

BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
JULY 26, 2016
MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Tuesday, July 26, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Chairman Matthew Maguire presided.

Members of the School Board Present: Patricia Lynch, Vice Chairman
Erin Sarris, Secretary
Lauren DiGennaro

Members of the School Board Absent: Kenneth Haag

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

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

NOMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Corey spoke of the 1.0 ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) position noting last year this position was allocated to the Brookline School District, which utilized 0.50% of the position. The other 0.50% of the position was utilized by the Hollis School District, which reimbursed the Brookline School District for that portion of the cost of the position. For the coming school year, the need is for the position to be split 0.35% in the Brookline School District, 0.35% in the Hollis School District, and 0.30% in the Hollis Brookline Cooperative (COOP) School District.

The Director of Student Services has recommended the same model be utilized for the coming year whereby the position would be housed in the Brookline School District, and the other districts would provide the appropriate reimbursement.

Superintendent Corey stated no additional funding would be required to support the position as it is already allocated to the District.

MOTION BY MEMBER LYNCH TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES TO HIRE THE ESOL TEACHER AND THAT COSTS BE ALLOCATED 0.35 TO THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT, 0.35 TO HOLLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND 0.30 TO THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DIGENNARO

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

Superintendent Corey spoke of the Board Certified Behavior Analyst position, which is an Allied Health position. The need for the current school year is 0.15% in the Brookline School District, 0.45% in the Hollis School District, and 0.40% in the COOP School District. This position would be allocated to the Hollis School District, and the Brookline School District and COOP School District would provide the appropriate reimbursement.

There would be no additional cost to the Brookline School District as the position was budgeted in the behavior management account.

Vice Chairman Lynch questioned, and was informed the position was previously contracted.

MOTION BY MEMBER LYNCH TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES TO COST SHARE A BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYST; 0.15% TO THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT, 0.45% TO THE HOLLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND 0.40% TO THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

Superintendent Corey stated the Director of Student Services wished the Board to be made aware of the uptick being seen in enrollment for Preschool three-year-old and four-year-old students. Although the current staffing level provides a favorable ratio at that level, if the upward trend continues, there may be the need to discuss staffing at a future date.

Vice Chairman Lynch questioned if the enrollment figures cited on the Administrator's Report (11 three-year-old students and 14 four-year old students) represent an uptick from last year. Principal Molinari noted the last school year ended with an enrollment of 14 three-year old students and 16 four-year old students.

Superintendent Corey clarified what was meant by an uptick is that the current enrollment figures are higher than they were at this time last year.

PUBLIC INPUT - None

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- Existing Staffing/Training - Update

Principal Molinari stated the only change in staffing at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS) is the addition of two paraprofessionals, Sarah Kelley and Elizabeth Kellner, who were hired in place of teachers who moved to teaching positions.

Principal Dobe stated, since the Board's last meeting, there have been no new hires at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA).

- RMMS Front Entry Project - Update

Principal Molinari provided a PowerPoint [presentation](#) outlining the projects currently underway at RMMS.

Each Wednesday, teachers, staff, and community members participate in the painting of the entryway. There remains a single set of railings requiring paint, and the bookshelves are now being painted on the wall.

- Building Projects - Update

Two lights have been added to the Milford Street entrance intended to illuminate the two walkways.

The flooring project will begin August 1st. The flooring through the main hall as well as the 1st grade and Kindergarten wings will be included in this phase of the project. Those areas were able to be included as a result of savings achieved in other areas. Principal Molinari explained the quote for the flooring in the main hall as well as the quote from Dependable Locks and the quote for the mats in the gymnasium came in lower than anticipated. Additional savings were achieved in the entryway by a parent volunteer assisting him in the installation of the sheetrock. Principal Molinari stated replacement of the Library floor is able to be postponed to a future date, and funds earmarked for that were also utilized for this phase of the project.

Vice Chairman Lynch commented the Library floor was recently carpeted. Principal Molinari responded it was carpeted, but due to leak(s), areas of the carpet were damp. Consideration was given to tiling the floor; however, it is believed that work can be postponed for the time being.

The gym mats and electronic door locks will be installed in the month of August.

- Current Projected Enrollment Numbers and Class Sizes

Principal Molinari stated the current enrollment numbers at RMMS to be:

Preschool three-year-old	11
Preschool four-year-old	14
Kindergarten	76 (4 classes; average 19/class)
1 st Grade	65 (4 classes; average of 16.25/class)
2 nd Grade	69 (3 classes; 23/class)
3 rd Grade	70 (3 classes; average of 23.33/class)

Principal Dobe stated the current enrollment numbers at CSDA to be:

4 th grade	75 (3 classes; 25/class)
5 th grade	66 (3 classes; 22/class)
6 th grade	102 (4 classes; 25-26/class)

Principal Dobe remarked the class sizes continue to be large at grades 4 and 6. At grade 4 it is particularly concerning because it is a transition year and those students are the youngest at CSDA. In 6th grade the class sizes of 25-26 are high; considerably higher than the State average. There are very few school districts in the State that have averages as high. As of last year's data the District had the highest class size in the State. Principal Dobe remarked as he reported last year the District can handle that class size, and has been able to do that. He cannot say that it hasn't been without its challenges, but the teachers are exceptional and the students very focused.

Principal Dobe spoke of the alarming influx in late spring, and noted since that time there have not been any additional enrollments. In fact, two students are scheduled to move out of grade 4 (not reflected in the numbers cited).

Superintendent Corey stated the Administration looks at grade 4 as a concern more so than grade 6 because the 6th grade class has the Math and Science Specialists, which reduce classroom ratios. He noted the bubble being seen in 4th grade is also being seen in the Hollis School District.

Superintendent Corey stated there are options for the Board to consider. The Administration looked at this situation through a financial lens, and would make the following recommendations were the Board to look to increase staff:

Don't hire the curriculum position; instead go with consultant for this year. Savings could be achieved through that measure as well as savings that will be achieved through retirements, etc., the anticipated savings resulting from a change in insurance carriers (approx. \$15,000), and the savings achieved through maintenance projects the Board approved to be covered under year end unassigned fund balance (\$27,740). A review of the available funds less cost items, e.g., final cost of transportation contract increased by \$20,000, would result in \$89,245 being available in the current budget.

Superintendent Corey remarked any time you add staffing there are pros and cons to be considered. For example, the students in the incoming 4th grade class know who their teachers will be, and are looking forward to being in a particular class. If the decision were made to increase staffing, the Board would need to act quickly as there would be the need to post for the position, interview candidates, hire, and get the word out to parents/students.

Superintendent Corey stated another option to be to continue with the three classes, and if the numbers increase consideration could be given to bringing in 2 six-hour educational assistant positions to assist the classroom teacher(s).

Superintendent Corey commented were the Board to go too far into August before making a decision to hire, it is likely the successful candidate would be a very new teacher brought into a very experienced and talented grade level for professional staff.

Superintendent Corey stated an unknown at this time is whether insurance costs will change as a result of employees making changes due to life events, e.g., marriage, new child, etc.

Chairman Maguire stated concern with both the 4th and 6th grade class sizes noting the possibility of additional students registering for one or both of those grades. Ms. Sarris remarked as a parent, she would prefer the choice of having her child's teacher shift at the last minute and a smaller class size.

Ms. DiGennaro stated if there is the option of adding a teacher, she would be in favor of that approach as opposed to hiring educational assistants. She commented, if there is the option of a 4th classroom teacher that is one that cannot be surpassed.

Chairman Maguire noted the current enrollment for Kindergarten is 76, which will be a bubble as those students move through the grades.

Superintendent Corey remarked, over the past few years, the District has been in a position of having to RIF a teacher during the budget season. During the coming budget season that RIF would be for a 6th grade teaching position. It would be his recommendation not to RIF but to reallocate that position to RMMS. If that Kindergarten groups remains with the

District he would like to have 4 sections in Kindergarten and 1st grade to keep those ratios as low as possible, and not have to RIF.

Superintendent Corey made the Board aware, were the decision reached to utilize the savings identified to hire a new teaching position there would be little or no contingency remaining in the current budget to address any unforeseen issues, e.g., bad winter, etc. It would be a bit of a roll of the dice. Having spoken with the Business Administrator, he assured the Board if that is the decision of the Board, the Administration could identify the necessary funds from within the existing budget.

Vice Chairman Lynch questioned where the Administration would propose placing a teacher. Superintendent Corey stated if the decision were to add a teacher, his recommendation would be to add a teacher at grade 4 because of the self-contained model that happens there whereas in the 6th grade there is class movement and the potential lower ratios. Principal Dobe added students in 4th grade are in a vastly different place than those in 6th grade developmentally. In many school systems 6th grade students are in the middle school, and are traveling around in a very large class and school environments. He believes 6th grade students are developmentally more prepared for that. The 6th grade teachers did an amazing job with the class sizes they had last year, and he is confident they could continue that with the next group as well.

Principal Dobe stated concern with the amount of attention and quality of educational experience the 4th grade students would have if there were 25+ students/class.

Chairman Maguire commented historically, between the months of August and September, there have not been a large number of students added. He questioned if the expectation is that a few additional students will enroll before the start of the next school year. Principal Dobe responded that is the expectation. Chairman Maguire commented there is no way to know which grade level they would end up in. The Board could make a decision at this time to add a 4th grade section only to have the 3rd grade enrollment numbers skyrocket, resulting in that grade being the area of greatest need. Principal Dobe agreed, and added it could be that the 6th grade becomes more of a concern, noting last year the District had a large influx of incoming 6th grade students in the last 2-3 weeks before school opened.

Vice Chairman Lynch commented it has also been stated the District will not understand the number of students leaving the district until requests for transcripts are received.

Chairman Maguire questioned average class sizes. Principal Dobe stated the average class sizes for the State of New Hampshire as of last October to have been 17.7 for grades 1 and 2, 19.1 for grades 3 and 4, and 19.4 for grades 5-8. Last year the Brookline School District average class sizes were 18.9 for grades 1 and 2, 22.5 for grades 3 and 4, and 25.6 for grades 5-8. Of the 154 school districts in the State, 28 were higher in grades 1 and 2, only 5 had a higher class size in grades 3 and 4 with Brookline being the highest class size in the State, and 2 districts were higher in grades 1, 2, 3, and 4; Manchester and Dover.

Ms. Sarris questioned what the worst case scenario looks like, e.g., what are the repercussions to the community/taxpayers if the Board were to decide to add a teacher, and then was faced with unanticipated expenses. Superintendent Corey responded there would be two decisions; if you add another teacher now you may decide during budget season that you do not have the ability to add a second one or retain the one you would RIF. If you did that RIF you would be status quo because you would RIF the person that would be brought on at this time. In terms of the overall budget picture, he reminded the Board of upcoming teacher contracts. There is the likelihood the overall budget could be increasing. The District is heading toward SB2. Superintendent Corey stated his understanding were the Board to put the position into the budget, which would be a contractual position, it then becomes part of the default budget. When the Board makes the decision of whether or not to RIF that also becomes part of the default budget. There is the potential the District could be up two teachers. Where those teachers would be allocated would be based on the recommendations relative to ratio.

Superintendent Corey remarked when looking at the 4th grade he considered the fact it is a transition to a new building, and for a lot of students that is a very difficult transition. When looking at the 6th grade students they know the ropes, the staff, how to get around the building, etc. One of the things he is seeing in the community is the turnover in housing. A number of people are making the decision to move here because of the school system, and are willing to pay the higher taxes. However, that is a fine line. Two years ago the budget was cut by about 5%, last year the proposed budget came in at about \$4,000 under the previous year's operating budget. Superintendent Corey stated his opinion a level funded budget would be about where the District would want to come in, not knowing the outcome of negotiations around the teachers' contract. It may be that the Board decides there is the desire for savings in the operating budget to offset the

teachers' contract. In the past, when the District has had to RIF individuals, resulting cost savings has offset the teachers' contract.

Superintendent Corey remarked heading into a new State budget year, it is not yet understood what retirement costs will be allocated at, etc. Costs associated with health insurance remain an unknown until late in the budget process. The budget process is somewhat accelerated this year because of SB2.

For the sake of the viewing audience, which might be just tuning in, Superintendent Corey stated when looking at the grade 5 enrollment, we're at 66 students. If that didn't change the intent would have been to RIF one of the teachers at grade 6 for next year (FY18). What he was suggesting is that, as the Board enters the budget process, instead of looking at that RIF as a guarantee, it is looked at to backfill what might become a larger class size in the younger grades as more younger families come into District. He remarked that is one of the reasons he wished to highlight the enrollment in preschool as that gives him a good trend of where the District is going. Looking at 76 in Kindergarten, that is a very strong number right now.

Superintendent Corey reiterated he wished to ensure the Board has all of the facts; the funding is available, the Administration shares the enrollment concern, but balances that with wanting to provide stability for students. He understands creating a new section can cause angst; enrollment numbers were over in a neighboring community, which resulting in the hiring of a 4th grade teacher. A lot of students struggled with the changes that resulted. A great deal of effort was put into easing that process, e.g., open house, teacher letters, etc.

Superintendent Corey reiterated the importance of a timely decision, and noted although there is always the opportunity for the Board to call a special meeting near the second week of August, he is unsure if much will change between now and then.

Vice Chairman Lynch commented when she first moved into Town, parents were informed of who their child's teacher would be by a posting at RMMS. She commented there is always the possibility that a teacher could leave the District, which would also present the scenario of students not knowing who their teacher would be. Chairman Maguire remarked there is not a lot of time remaining before the start of the school year to post for the position, complete the interview process, and hire. Vice Chairman Lynch stated her opinion the Board should postpone making a decision regarding a new teacher. She noted the enrollment numbers reported over the last few months have gone up and down. She commented people moving out of the District are not as concerned with timely notification to the schools as those who are moving in and registering their children.

Ms. DiGennaro spoke of the agenda item relative to class size. She suggested that discussion would tie into the decision before the Board relative to the matter of hiring an additional teacher. She stated her opinion even if enrollment in the 4th grade is 75 and goes down to 73, she would still see that as too high of a class size. She is of the belief grade 3 at an enrollment of 70 is borderline too high of a class size. She reiterated it is a discussion the Board will have to have. She stated her desire to see an additional teacher hired, and that protecting that in the future is going to be very important given the enrollment numbers, and regardless of move-ins. She stated her belief the Board needs to look at the enrollment numbers and decide, as a District, the standard we want for class sizes.

Chairman Maguire spoke of class sizes being on the high side of the State average, and noted the incoming 4th grade was a third grade that had a huge increase during the school year. Ms. Sarris stated her belief in the long run there will be more than one class that will need to add a teacher. She would rather take the gamble and get the best possible candidate in place.

When asked, Superintendent Corey stated were the Board to approve the hiring of an elementary school teacher, the Administration could continue discussions, and notify the Board of the grade at which the new teacher is assigned, based on classroom ratios and developmental needs.

MOTION MADE BY MEMBER DIGENNARO TO HIRE AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Maguire questioned how much of the \$89,245 savings would be expected to be utilized in this hire. Superintendent Corey stated his impression, inclusive of benefits; the position would be at an approximate cost of

\$65,000. This time of the year it is likely the position would attract a teacher right out of college.

MOTION CARRIED

3-1-0

Member Lynch voted in opposition

DISCUSSION

- Start Time Committee - Update

Superintendent Corey informed the Board the committee feels it best to take no action at this time, which means there would be no impact for this school year. The committee has met with the transportation company; they have some thoughts. One of the pieces encountered is the number of students who participate in vocational education classes that are outside of the COOP School District, e.g., Nashua, Milford, etc. They have a whole other set of transportation requirements. To change start times could affect those students in a negative way if the other districts are not looking at changing start times. There are a number of districts across the State looking at the issue of start time right now. We are kind of working in parallel paths with them to see what their studies are indicating.

Another piece that comes into play is the level of darkness in the winter months; 5 or 10 minutes doesn't sound like much until it is a young student who is walking ¼ mile home in the dark. On the other end, we can't have too much wiggle room with the start time because we have athletic contests, we don't have lighted fields, etc.

The Committee's goal is to actively involve the building administration and district boards for further input, and hopefully be able to come out with recommendations in the spring for the community to digest.

Ms. Sarris added the Committee did discuss ensuring the Boards and all of the elementary schools are familiar with the research the Committee is basing all of this on as, at some point in time, there may be discussions that involve how various decisions could impact elementary schools. She stated her belief it would be helpful for the Board to review the links provided with the survey.

- Job Description Policy

Superintendent Corey noted the Board's agenda included an outline provided by the Business Office informing the Board of a problem the SAU is facing with regard to job descriptions, a sample policy (GAA), and procedures to go with that policy. He requested the Board forward the policy to the Policy Committee for review and recommendation.

Over time, job descriptions have not stayed current with the positions. The example provided was a paraprofessional; there are requirements of what they are doing now which don't match up with what was included in the job description when it was written 5-10 years ago. The overall gist of the job does, but the specifics don't.

Vice Chairman Lynch questioned if the intent is to develop a job description for every job. Superintendent Corey responded there are currently descriptions for each job it is just a very cumbersome process now as to make any modifications one has to go through a series of different steps. The Business Administrator is looking for the process to be streamlined whereby she can involve policy members and union Presidents, and get them onboard. He noted many of the unions would like to see these job descriptions updated. It is not a contentious relationship around this policy, it is just more of the need to have it specifically outlined moving forward.

Chairman Maguire clarified the policy would be relative to the process of writing the descriptions not actually providing the descriptions of what the jobs are.

Principal Molinari stated the Policy Committee already met, and are of the opinion the policy is ready for a first reading. As the item was not identified on the agenda as one which the Board would take official action on, the first reading will be included on the August agenda.

- Class Size Policy

Superintendent Corey stated there is no guiding policy around class size in terms of steps to be taken, when the Administration should bring enrollment numbers to the Board, what we, as a community, feel are the correct class size for K-3 and what the ratio should be for grades 4-6. The Administration was looking for the Board's permission to refer the matter to the Policy Committee so the work can begin on identifying guidelines that could be discussed during Board meetings, and vetted by the Board and public.

Superintendent Corey noted the neighboring community has an existing policy, which could provide something of an outline. He remarked the key elements for the Board and Administration are around the specific numbers; that trigger. That policy could be used to determine how to address overall enrollment. He commented he is not certain, if the Board were to change policy right away, the community could support a significant budget impact. It may be that the policy has to be tiered to address either upper or lower, developmental needs, etc.

Chairman Maguire stated he would like to see a first reading of a draft policy before the Board for its August meeting, and for language to be included stating there to be a specific enrollment number that when reached will trigger a discussion with the Board. He does not wish for the language to include any statements identifying that when a particular enrollment number is reached it results in the hiring of a new position. He would like to retain the flexibility to consider not only class size, but specific developmental needs, etc., which can change from year to year.

The Policy Committee will be tasked with providing a draft policy for consideration by the Board.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

Brookline School Board. June 14, 2016

The following amendments were offered:

- In all instances where it appears; remove “the” before “RMMS” and “CSDA”
- Page 2, Line 35; delete “(near playground)”
- Page 4, Line 40; replace “an” with “a”
- Page 6, Line 43; replace “hem” with “them”
- Page 7, Lines 6 & 7; delete sentence that begins “He continues” as it is repetitive with the last sentence in the paragraph.
- Page 7, Line 7; add “to” after “her”
- Page 9, Line 53; replace “sent” with “spent”

**MOTION BY MEMBER LYNCH TO APPROVE AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DIGENNARO
MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0**

AGENDA BUILDING

- Smarter Balanced Assessment Tests for the Upcoming Year
- Strategic Plan - Update
- Technology Plan – Update; to include discussion of bandwidth as it relates to the possibility of taking the electronic form of the Smarter Balanced Assessment in the coming school year.
- Policy GAA; 1st Reading
- Class Size Policy; 1st Reading

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

**MOTION BY MEMBER LYNCH 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 SARRIS**

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

Yea: Lauren DiGennaro, Erin Sarris, Patricia Lynch, Matthew Maguire

4

Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

*The Board went into non-public session at 6:55 p.m.
The Board came out of non-public session at 7:10 p.m.*

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER LYNCH TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DIGENNARO
MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0**

The July 26, 2016 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____