. What is also really important is looking at 2022 data, which isn't fully released yet. She is uncertain how the State has done. She only knows our preliminary data. All of our cohorts with the exception of 1 assessment piece, have seen significant growth, and that tells the story of what takes place day to day with our teachers and students with the direction of our administration. That is really telling. That being said, she still had some concerns across the board with that cohort. She didn't want to just push them back into 4 sections at 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She found another grant source to fund that 5<sup>th</sup> section in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. That cohort remains fully supported at the same level as this year.

As Superintendent Corey mentioned, you will see it as a new item in the budget because her expectation is they are likely going to need that support as 6<sup>th</sup> graders, and we will probably need a 5<sup>th</sup> section. If not, we can readjust that and take a look at that as more data becomes available. We have to proactively plan for that.

Looking at this data, we recognized the need for support in ELA at RMMS. In August of 2021 teachers all received Foundations training to boost up their ability to support the reading needs of our youngest learners. Just this week we had some of our teachers work to ensure that our ELA curriculum was up to date and across the board consistent amongst the grade levels. When teachers return next week, we are bringing in a consultant to do reading training to make certain that now that they have that Foundations training all of our teachers have that same level of support in reading

instruction. In addition, we are providing specific mass general supported behavior training for all of our teachers in Brookline.

There are needs, but we are certainly looking at them, addressing them, and trying to figure out the best way to support all of our teachers and administrators to help us move forward. Certainly this has not been an easy past few years, but we are not sitting idle. We are utilizing information available to us and working together to problem solve.

As mentioned in the discussion about teacher training, we do have new teachers across the entire SAU. We welcomed more new teachers than fit on a school bus as we learned during the tour provided of Hollis and Brookline yesterday. Part of that was being able to provide them support not just with the curriculum with reading, Foundations, and behavior, but also with classroom management and the organization of space, communicating effectively, small group instruction, etc. Each teacher is provided with a mentor. About 6 years ago we added a building coach, which is one teacher in the building that provides sort of over-arching support for all of our new teachers. We've utilized grant funding to create an instructional coach of one of our beloved, recently retired, highly respected teachers from one of the districts within SAU 41 who can spend the time not tied to their own classroom but one-on-one with our newer teachers to provide the support that they need, modeling of instructional strategies, substitute coverage so that they can view a peer; observe a different lesson or the strategy with a student.

Chairman Haag spoke of a comment made around the Board not having a July meeting. That stung a little bit because there has been a lot that has been going on in June, but not a lot that can be said instantly. You heard a lot of the detail here. He wished to impress upon the trust that the Board is looking after the administration, teachers, feedback from the community. You heard a lot of the outlined recommendations. A lot of those were discussed in depth in non-public session before we could talk in public. Your feedback is being heard. He struggles with the remarks that we have a fundamental culture issue. It doesn't mean that we can't improve things. He is very concerned that if we are loud enough about having a culture problem, we will make that manifest destiny and we will create a problem that doesn't exist. He cannot say that loudly enough. Nobody is perfect. You heard how difficult the last two years have been to say the least.

Everyone is dedicated to remaining as one of the greatest districts in the State. He stated appreciation for the comment about building back the community. That really resonates with everyone profoundly and that is what we have been missing. There is a real dedication to doing that.

We listen to every piece of feedback. Not everything can be shared, but inaction doesn't mean there is nothing happening behind the scenes.

We have talked about these assessment scores for the last 18<sup>±</sup> months at Board meetings. We have been discussing this and it is why we added the extra teachers and why we have been looking at it. We adopted a new math program a few years ago. The Hollis district is now adopting that because of our success. We are looking at what is going on in Hollis because they have some better language type things. The Portrait of a Cavalier portfolio that the Administration has been pitching for K-12 is very real. We are really looking to harmonize and continue to improve where we can.

Member Micavich remarked she has to listen to a meeting and then reflect on it afterwards. When she reflected on the June meeting, she regretted not speaking up more. Someone in the audience said it

best; the majority of us want to have a collaborative community. We don't want to come in here and talk about half of a factual situation, admit that we don't know the other half, and then demand the resignation of individuals. That is not how we operate in this community. There is a large majority of parents in this community that support the Administration. That does not mean we don't ask questions. The way that meeting went seemed like people had a decision in mind and they were drawing out certain facts and then demanding resignations. She wished to reiterate her support for the Administration and for the community that we have to work together collaboratively. Yes, we have things to work on, we are committed to that, and she is hopeful we can do it in a positive way. We create culture and climate in this room too.

Vice Chairman Jew commented on the outstanding administrators and staff and the Board's support of them. Everyone is here looking out for the best interest of the students. It is important to voice your concerns. It is important to come to these meetings because everything is addressed. Everything is presented over the year, you learn how it is presented and the cycle of when the results come in. Sitting on a soccer field and gossiping is not going to get you accurate information. If you have a concern that comes up outside, come here, address the School Board, bring it to the Administration, but come to our meetings because everything is done in public. We want to hear your feedback, but this is the forum for that. This is where you will get accurate information. You will hear from staff, from other parents, and the Administration. Come here first, please.

Member Marsano remarked first and foremost if there is a climate and culture problem it is because people are saying there is, not necessarily because there is a pervasive problem. She was pulled into an office yesterday morning at work with someone talking about the climate problem here. She doesn't have a child in the Brookline School District any longer but has still continued in her role because she believes in these schools. That is why her family moved here. Has she had problems, yes, has her child been one of the problems at times, yes. These individuals are fantastic at what they do. One of her own children was being bullied at one point and they didn't even tell her. The then Principal called her the next day and spoke with her about it. Her response was she had no problem, she was confident it was being handled. She had faith that it was being handled appropriately, and that is a faith that continues today. When her child was the problem and she found out, Mr. Molinari was her first phone call because, as the parent, she needed to take responsibility for her child's behavior.

We look at this climate and say there is a climate problem, but one of the biggest problems faced right now across the country is discipline issues within the school. If we keep trying to pile it on our teachers and our administrators to solve it, it will never get better. It has to be collaborative across parents, children, administrators, and teachers. It is heartbreaking to think that we are standing so firmly and unwilling to sit outside and really look at all of the perspectives. She hears what the residents are saying and understands that is their experience. We all come in with our own biases, thought processes and ways of wanting everything to be. This is a public school where we have to compromise on everything. We have to follow the RSAs and policies. If you feel that we are not that is a major issue that needs to be addressed. If the policies are being followed even if we cannot see all sides of it, e.g., what the discipline for a certain student was, that is okay.

She reviewed attrition rates while sitting here, and believes the 8% number was a little low, at least in this state. Attrition rates are brutal. Dissatisfaction with jobs is high across the board. Healthcare, teaching and mental health are huge areas where this is occurring. We have not had the volunteers in, and it was all in the name of safety. This administration put together a plan to keep our children in school. Did we disagree about masks, yes. She still wears one because of her own health issues, but

she is okay with others not. It is about the collaboration, the working together and trying to see it from the other person's perspective and take it all in.

She commented on remarks around a vote of no confidence, which really bothered her. Asked what percentage of teachers are in the union, Superintendent Corey responded he did not know the exact number off the top of his head, but during his career the number of people that choose to join has decreased. He can gather the information for the next Board meeting. Member Marsano stated the union helps our teachers get what they want. There are fewer and fewer teachers paying into the union and complaining about protections. If the union is not protecting you, maybe it is because something is not right. The union doesn't just ditch their teachers.

Chairman Haag stated the topic would continue and would be heard during the budget cycle. He encouraged residents to continue to be involved in the process noting in order to see it through it has to happen at the polls too. We will need this same energy through March to make some of these recommendations reality.

- Unreserved Fund Balance
- Facilities Update

Superintendent Corey noted the Unreserved Fund Balance would be covered under Deliberations and the Principals covered the facilities update during their report.

- Safety and Security Update

Superintendent Corey spoke of work with New Hampshire Homeland Security, which conducts evaluations of the buildings and make recommendations. An area identified, addressed for some time, and which has now become a mandate, is the requirement for a Joint Loss Committee. The Joint Loss Committee is a group of educators from across the SAU who, on a monthly basis (unannounced), visit classrooms. They are looking for safety issues, e.g., if doors are propped open, utilizing too many extension cords. The group meets quarterly and includes representation from the Brookline and Hollis Police and Fire Departments, as well as Emergency Response. A lot of this work leads to the videos that we have for our volunteers to review. All staff goes through that training.

Beyond that, the two towns come together. The Superintendent sits on the Emergency Management Team. If a tanker truck goes over on Route 13 spilling chemicals, there is a plan for that; how we protect all of the children. Every situation is discussed. When we think of safety and security, we need to think of everything it encompasses.

In terms of safety and security around the buildings and the tragedies we see, all mandated drills are practiced and reported to the State each year. Noted was that the following day the administrators would be at the HBHS spending the day with the police on intruder safety. One of the biggest things we have learned is to harden the entrances. He spoke of the improvements made to the entrances requiring visitors to interact with others before gaining access to the building. One of the critical areas of concern is response time. About a year ago, we started working with the Brookline Fire and EMS, Police, Hollis Fire and Hollis dispatch. We have put in a request for all 6 schools to get new walkie talkies that communicate from here all the way to the high school in Hollis so that the Superintendent can sit at CSDA, learn of something occurring at the high school and can lock it down. The police and others are included in that communication.

We have spent extensive time and approx. a half million dollar grant on this increased level of communication. Also being looked at is the Milford Street entrance to RMMS, which was previously the main entrance to the building. We want to change that into some form of an office, etc. RMMS having a smaller number of staff and not requiring the same percentage of the grant, they included an architectural study of the best way to address that entrance.

There is safety being addressed around the construction project taking place during the school year. All of the construction workers are having background checks done and will only have access to the ground floor.

Superintendent Corey stated he and Chief Quigley have met on several occasions this year to discuss putting forward a warrant article for an SRO. They are looking to determine eligibility for grant funding. They were able to secure an elementary officer in Hollis through grant funding.

Later tonight, during non-public session, he will be speaking with the Board concerning other safety aspects. This is one of the items that recently became eligible to be discussed in non-public because you don't want to sit in public session informing those that might be trying to gain access exactly how you plan to keep them out. The district will continue to make safety the number one priority. From a budget point of view, the biggest priorities are those that directly impact the students. He provided the example standpoint, being considered is the Assistant Principal who is one step removed and the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who will be in front of students. He would like the administrator, but if push comes to shove that position will be let go again. Guaranteed that would make the lives of the administration miserable, but a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher is going to change the lives of kids.

The Administration and Board will continue to provide updates on safety and security as they are able. Should there be a concern, residents are asked to reach out. Last month an individual mentioned an instance of an open door. It was investigated and learned it was open during milk delivery. The person is right inside the door, but it is still a concern. The Administration will look to determine if there is a better way to do that.

Superintendent Corey remarked tonight the comment was made that he had not returned a call. He disagrees with that. He met with a person for an hour and a half around an issue that was an area that he does not control. As Superintendent he has no legal authority over special education. He set up a meeting for that individual with the Director of Special Education for the SAU. On that Wednesday night the Board meeting took place and then that meeting was cancelled. To say he does not get back to people is a pet peeve of his. If you email or call him, you may not like what he says but he will get back to you.

#### - Staffing Update

The district is currently basically at the same staffing level that we ran at last year. That means there is a professional staff member in every position, but that, just like last year (for the entire year), we are down 4 paraprofessionals. We are also down the 4 Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS) positions that were funded in the budget two years ago. Those positions have not been able to be filled. The bodies just aren't there. There is a driver for every bus and every van. It is hoped that will remain the case. Superintendent Corey stated the desire to publicly commend the transportation company as they made certain they matched the starting pay of the neighboring districts so we would not lose drivers.

He has asked that the Board provide the opportunity for temporary support for administration, and part of that, if he can get the right individual, would be doing some of the MTSS work as it revolves around data.

That would allow additional data to get back to teachers who would be able to adjust curriculum, which increases the probability of success.

If there is knowledge of anyone who wishes to work in the kitchen or as a custodian, the district would welcome learning of that desire.

Chairman Haag spoke of reopening and questioned if the district is back to the lunchroom and recess being wide open. Superintendent Corey stated that to be the case. If a family wishes for their child(ren) to wear a mask they are more than welcome to. Right now everything is back to normal so there will be 92 kids in the lunchroom, we are not segmenting the playground, etc. He will closely monitor and work with DHHS, If adjustments need to be made, they will do that.

### **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's memo regarding the Unreserved Fund Balance

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RETAIN THE SUM OF UP TO ONE HUNDRED FORTY THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY ONE DOLLARS (\$140,161) OF SCHOOL FUND BALANCE FROM THE FY22 SCHOOL YEAR AS THE END OF YEAR AVAILABLE FUNDS ALLOW MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

### **ON THE QUESTION**

Superintendent Corey reminded the community this Unreserved Fund Balance (UFB) cannot be expended without Board permission and a Public Hearing. It is a safety net to be able to address an unanticipated/unbudgeted expense, e.g., boiler. The first attempt would be to utilize the operating budget to cover the cost. At year end, if the item caused there to be a concern for the budget, this is the funding source that would be looked to. In prior years there was a Contingency Fund. When the taxpayers approved the UFB the Contingency Fund ceased.

Member Marsano asked for clarification, at year end, if not utilized, those funds return to the taxbase. Superintendent Corey stated there to be a sum of money that will be going back to the tax base to offset what has to be raised to support the next year's budget. This motion is the Board making the decision to have that safety net in place. Were the Board not to do that the funds would be returned to the tax base. That decision is made each year. The percentage that Brookline voters approved that could be retained is 2%. The State allows approval up to 5%.

Chairman Haag noted this has been held in the budget all year. This amount aligns with the budget line items of what we held for this and what we planned to return to the tax base.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO PROCEED WITH A CLIMATE STUDY FOR THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO BE REVIEWED AND LAUNCHED IN SEPTEMBER OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Marsano asked for clarification this motion is to allow the Superintendent to return to the Board with information on the cost and what is involved in the process. There is no cost at this point. Chairman Haag stated cost would be identified in September and then it would be launched based off of approval of that. Vice Chairman Jew stated appreciation for the Superintendent taking the feedback and offering a plan to address is. Superintendent Corey stated he has reached out to Tom Closson, Esq., who the district just brought on board as legal counsel. As a labor attorney expert this is something he will be assisting with.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO REVIEW THE COST OF ADDING PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE HELP FOR THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR FY23**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Marsano clarified that is at no cost to the district at this time, and was told that is the case, at this time.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-0-0**

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3, II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE AND RSA 91-A:3, II (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

*A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

Yea: Alison Marsano, Colleen Micavich, Karen Jew, Kenneth Haag

4

Nay:

0

**MOTION CARRIED**

*The Board went into non-public session at 8:20 p.m.*

*The Board came out of non-public session at 8:41 p.m.\*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ADJOURN  
SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO  
MOTION CARRIED  
4-0-0**

*The August 24, 2022 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_