

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
SEPTEMBER 28, 2022
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, September 28, 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
 Kelly Zakar

Members of the Board Absent:

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

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 (I) CONSIDERATION OF LEGAL ADVICE PROVIDED BY LEGAL COUNSEL, EITHER IN WRITING OR ORALLY, TO ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BODY, EVEN WHERE LEGAL COUNSEL IS NOT PRESENT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

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

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

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Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 6:00 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 7:07 p.m.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug requested the Board act on an error identified on the 2022-2023 school calendar; the March early release date was identified as March 7, 2023 and should be listed as March 14, 2023.

There being no objection the agenda was amended to include the item, under Deliberations.

CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS/NOMINATIONS – None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brookline School Board [August 24, 2022](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 8, Line 25; replace the comma with a period following “well”
Page 20, Line 48; replace “nit” with “it”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW
MOTION CARRIED**

4-0-1

Member Zakar Abstained

Brookline School Board – **Non-Public** [August 24, 2022](#)

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

4-0-1

Member Zakar Abstained

PUBLIC INPUT

Noted was the language included in Policy [BEDH](#).

Chairman Haag opened the floor for public input at 7:08 p.m.

Mike Baier, 2 Kemp Drive

Spoke of looking forward to a good year.

The public input period was declared closed at 7:09 p.m.

PRINCIPALS’ REPORT

- Opening of School

Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA), highlighted items from the report, which was included as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

District enrollment is currently at 580. CSDA had 7 students move out and 13 move in.

Principal Bouley stated the new year at CSDA started with 2 assemblies. Plans are for an assembly each month. She spoke of working with Guidance to collaborate a class from each grade level presenting/holding the assembly in October. The subject matter will be communications/conversations.

Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS), commented on the excitement level in the schools. Upcoming events were noted.

Principal Bouley spoke of the open positions at both CSDA and RMMS as well as the need for volunteers and substitutes.

Chairman Haag commented on the amount of training required for volunteers and questioned whether there is the ability for some of that training to roll over from year to year; specifically the 8 hours required, e.g., could the level of training be based on level of volunteering. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the requirements for volunteer training are dictated by district policy and can be reviewed by the Policy Committee.

DISCUSSION

- Facilities Update
 - Building Aid

The discussion was brought forward last month. There is the opportunity for building aid through the State. However, the district cannot move forward with the application process without formal action by the Board indicating support. If successful, the Board is not committed to putting a project/cost on the Warrant in March.

- Renovations Update

Principal Molinari noted work is progressing very well. At this point in the process, you can begin to see the outline of where the library will be. The area where the elevator will be located was recently dug. Drywall has been delivered and studs have been put up to section off the large old storage area; there is currently a section for the teachers' room and two 250 sq. ft. sections next to that, then a storage area. Preparing for LED lighting installation.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the framing downstairs is underway, the doorway openings have been put in, and walls removed to open up the music room. In October, a specific timeline will be provided.

- Staffing Update

At RMMS, open positions include 3 Paraeducators and a part-time custodian. At CSDA, 1 Case Manager, 1 Paraeducator, and 1 Custodian.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the climate survey proposal provided at the Board's request

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR A CLIMATE SURVEY AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED SIX THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY FIVE DOLLARS (\$6,875). SOURCE OF FUNDING IS THE FY23 GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

ON THE QUESTION

Member Zakar remarked back in the March/April timeframe she mentioned the idea of a climate survey. In general, workplaces across the country have gone through a great deal over the past several years, and most industries have validated survey tools to gain a pulse of their employees, volunteers, and administrators. It is her hope something like that can be identified for use in the schools to gain the pulse of how things are going, what supports could be used for the adults and students in the buildings, what we are doing well and upon what we could improve.

A proposal was brought forward. She is uncertain, however, that what was proposed would be the right direction. She is not in support of the current proposal. She does fully support identifying a tool that has been validated for use in educational settings.

Member Micavich stated her full support of a climate and culture survey but views it as soft questioning of people's thoughts. With the idea that climate is created by every single individual in the building, she does not support the proposal that was put forth tonight. Although well intended it seems too much in the nature of investigating and not at all what she had in mind.

Vice Chairman Jew stated she would not support moving forward until the Board agrees with what the desired product is.

Member Zakar noted a website; safesupportivelearning.ed.gov, which looks like a government clearing house of school climate surveys. That may be a place for the Board to start looking for resources.

Chairman Haag stated the Board has discussed the need for a sense of the climate and was offered a first proposal of a solution tonight. He does not believe the Board is aligned on the vision at this point. Discussed was the possibility of something more standardized that could reach all employees. He appreciates some of the aspects of the proposal such as use of an independent third party to summarize the data to a meaningful dataset, which would allow the Board to act on any findings. He believes the Board is looking for something broader than interviews.

Member Marsano remarked interviews should not cease but should not be the only source of information. Chairman Haag along with Vice Chairman Jew and member Micavich acknowledged agreement.

Member Marsano commented on her belief many climate surveys are never answered. Having the interviews provides critical information. Data points are data points, e.g., on a scale of 1-5 how to do find this? There are always comments that go along with it. There is that need for discussion.

Chairman Haag commented some of the experiences occurring are the result of coming off of 2.5 years of unusual situations. We have all sorts of things that are different now. There is a general concern around changes that have happened, systemic changes in schools that are seen nationally.

He suggested the Board hold off on approving the study and come forward with information on how members would like the survey to look for consideration at the next meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented a hybrid would touch on where everyone is. It is critical to have that third party participate. She is hearing the Board is in full support of a study, it just needs to look different.

Member Zakar questioned if anyone has worked in a school that has gone through this survey process with a validated tool that is meant to take a pulse of educational settings. Principal Bouley responded the last district she was in did that. The part that they were missing was the one-on-one interviews. As was mentioned, it is great to have a scale, but it is subjective.

MOTION FAILED

0-5-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Administrations recommendation to support the application(s) for building aid

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT TO MOVE FORWARD WITH APPLYING FOR SCHOOL BUILDING AID FOR THE BROOKLINE SCHOOLS
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

The State has opened up the opportunity for building aid. The NH DOE has conducted a site tour in Brookline, where there is the need for many building projects. How much funding there is and whether or not the district would gain a spot at the top of the list of applications/projects remains to be seen. The district would not be considered in the absence of a vote of support by the Board.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the SAU Administrations recommendation for part-time administrative support

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION FOR TEMPORARY, PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, 15 HOURS/WEEK, AT AN HOURLY RATE OF SEVENTY DOLLARS (\$70.00), WITH NO BENEFITS, NOT TO EXCEED THIRTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$35,000)
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag commented on this being another opportunity for a Curriculum Coordinator whose time is split 50/50 between the two buildings. That is not an item included in the budget. At this time, being considered is bringing in a former COOP School District administrator part-time. The individual understands how our school system works and would help with matters such as curriculum and disciplinary needs, oversee the rollout of IEPs, etc. This would not be a standard item in the budget and would not roll over to next year (for this year only).

Member Micavich stated her full support of the temporary part-time position believing it time the principals receive some level of support that is equivalent to other districts in the State. She spoke of the time commitment the principals have made, which is not sustainable. This would be a good start in the right direction. She is supportive of the individual being one known to the district.

Member Marsano wished to make it understood there are funds available to cover the cost as a result of positions that have gone unfilled. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted positions that remain unfilled include MTSS positions that have been in the budget since 2020 and have been unable to be filled. The money was earmarked for something else, the support is needed, and the result is the funding could be transferred to a different line item within the budget to cover the supervised support for the administrators to support teachers and students.

Chairman Haag commented we are laying the groundwork as a trial for a long-term solution around a curriculum coordinator. That has been feedback heard over the past several meetings. He believes that is the direction the district is heading into.

Vice Chairman Jew commented it feels as though there has been screaming support for more support for administrators and teachers. The feedback has been heard, and the Board is taking a step it can, within the current budget, to address that.

Asked if the Board could discuss the individual, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the administration is looking at bringing on Robert Ouellette, former Assistant Principal at the high school. He is recently retired, was in our district for over 26 years, knows the teacher evaluation model inside and out, our families in the community, our administrators, and many of our teachers from common professional development days. He co-chaired the district-wide safety committee with Principal Molinari and knows all of our drills inside and out. He can be a resource in many ways. This is a great opportunity to test out what we have had to remove from the budget for the past 7 years, but with an individual who can hit the ground running. We can do that at a part-time rate absent of benefits. This undertaking can provide the data needed to either support or not support the position as we propose an FY24 budget.

Asked for their thoughts, Principal Molinari spoke of being excited to have Mr. Ouellette come on board. He is known to the community and has been wonderful at the high school and the COOP. He has good relationships. He will bring that aspect of the observations. He knows the safety protocols and has handled discipline at the high school level. For both of our buildings he will be another layer of support. Principal Bouley added both she and Principal Molinari were acquainted with Mr. Ouellette. He is a wonderful asset for the entire district. He is easy to work with, very approachable, and the rest of the staff will enjoy working with him as well as the student population and community-at-large.

Member Zakar commented on being pleased to hear about a creative approach to a problem she believes has been identified. In her personal experience as a parent in the COOP district, her perspective is that Bobby O, as he is affectionately known by the students, is a well respected member of the HBHS team, he is a varsity swim coach who won the State championship last year, and really does have a lot invested in our community. She believes he will have a lot of support from a lot of different constituencies.

Chairman Haag commented this is solely the result of the overarching changes in behaviors and need for support. We see this across all school systems across the United States, and we are trying to better support our entire staff. We have talked about Brookline versus Hollis at the elementary level; this position does exist in Hollis and does not in Brookline. We are laying the groundwork for this to be in the budget.

Member Zakar stressed this position will support both teachers and students. She expects he will make a direct impact with our students on a day-to-day basis.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding an update to the 2022-23 school year calendar

The March early release date was identified as March 7, 2023 and should have been March 14, 2023, voting day.

MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO AMEND THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL CALENDAR BY CHANGING THE MARCH EARLY RELEASE DATE FROM MARCH 7, 2023 TO MARCH 14, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HAAG

ON THE QUESTION

Member Marsano commented prior to COVID, the Board had made it a priority to not have students in school on voting day. We have stepped away from that. She would like return to that practice with next year's calendar.

Chairman Haag suggested the discussion be added as an agenda item for next month's meeting.

Member Zakar added she would like to reach out to the Town to determine if there is an alternate setting. Chairman Haag noted the Board has engaged in this discussion previously and he would like to set aside ample time to discuss the issue. Member Zakar agreed with having the discussion around the next school year but feels families have provided the feedback for the preference for school not to be in session in March if the voting takes place in the schools.

Chairman Haag spoke of the importance of getting all of the information out to the public. Including this as an agenda item will allow that discussion to take place.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy AC – Non-Discrimination
Given its 1st Reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY AC – NON-DISCRIMINATION, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

ON THE QUESTION

The policy has been in place since 2004. The former policy differed greatly from current requirements. As a result, the Policy Committee essentially replaced it in its entirety with the updated language. The policy also addresses the anti-discrimination plan, which will come before the Board at the next meeting. It also identifies the person or persons acting in the various positions, e.g., Human Rights Officer, 504 Coordinator. It is a much more comprehensive policy. The district follows the law but is behind the times in terms of updating the policy to mirror the law.

Asked if the proposed language comes from a template provided by the New Hampshire School Board Association, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug replied it does, and has been approved by the other two districts.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **BEDH** – Public Participation at Board Meetings
Given its 1st Reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO AMEND #1 BY REPLACING “15 MINUTES” WITH “30 MINUTES” AND ACCEPT THE FIRST READING, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Noted was a change in State RSA (SB410), effective September 6, 2022, which requires 30 minutes for public comment.

Member Marsano stated the desire to incorporate language clarifying how individuals are allowed to address the Board and the Superintendent, and whether or not reading of material from those not in attendance can be incorporated.

Member Zakar spoke of remote participation that occurred as a result of COVID. That was the first time, for those who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend in person, were able to participate and have their voices recorded in the minutes. As things started to integrate those opportunities started to close down. She is concerned with the loss of the opportunity for residents to participate remotely. Not allowing testimony that has been written by another to be read into the minutes feels a little inaccessible.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated her belief there are differing opinions by attorneys. She will bring the question to the Department of Education attorney, and the information back to the Policy Committee. Although she does not believe there to be a right or wrong answer, she does believe there to be one that would be recommended by legal counsel.

Member Marsano suggested there is likely an opportunity for compromise. Perhaps counsel could be asked to provide an opinion around a resident composing and sending a letter to the Board with a request for it to be read into the public record. She would be more in favor of that approach.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the next meeting of the Policy Committee is scheduled for October 17th at 8:45 a.m. in the conference room at CSDA and is open not the public.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **IGE** – Parental Objections to Specific Course Material
Given its 3rd Reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE THIRD READING AND ADOPT POLICY IGE – PARENTAL OBJECTIONS TO SPECIFIC COURSE MATERIAL
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the intent was to remain less specific in terms of the makeup of the committee. When reviewing course material, a team would be utilized that is most appropriate, e.g., if reviewing a book that the 6th grade team is reading, the committee would consist of members of the middle school, English teachers, librarian and principals. We would also likely have the school counselor to look at all competing factors as well as the concern that was brought forward. The desire was for the language to provide the flexibility to do that.

Chairman Haag commented the other discussion was around the form versus notice in writing. The language states notice in writing. There is no designated form, you simply have to provide written notice.

Member Zakar commented she understands the point of keeping the language broad. Her concerns were more procedural than around policy.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **IHAM** – Health Education and Exemption from Instruction
Given its 2nd Reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE SECOND READING OF POLICY IHAM – HEALTH EDUCATION AND EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

ON THE QUESTION

This is a new policy to the district and is governed by State law. No amendments have been proposed since the last reading.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **JICK** – Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention – Bullying
Given its 2nd Reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO AMEND UNDER SECTION XII BY INSERTING THE SENTENCE “IF THE SELECTED REMEDIAL MEASURE REQUIRES THE VICTIM’S PARTICIPATION, THE VICTIM’S FAMILY WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE REMEDIAL MEASURE” AND BY REPLACING “HIS/HER” WITH “THEIR” IN EACH INSTANCE IT OCCURS, AND ACCEPT THE SECOND READING OF POLICY JICK – PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Micavich stated her concern had been if this has come to this point, we are working with the student accused and notifying their family, but the student who is on the other side of the situation needs to know that this is occurring.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **KEC** – Policy on Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Given its 3rd Reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE THIRD READING AND ADOPT POLICY
KEC – POLICY ON RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

ON THE QUESTION

No changes have been proposed since the last reading.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ADJOURN

SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The September 28, 2022 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____