

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD  
DECEMBER 19, 2017  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Chairman Matthew Maguire presided:

Members of the Board Present:           Lauren DiGennaro, Vice Chairman  
                                                          Alison Marsano, Secretary  
                                                          Kenneth Haag  
                                                          Erin Sarris

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance:                       Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent  
                                                          Kristen Maher, Assistant Business Administrator  
                                                          Dennis Dobe, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy  
                                                          Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School

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AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

The agenda was adjusted to include a non-meeting following the public meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS - None

PUBLIC INPUT - None

PRINCIPALS' REPORT

Principal Molinari highlighted items included in the Principals' Report (copy provided with [agenda](#)).

Neil Stone, Neil Stone Academy, presented to all grade levels during a visit on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Topics were self-control, integrity, and perseverance. The presentation was well received.

A school-wide STEM activity was designed where all grade levels participate in an activity; take the Dash & Dot robots and protect them from one another. The activity is based off the book The Wild Robot, and fosters cross grade-level collaboration.

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, report cards went out electronically, for the first time. They were sent out through PowerSchool. It was a successful implementation. Families are still accessing report cards online.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual STEM Night at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS) will be conducted on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The event is in collaboration with the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA). STEM activities are conducted throughout the night in the gymnasium, library, and STEM room.

Principal Molinari spoke of having invited the Hollis preschool and kindergarten and all preschools in the southern part of the State that have students that come into either the Brookline or Hollis School Districts to attend a Kindergarten/Preschool meeting. Six area preschools participated. The desire was to form a partnership to close the gap with students that come into the kindergarten program from all over. Discussions

included milestones expected at the kindergarten level, referral process, importance of play at the early ages. Those in attendance asked that the discussion be repeated soon. Consideration is being given to it being an annual event.

Principal Dobe spoke of the school-wide fieldtrip to view the movie Wonder, and the activities scheduled in the afternoon as a follow-up. The trip came on the heels of the off-site evacuation drill. Within the span of 6 days, the entire school body was moved twice. Both events went amazingly well.

The report from the security audit was received. The school has made strong progress in terms of what has been able to be done to make the school even more secure, safe, and prepared. There were some items highlighted, which were anticipated. The District is seeking grant funding to address the items. Principal Dobe stated he does not have concerns with the items that are currently outstanding; however, believes what can be done should be done to support school security.

Principal Dobe spoke of the Winter Concert, and how enjoyable the event was for all who were involved.

When asked, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated she has access to information on the number of times each report card has been accessed. She can go teacher by teacher to see the percentage of those parents that have viewed them. Not every parent has seen the report cards; however, there is no means of guaranteeing that every parent sees a report card in its traditional fashion of distribution. Principal Dobe has the same learning curve with his 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents when they get that first opportunity to register for middle school. It is the same process of accessing PowerSchool and learning the system. We're doing the learning now so that it is a smooth transition in the spring time.

Principal Molinari reiterated they can run a report of which parents have and have not seen the report card. RMMS sent another report card home to any parent that had not accessed PowerSchool.

Ms. Sarris spoke of having heard discussion in the community about what the options will be for next year in terms of the possibility of all full-day Kindergarten. Principal Molinari stated the current set-up to be 3 full-day sections and 1 half-day section. A lot is dependent upon enrollment numbers and budget.

## MATH PRESENTATION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug provided a PowerPoint presentation (can be viewed [here](#)).

Previously, math existed as 4 separate entities; Brookline, Hollis, Middle School, and High School. There was very little communication between the 6 buildings. Decisions were made independently with no consideration as students move from one place to the next. That was a result of not having the proper channels in place for that conversation. Resources were varied. Last year the Brookline School District switched to enVision 2.0. The Hollis School District has enVision 1.0. The Districts are now in a similar place. In the COOP School District, the middle school uses a different resource, but the high school utilizes enVision.

There were limited opportunities to stray from the pathway of, this is the program we offer, and these are your choices. If a student wished to stray from that pathway it was going to be really challenging to do so. But at the end of the day the District had positive results; standardized test performance is strong, math team performance is unbeatable (16-year consecutive State champions), and well over 50% of students graduated having had calculus in high school. That is compared to 16% nationally in 2009.

With the goal of having a K-12 approach, a math steering committee was developed to guide content area for the entire district; more of a collaborative endeavor, to move the District forward ensuring logical progressions through a vertically aligned curriculum.

The Standards Based Report Card Committee, which began in 2015, identified the standards, specifically math, in every age and stage until understanding what we do, how we are hitting the standards, assessing the standards, and what do we do when a student hasn't quite mastered the standard, but we need to move on.

At the end of last year some standards were selected to be targeted. The district is piloting a Standards Based Report Card. One teacher per grade level is running a dual reporting system; traditional report card as well as another behind the scene where the teacher is grading with the new reporting system. With the new reporting system, they are trying to ensure what is being done now is mirrored in the new system, but targeted toward the standard so that when it is rolled out it is with confidence and evidence to back it up.

The SAU has instituted Meaningful Monday. Every Monday afternoon, an entire grade level team within the SAU works together for three hours. They talk about curriculum, rigor, expectations, resources available, rubrics, how the standards are being targeted. Each grade level meets once per trimester. Those teachers that are part of the pilot are also meeting an additional time once per trimester to look at a logical progression of the standards K-6.

In the Meaningful Mondays, they are also reviewing student work making sure that if we take a writing sample we are applying the same rubrics and a 3 is a 3 regardless of who the instructor is, and the expectations are the same. The instruction will look different, but at the end of the day that student is going to walk out of the classroom having had similar expectations placed on him/her so that the receiving teacher has a better idea of what that student's experience was in the year prior.

At the COOP School District, there are students taking algebra in grade 8 and others in grades 9 or 10, and it potentially looked different. One of the two Fridays per month they have a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that has all the algebra teachers coming together. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug participates in that. They look at the curriculum, pacing, student work, student data, etc. to ensure they are all on the same page, and the same standards are being taught regardless of which grade the student is taking the course.

In addition to some of that COOP work, they are really reviewing the math placement test, which impacts grade 6. Sixth grade students take math placement tests in the spring. Information gained from that test along with other data points determines where the student will be into the compacted accelerated grade 7 math at the middle school. It was a skills-based assessment; a student having an exposure to the skill was at an advantage. Some of the work Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug has been doing this year is redesigning that assessment to make it less of a skills-based assessment and more of an ability to think mathematically, and do logical reasoning and thinking, to see if the student has the capacity for higher-level, faster paced math learning rather than having done some independent work on the side until they could do the skill, e.g., can they think deeply about the concept. Another part of that conversation is when the math placement test will be given.

Another piece is revising/looking at the curriculum. There were some grade level teams in grades 5 and 6 really digging into the curriculum, the new enVision 2.0, and making sure the pacing and order were appropriate, and discussing, after sticking to it very closely in year 1, what changes can we make, if appropriate.

In the past, students took the 6<sup>th</sup> grade assessment test, were placed, and very little else was done with the information. This year, the results of that test were analyzed, standard by standard, question by question. We wanted to know how the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Brookline are doing on these standards and how Hollis students are doing on these standards. That information was then shared with the grade 7 teachers. That allows for

discussion of how to fill any gaps that may exist and how each student will be pushed in the area he/she is excelling in.

The same is true in 6<sup>th</sup> grade; if there was, across the board, a clear area for improvement, efforts are made to ensure that approach is adjusted for the current cohort of grade 6.

Last year enVisions 2.0 was implemented. This year the math centers block was implemented in grade 6 to address some gaps that were identified for the current grade 6 cohort. Some revisions were made, and a pacing guide implemented.

The Hollis School District is looking at some of what they do to be more in line with what is done at CSDA by providing additional enrichment and acceleration options.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the need to continue the conversations. The algebra PLC was created to make sure the conversations take place. A revised grade 7 compacted math course was implemented as was a revised 8<sup>th</sup> grade algebra course. There is the need to have conversations with the community so that the process is more transparent, and the transition from district to district is as smooth as possible. She provided the example of opportunities that have been in place for summer enrichment as students go from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which have not been widely publicized.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated she would be back before the Board in the January timeframe to discuss some additional changes.

Steps for the next year include:

- Identifying key math vocabulary for each course

It is a critical first step to make sure the language is there and that 5<sup>th</sup> grade knows the language 4<sup>th</sup> grade is using, 7<sup>th</sup> grade knows the language 6<sup>th</sup> grade is using. It is easy for the students to say we never learned that, but it could be just a change in the term used.

- Provide intervention to targeted group at HBMS

Piloting an intervention program to target group of about 50 students at the middle school to really look at different intervention programs, and compare how students do on a standardized assessment once having had this experience in comparison to the prior year.

- Revise the Math Placement Exam & Procedures

Is being revised. The procedures will also be revised. It is likely it would be implemented in grade 5. That would permit a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student to opt in to take the test. It would not be skills based, but rather more mathematical logical reasoning and thinking. The results of that would be used to provide a placement into an accelerated grade 6 program. That accelerated grade 6 program would then provide different pathways for the future. For the year that the switchover is done, the math placement test would be administered to two cohorts (grade 5 and grade 6).

- Offer additional options to HBMS students to best meet the needs of all learners

One piece that is part of the COOP School District budget is an additional math teacher that works both in the middle school and high school and teaches sections for middle school students that provide additional

pathways/opportunities. If there is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student who is ready for Algebra 1, there is an opportunity that exists, and that teacher/course wouldn't be tied to a team. If that student needs to take a different course or potentially geometry for 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we're not requiring that student to be transported to the high school. The intent is to remove barriers for students to ensure we are meeting their needs.

- Offer additional and/or refined options to best meet the needs of all learners in Hollis & Brookline

We need to offer a little bit more. Right now, the District is offering a little bit more in the RtI time or FLEX time during the day. There is the need to identify what it is specifically we are offering, and ensure those processes are aligned between Hollis and Brookline so that we don't create a new gap at a later point.

- Develop a K-12 approach to align vertical acceleration practices

Making sure it is a K-12 approach for acceleration so that we are prepared to receive students that may have had a different curriculum. If we move them now, what does that mean for them next year to ensure students continue to be challenged, and that the District is being proactive about meeting their needs.

Chairman Maguire questioned with the elementary and high schools utilizing enVision, and the middle school something different, is there a plan to have the middle school switch to enVision. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the instruction isn't so based on the curricular resources. The District did purchase enVision 2.0 grade 6, grade 7, grade 8, and the accelerated version for the middle school math team so they would have the resources available. Included in that is the entire subscription to all performance tasks, etc. In the middle school students have math, but are not stuck to the book. They don't take the book home and do problems throughout. To fund text books that aren't necessarily fully utilized doesn't seem to make the most sense, but making sure that the resources are available for the teachers made a great deal of sense.

Chairman Maguire questioned if the curriculum transition is smooth and without gaps. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked they look at the standards and a logical progression, and then insert the resources as appropriate to support the standards they want to teach.

Ms. Sarris stated she is pleased with the idea of an individualized approach especially when it comes to math. She questioned what led to the decision to change the assessment for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, and what the potential impact(s) could be. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded one of the pieces of data that came back from analyzing the results of the assessment was that it was top heavy on a topic that just wasn't taught. Students who hadn't independently learned that skill were starting at a much lower maximum potential. Students mature at different times, and there are some that are ready for more at a different point. She stated concern for the potential that we are not allowing all the students into a program that she believes them capable of doing, and if they are in that program can they keep the pace, and can they go in with depth. If you have a surface level understanding of a lot of topics you will struggle with the depth. Skills based assessment is not really going to be able to identify and pick one student from the other.

When asked if she has found a place for e-learning within this, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there to be a whole spectrum of what students do; at the high school the discussion is credits, which require courses that are approved through an accredited school, e.g., VLACs. There are a lot of students taking VLACs courses. There are a lot taking VLACs courses in the middle and elementary schools, but it is not credit-bearing, so the district is not necessarily made aware of it. That is part of the discussion, let's help guide the pathway; if you're going to take an additional course on your own this is the best place to do that so that it makes sense in the progression of math to ensure the foundation is strong, and continues even if that student does something independently.

They have discussed supplementing with additional resources. There are online resources being utilized for some students now. RMMS has a program that is available to all students. CSDA has a different program that is available to some students. Some of it is for intervention, some for enrichment, and some for an additional resource. That is another piece of the puzzle; how to organize all the resources.

Ms. Marsano questioned if it was an over-identification of students going into the accelerated math classes that was of concern, the under identification or a combination of the two. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded it was a combination. When asked how it would be known if the plan was successful, she responded there is a different answer depending on who you ask; some would argue the number of students taking calculus indicates success, but she would argue that is not an indicator; shooting for more than the over 50% that already exists is not a realistic goal. For her a successful program would be fewer students feeling the need to leave because we're not meeting their need.

Ms. Marsano commented the standards based is more intriguing; if you are finding you have more students meeting standards versus graduating with calculus she believes that would provide a better indicator of success.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated they would continually review and make small adjustments, but to do a whole program review they have to look at the cohort; 1<sup>st</sup> year of grade 6 accelerated math that took the test, what did they look like in grade 9 and grade 12.

## DISCUSSION

- FY19 Budget - Update

An updated budget line item detail list was provided, which correctly identified the additional teacher at CSDA.

Addressing new items, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the math intervention line item (\$1,500), is intended to ensure the District has appropriate resources available to close gaps, if necessary, in math. That is shown in the new line items for both RMMS and CSDA. There is also a defined STEM program. This is another curricular resource that aligns standards with real world projects.

Under the heading of Personnel, there is the cost of a part-time science specialist moving to full-time (\$17,000) and a part-time custodian (\$3,500) this figure is down from the previous round of budget discussions (originally listed as \$5,000) due to a decrease in number of hours. The classroom teacher at CSDA (\$70,000).

Under the heading of New Computer Equipment, the total is identified as \$0. However, at RMMS there are iPads and a projector that, although removed from the operating budget, are identified on a list for which grant funding will be sought. The same is true for the Chromebooks at CSDA.

Under the heading of Replacement Computer equipment, the \$5,200/\$6,500 in staff laptop costs was removed in the latest round, because of a review of existing laptops, and the determination replacement could be put on hold for a year. Remaining on the list is a copier for the teachers' room (\$4,500) and a copier (\$4,500) for the main office at CSDA.

Under the heading of Safety Issues, security upgrades have been removed as has playground equipment replacement. A thorough study was conducted, which indicates the District is in really good shape. There are a couple of opportunities in terms of moving forward with new items, but grant funding can be sought for those as well.

Under the heading of Facilities/Maintenance, the amount allocated for classroom sinks/counters has been decreased (now at \$7,300), the first phase of the playground work as well as trim work and boiler replacement have been removed in the latest review/round. The amount allocated for HVAC Work/Air Handler (duct cleaning) has been reduced (now at \$7,550) because of having received more favorable quotes. Items previously listed for CSDA have been removed. The items that were highlighted on the list, have been moved to the list of items that will be funded through the maintenance trust.

The revised budget proposal results in a potential increase of 2.79% over the FY18 approved budget. The BESSA contract is pending. The BTA contract will be a Warrant Article. The SAU assessment is listed as are the trust funds. The result is a total of \$9,638,809.07.

Mr. Haag questioned if there is an identified percentage at which the Maintenance Trust Fund should be kept, noting if the fund is utilized to purchase some of the items previously identified in the budget, as proposed, the balance would go from \$72,000 to \$40,000. Ms. Maher noted the Warrant Article that would allocate an additional \$50,000 to the fund providing the year-end unexpended fund balance is sufficient to cover that amount. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the Board and the public could change that number at the Deliberative Session.

Ms. Maher stated she is unaware of a percentage range having been identified. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented it is at a low amount, and she would not want to see it dip too far below. For the past few years the Principals have been able to address a lot of facility/maintenance needs, which is likely why the balance dipped down to the \$72,000.

Mr. Haag spoke of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) the Board reviewed last year, and requested that be brought forward again to provide the Board and the public another opportunity to review progress being made and capital improvements planned for future years.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the default budget, should the voters not approve the proposed budget, would result in the loss of a grade 4 teacher and a preschool teacher. The default budget is the amount of the previous year's approved budget plus any contractual obligations, and less one-time expenses. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug went over the contractual items that differ from last year, and will have an impact on the amount of the default budget. The difference between the proposed and default budget would be \$164,404.

The Public Hearing on the proposed budget is scheduled for January 11, 2018. The Deliberative Session is scheduled for February 5, 2018. Historically, the Board has conducted its regular monthly meeting on the same evening as the Public Hearing. Chairman Maguire questioned the will of the Board regarding conducting its regular monthly meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. He noted it is also at the January meeting when the Board will need to discuss and consolidate member input to the Superintendent's evaluation process. The Board decided it would hold the January 23, 2018 meeting.

Mr. Haag questioned the benefit of having trust funds that identify a specific purpose as opposed to simply having a contingency fund that could be utilized for a wide variety of needs. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded historically the Town has been hesitant to simply have a savings/trust set up. The Maintenance Trust Fund was established as items falling into that category can be large/expensive. Being able to plan and save for those items over time avoids having to utilize funds budgeted for educational purposes to cover unanticipated maintenance items. Last year the Special Education Trust was proposed and supported by the community given the unpredictability of those expenses, and the potential for the need to cover unanticipated expenses in that area taking away from regular education expenses that were planned/budgeted for.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brookline School Board . . . . . November 28, 2017

*The following amendments were offered:*

- Page 2, Line 36; replace “off-site evaluation” with “off-site evacuation”
- Page 2, Line 39; replace “home & security” with “Homeland Security”
- Page 2, Line 40; replace “recently” with “recent”
- Page 2, Lines 45 and 46; amend the sentence to read: “All but 2 were up and running again before the end of the day. All were back to normal earlier today.”
- Page 4, Line 53; replace “repave” with “repaint”
- Page 9, Line 22; replace “ley” with “key”
- Page 9, Line 53; replace “teaches” with “teachers”

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**5-0-0**

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 (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 DIGENNARO**

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

Yea: Lauren DiGennaro, Kenneth Haag, Alison Marsano, Matthew Maguire, Erin Sarris  
5  
Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

*The Board went into non-public session at 7:13 p.m.*  
*The Board came out of non-public session at 7:18 p.m.*

ADJOURNMENT

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

*The December 19, 2017 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.*

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