

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
FEBRUARY 22, 2023
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

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

Members of the School Board Absent:

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

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Chairman Haag noted the meeting would adjourn by 7:00 p.m. given the current weather conditions and closure of the school facility.

Superintendent Corey suggested the discussion around the Special Education Trust be delayed as it will be a decision that the Board seated for the next term would have to make.

CORRESPONDENCE / RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / NOMINATIONS

Work is being finalized on the long-term substitute in the area of Guidance at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA). The Superintendent and the Director of Student Services will update the Board in March regarding a transition for a special education administrator. The transition of that individual will start during the current school year and the individual would be formally welcomed to the full-time position in July.

Chairman Haag commented on this being the last meeting for members Jew and Marsano. He thanked them for their years of service to the students and community-at-large.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jt. Mtg. Brookline School Board/Brookline Finance Committee [January 11, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 1, Line 28; replace “belief” with “believe”

Page 7, Line 2; correct the spelling of “the”
Page 13, Line 31; replace “Board” with “Boards”

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

Brookline School Board – **Public Hearing** [January 11, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 38; replace “of” with “or”
Page 5, Line 2; replace “F24” with “FY24”

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

Special Brookline School Board [January 31, 2023](#)

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

Brookline School Board – **Non-Public** [January 31, 2023](#)

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

Brookline School Board – **Deliberative Session** [February 8, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 5, Line 14; replace “going” with “go”
Page 10, Line 16; correct the spelling of “save”
Page 22, Line 14; replace “IN” with “In”
Page 25, Line 25 replace “or” with “for”

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

PUBLIC INPUT

Chairman Haag opened the floor for public input at 6:04 p.m.

Olly Hill

Believes the dress code is unfair and targeted towards girls. The dress code unfairly targets girls when most examples used are things like tank tops and spaghetti straps; items boys usually don't wear. It infers that boys don't wear anything bad and that girls are the problem. It also points out girls bodies or body fat or is aimed at girls who have bigger chests or other body parts.

A lot of the time when teachers point out body fat or a body part that they feel should be covered, it makes kids insecure. She has been dress coded many times and has been told to cover up or to put on a sweatshirt. She remembers one day she was sitting in the bus line waiting for her bus. She had a tank top on in hot weather and was told to put on a sweatshirt. When she explained she did not have one, she was taken to the office and had to sit there and wait for her bus. Another time she was talked to for showing too much. Again, she was in a tank top. This made her insecure about having a bigger chest than most other girls in her grade. She would like to have a further conversation at the next Board meeting as she does not believe the dress expectations as written are appropriate. She would like to talk more about her thoughts and ideas.

Superintendent Corey thanked the student for coming before the Board. Although there is no dress code policy in Brookline, policies from the other districts within the SAU could be sent to the Policy Committee for consideration.

Chairman Haag noted the next meeting would be the Organizational Meeting during which member(s) would be appointed to the various committees. It may take a bit of time before the Board has a draft policy for consideration. The student and her parent(s) will be made aware of the meeting during which a draft policy would be discussed.

Chairman Haag noted the period for public input would remain open until 6:34 p.m.

PRINCIPALS' REPORT

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

Principal Bouley noted enrollment remains steady (total of 585 students). She commented on the level of student, teacher, and family participation for STEAM Night.

Principal Molinari spoke of the celebration of 100th day, Valentine's Day, and STEAM Night. What he found most impressive while watching this project unfold was that students went through the engineering design process in all 4 grade levels. The kindergarten students were partnered with 2nd grade students and 1st grade with 3rd grade. That allowed the older students to be leaders for the younger students and provided role models for the younger students.

DISCUSSION

- Teacher Survey

Superintendent Corey stated he, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug, Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator, and Board members Zakar and Micavich met via Zoom to review the proposed survey from OCI. It consists of 30 questions, is validated, believed to be very important and a great starting point for gathering data.

Members Zakar and Micavich were charged with preparing a cover memo to go along with the survey.

Member Zakar stated the Organizational Climate Index (OCI) survey tool is a short organizational climate descriptive measure for schools. It has four dimensions; Principal leadership, teacher professionalism, achievement press for students to perform academically, and vulnerability to the community. Each of these dimensions was measured by a subtest of the OCI. The reliability scores for the scales were relatively high.

The desire is for a tool that could be used without modifications to avoid impacting the validity.

The survey tool has been benchmarked, which means when our faculty and staff complete it and we get the results back, they will be anonymous, and we will be able to score it and look at item numbers for each score and come up with generalizations about areas the feedback is benchmarked to.

Chairman Haag asked, with the survey being manual (pen and paper), from a scoring standpoint, will it be a manual tabulation. Superintendent Corey stated it is a Scantron sheet. Where the appropriate oval would be colored in, the papers could be sent through the machine, which would tabulate the responses.

Member Zakar stated she and Member Micavich drafted a statement to serve as a cover letter to accompany the survey.

The draft reads as follows:

“Dear Staff Members,

Thank you for taking the time today to carefully consider and respond to this climate survey. The Brookline School Board represents a Town that deeply values and appreciates the teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and other staff members who provide an education to our children. Our goal in providing this survey is to gain a better understanding of the climate in the Brookline schools and to provide a tool that allows your voices to be heard.

We selected a tool that has been validated and is benchmarked. The survey is being given by pen and paper to provide anonymity. The results of the survey will be shared directly with the Brookline School Board and will be used to inform decision making regarding allocation of resources, potential further inquiries into staff perceptions, professional development, and goals for the school year.

We appreciate you taking the time out of your busy day to share your thoughts, feelings, and opinions with us. We hope this will be the first of many opportunities we have to listen to you and work with you all to continue to foster a supportive school community.”

Asked if the data is only shared with the School Board or with Administrators as well, Member Zakar stated it would be shared at a School Board meeting. It was suggested the statement could read “The tabulated results will be shared at a Brookline School Board meeting”.

Asked, Member Zakar noted mention was made of the possibility of handing the survey out at the conclusion of a staff meeting. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked it has to be made available in a way to ensure that all staff receive it.

Chairman Haag commented if the timeframe were 2-3 weeks it would allow everyone an opportunity to be heard and the results tabulated.

Asked if this was intended to be a one-time event, Member Zakar stated this to be used sort of as a baseline after which we can see if there are other areas that need to be explored. Member Marsano suggested a survey at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year would provide better data for how things are going.

Superintendent Corey suggested, if approved by the Board tonight, it could be opened up the Monday after vacation (March 6th) and then closed on the 14th, which is an early release day. There could be a collection box or some other mechanism for receiving the completed surveys.

Principal Molinari suggested it could be put in mailboxes on the 6th. Anyone not having a mailbox could receive a copy at the office.

Superintendent Corey noted the union and union President are aware and supportive.

If the desire is for due dates to be included in the cover letter, Superintendent Corey suggested they could be added at the top in bold lettering.

- Fiscal 2023 Revenue & Expense Update

As of 1/30/2023, the area of special education is over budget by \$197,927 as a result of occurrences after the budget was put together. ADA projects are over budget by \$106,294. There were compliance issues that had to be addressed such as sidewalk ramps.

The result is a negative balance of \$54,429. When this was reviewed in December, the estimated negative balance was \$120,000 higher. In March, the Board will discuss the potential of utilizing monies from the Special Education Trust to address the unexpected expenses. The Board could also choose to look at covering the costs of the ADA projects out of the Unreserved Fund Balance.

Noted was that the district has gone a number of months with an unfilled administrative position. A custodian position was just filled at CSDA but had been vacant for a few months. It is believed the ending balance will improve.

- Special Education Trust

Postponed until next regular meeting.

- Teacher Contract Statement – Voter Information Guide

Superintendent Corey spoke of postcards the teaching staff, through their union organization, were going to be sending out. The union and a community member asked him if the Board could participate in those postcards. He does not recommend it as there may come a time when the Board is not supportive of an issue. The Board has clearly stated its position in two forms; the documents published for the voter guide, which shows a 5-0

recommendation from the Board and remarks made at the Deliberative Session regarding the value we place on our teachers and what we believe this contract does for them. He consulted legal who was of the same opinion.

The group moved forward today with their own statement.

Asked if the Administration is still on track with the reveal of RMMS following February vacation, Superintendent Corey stated the project is progressing wonderfully. Principal Molinari stated his belief the area will be able to be utilized after the April break. Superintendent Corey suggested it may be good to perform another tour of the facility at the start of the new term.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action, if any, the Board wishes to take regarding conducting a teacher survey for the Brookline School District.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO CONDUCT A TEACHER SURVEY FOR THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Zakar suggested reference as a climate survey.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO CONDUCT A CLIMATE SURVEY FOR THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Marsano asked for additional clarification. Superintendent Corey stated the vote would be to utilize the amended statement and the 30-question survey.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO APPROVE THE USE OF THE AMENDED STATEMENT AND OCI SURVEY FOR ASSESSING THE CLIMATE OF THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT SYSTEM

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The public input period was declared closed at 6:38 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO ADJOURN
SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

The February 22, 2023 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____