

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – March 19, 2014

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 19, 2014 in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Noel DiBona, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. David McCarthy, and Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Vice Chair.

Regular Meeting

Vice-Chair Presiding

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The Superintendent called the roll and all were present. Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary; Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk; Mrs. Michelle Andrews, Ms. Rita Bailey, Ms. Barbara Campbell, Ms. Diane Colletti, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Dr. John Franceschini, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mrs. Pamela Gibbons, Mrs. Mary Griffith, Ms. Beth Hallett, Ms. Kristin Houlihan, Mrs. Jane Kisielius, Ms. Margaret MacNeil, Ms. Maureen MacNeil, Ms. Kate MacRitchie, Mr. Michael Marani, Ms. Courtney Mitchell, Ms. Alexandra Morales, Mrs. Joanne Morrissey, Mr. James Mullaney, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Nancy Tierney, Ms. Judy Todd, Ms. Roseann White; Ms. Lindsay Schrier, Quincy High School Representative to School Committee; Ms. Allison Cox, President, Quincy Education Association.

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There was a moment of silence for members of the military serving overseas.

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Mr. McCarthy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bregoli, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for March 5, 2014. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Regular Meeting
Minutes Approved
3/5/14

Ms. Isola made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCarthy, to approve the Executive Session minutes for March 5, 2014. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Executive Session
Minutes Approved
3/5/14

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As no one wished to speak at Open Forum, School Committee proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

Open Forum

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Dr. DeCristofaro opened the Superintendent's Report by introducing the Inspire Quincy video featuring the recent Junior Heroes event, the Middle School Competitive Swimming Skills Clinic, HyperRobotics competition, Sterling Middle School Science Fair, Atlantic Middle School Science Fair, Atlantic Middle School Geography Fair, *The Wizard of Oz* at Broad Meadows, previews of Quincy High School's upcoming production of *Bye Bye Birdie* and North Quincy High School's production of *Into the Woods*, the Middle School Honors Band, and a very talented Snug Harbor student.

Superintendent's
Report

Dr. DeCristofaro thanked the teachers who participated in recent Parent Academy on Assessment for Elementary School parents, noting that principal and teacher support for all events is tremendous. The Curriculum and Assessment team hosted four Parent Academy events this year and asked parents for topics to focus on for next year.

Dr. DeCristofaro then recognized several new administrative appointments: Sterling Middle School Principal John Franceschini; Assistant Principal Courtney Mitchell; Snug Harbor Principal Margaret MacNeil, and Assistant Principal Michael Marani. These talented professionals have in common a love of children and a focus on the families, all have been Quincy Public Schools staff members throughout their careers.

Upcoming Events include the School~Community Partnership Breakfast on April 8 at the Tirrell Room. The Credit for Life Fair will be held on March 27 at the Tirrell Room; 200 high school seniors will meet with 75 volunteers from fifteen business partners sponsoring the event. The Middle School Swim Championship will be held on April 5 at the Lincoln Hancock pool at 9:00 am. Clifford Marshall, Lincoln Hancock, and Montclair will begin a new session of Tuesday afternoon Learn to Swim lessons in collaboration with the South Shore YMCA on April 1.

The Spring Athletics season is just underway; Winter Sports tournament team captains and coaches will be recognized at the April 9 School Committee meeting.

The Robotics Team, now in its 19th year, competed at the University of New Hampshire event recently and made it to the quarterfinals. The team is sponsored by Bluefin Robotics and team alumni assist the team members throughout the season. The next event will be March 28-29 at Northeastern University.

During the February vacation week, Quincy High School teacher Meg McMillen chaperoned 35 students at the Harvard Model Congress, a 4-day event where students participate in debates, crisis management, and policy development events.

NAEYC Accreditation is completed for the Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center and Snug Harbor Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. Kindergarten programs at all

elementary schools will be reviewed between this spring and next fall.

Pre-Kindergarten screenings for the 2014-2015 school year will be held on April 1 and April 8.

High School Course selection is underway for students in Grades 8 through 11. Parent information evenings have been held at both high schools and assistance in completing the online scheduling through Aspen was provided.

Dr. DeCristofaro updated on the school building projects in development with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The contractor bidding process is underway for the North Quincy High School, Wollaston, and Merrymount window and door replacement projects. For Sterling Middle School, the Initial Compliance Certification and the School Building Committee are submitted to the MSBA. Enrollment projections and the educational profile are due May 5.

A long-standing safety issue at the Wollaston School is almost resolved after several meetings between Mayor Koch, the MBTA, Dr. DeCristofaro, Principal Hennessy, and Mr. Tramontozzi from the Traffic & Parking Department. MBTA Bus 211 route will be moved from Highland Avenue to North Central Avenue for the block between Beale Street and Brook Street. The next step is for new bus stop signs to be installed.

The Wollaston Elementary School is celebrating the building's 100th Anniversary on Saturday, April 12 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Dr. DeCristofaro concluded the Superintendent's Report by noting the Home-School Connections shared with School Committee: Monthly Newsletters from the Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center, Atherton Hough, Wollaston, and Squantum Elementary Schools.

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Senior Director of Student Support Services Maura Papile introduced Health Services Coordinator Jane Kisielius and spoke of her great leadership, and work with a staff on the cutting edge of implementing wellness and concussion policies, and collaborating with families. School health programs are experiencing unprecedented demand for services, facing new paradigms for health care delivery system, and providing advocacy and individual nursing care for all students.

New Business

Health Services

Mrs. Tierney, the nurse at Lincoln Hancock, spoke of needing strong clinical skills and the ability to communicate and be flexible to adapt to any situation. A typical day might include health screenings: height, weight, vision, hearing, scoliosis, conducted to minimize disruption to student learning. Daily issues arise from students and staff and nurses must adjust to best meet the needs of student immediate needs. New this year, Quincy Public Schools has three nurse

paraprofessionals to assist with screenings and communication with parents.

Mrs. Campbell spoke of the role of a middle school nurse, encouraging students to become active participants in managing their own health care issues and organizing wellness initiatives, such as healthy tips, and nutritional information geared to students and staff. Nurses provide CPR, AED, and First Aid Training for all QPS staff members, another layer of safety for students and staff with 150 staff certified this year.

Mrs. Houlihan spoke of the role of the high school nurse as a case manager, in collaboration with staff, students, and families on care and well-being issues. Nurses provide preventative health education to high school students, support peer to peer education on substance abuse, safe driving, sun safety, and collaborate with health interventionists. Quincy Public School nurses at every level work to provide intervention, education, and health promotion.

Mrs. Kisielius recognized the nurses in the audience who came to support the presenters. Dr. DeCristofaro thanked the presenters and appreciates their leadership role as collaborator and counselor.

Ms. Isola noted how much nursing has changed and appreciates the fact that the nurses are juggling so many things, looking at each student and their families, their place in the classroom. As a School Committee member and a parent, thanked them for their efforts.

On behalf of the thirteen Elementary Library Support Teachers, Ms. Laura Owens gave an overview of their accomplishments over the course of this school year. Over 24,000 books have been circulated to date to the 4,228 students in Grades K-5. Over 6,000 books have catalogued, including Atherton Hough’s library where the data was not retrievable. The Library Support Teachers provide for planning time and support to 214 teachers; technology support for *ThinkCentral*, *Study Island*, and *Reading Eggs*. Individual school initiatives include keyboarding, Docent Art, research project support, poetry writing, and Read Across America.

Elementary Library Support Program

Mayor Koch left the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Senior Curriculum Coordinator Madeline Roy introduced an overview of the PARCC Field Test, noting the many hours of research and planning that went into implementing this PARCC Field Test. Massachusetts is moving towards a new assessment to better align with the new Common Core State Standards. These new

PARCC Field Test Presentation

frameworks demand strong reading, writing, critical thinking, and analytical skills; assessments within the district and at the state level must shift to meet these demands.

PARCC is the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and made up of 18 states and charged with developing common, high-quality ELA and Mathematics Assessments for Grades 3-11. These assessments will be computer based and consist of two summative assessment components: Performance-Based Assessments (PBA) and End of Year Assessment (EOY). In 2010, the governor signed a memorandum of agreement to commit to adopt the PARCC assessments provided they are at least as comprehensive and rigorous as our current MCAS assessments. Other states are involved in the Smarter Balance consortium.

For ELA, MCAS assesses writing in Grades 4, 7, and 10. PARCC PBAs will assess writing in every grade 3-11; students will be writing in response to reading or writing to a source. For Math, students are expected to apply and extend their knowledge to real-life modeling and problem-solving. At the high school level, PARCC will be an end-of-course test.

This year is a field test, next year may require assessment in both styles (no details available yet). It is anticipated that in the 2015-16 school year, PARCC will be administered at all Grades except for 10 through 2016. The PARCC field test being administered in randomly selected Massachusetts schools/classrooms and other states. The field test will not yield scores for any student, school, or district. The purpose of the field test is to examine the quality of the items, pilot administration procedures, and give schools and districts the opportunity to experience the administration of the PARCC Assessments.

Mrs. Fredrickson spoke of the field test, over a million students nationwide from 15 of 17 PARCC states, and 1,097 Massachusetts schools. For a field test to yield reliable and valid information, schools and students must be selected randomly. Mrs. Fredrickson shared the schedule for field testing and the schools involved. Five elementary schools, all five middle schools, and both high schools will be involved. Field tests may be administered as paper and pencil or on computers. PBA Assessments will be given between March 24 and April 11 and can be Math or ELA. End of Year Assessments will be administered between May 5 and June 6. Schools will coordinate so there is no conflict with MCAS Testing.

Dr. DeCristofaro said that the decision was made by SLT and Principals to have students take MCAS and PARCC since MCAS data is important in planning and assessment of programs and professional development. Statewide, 83% of districts are choosing to administer both tests. QPS staff will be observing students and providing information on administration and student participation.

Mr. Segalla reviewed that 9 of 12 schools will be administering the PARCC field test as a computer-based assessment. QPS will utilize desktop computers and

infrastructure and hardware upgrades over the last few years will assist with the efficient administration of the tests. QPS IT Team has worked on technology readiness with each of the test sites, participating in Readiness Toolkit assessments and training, site readiness planning tools. Staff attended a regional training workshop and are collaborating with Principals to schedule test sessions across the three-week window and will provide support. QPS has already begun online test administration at the high school level (MEPA, AP Exams), Project Lead the Way and ParaPro.

The PARCC Field Test is timed, although students may receive additional time. Extended time is available for students with disabilities or ELL students. Testing blocks are two to two and a half hours on multiple days. Many accommodations previously available for MCAS are built into computer based PARCC tests and available to all students as accessibility features. There are specific accommodations available for students with disabilities and ELL students. There are tutorials that students will access on days prior to the field test administration.

Information was shared with parents through the QPS website/social media platforms; letters were also sent to students who were selected to participate in the field test. The online post included DESE resources with FAQ.

Mr. Bregoli asked about the breakdown states across the country: 18 are in PARCC, 24 are part of the Smarter Balance consortium; the other states are developing tests independently or have not adopted Common Core. Mr. Bregoli thanked the team for sharing the accommodation information. Mrs. Fredrickson said there are very specific directives about what can be accessed or not. Mr. Bregoli asked if a student has an IEP with accommodations, will those automatically be implemented. Mrs. Fredrickson said yes, but how may be adjusted. Mr. Bregoli expressed concerns about technology, Mr. Segalla said we are in good shape for the field test, but going forward, additional equipment will be needed. Mr. Bregoli asked if the federal government was going to provide funding for new equipment, but there has been no indication of this as yet. Mr. Bregoli asked about the number of PARCC administrations annually; with the speaking component, it will be three tests. Mr. Bregoli concerned about the volume of testing, raising a generation of children that are good test-takers, removing opportunities for creativity.

Ms. Isola thanked the presenters and said that it was helpful to hear that there are many undecided factors. She emphasized that this is mandated by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and that there was not an option to not participate. She also noted that this is an unfunded mandate. She asked for Ms. Roy and Dr. DeCristofaro to speak to this. Dr. DeCristofaro has spoken to the Office of Assessment and they will be sending out additional communication on the importance of the field test to parents. State regulations give DESE the authority to direct school districts to administer these field tests. This is an incredibly cumbersome and stressful initiative for students, parents, teachers, administrators; and affects time on teaching and learning. QPS does not have a

choice and the Superintendent has heard from a few parents directly; all efforts will be expended to lessen the stress of students and teachers. Ms. Isola asked if our receipt of state funding is contingent on participating in these initiatives; Dr. DeCristofaro agreed that although this is not specifically spelled out, there could certainly be ramifications for failure to comply. Ms. Isola asked if there is a rubric that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will be using to evaluate PARCC; the plan is for them to analyze PARCC and MCAS data side by side in standards-setting meetings in the summer of 2015 before making the decision. For the 2014 and 2015 MCAS tests, items will be reflective of the Common Core State Standards. Ms. Isola noted that the Speaking and Learning component is yet to be determined and that seems like it could be time-consuming to administer.

Mr. McCarthy asked that in terms of deciding whether to administer both tests, it seems like it wasn't a choice whether to administer the MCAS tests as well. Dr. DeCristofaro said the value of the data and the expectations of parents made this the best choice. Mr. McCarthy agreed with Mr. Bregoli and Ms. Isola that the public should be aware that these are not decisions of the School Committee or Quincy Public Schools administration.

Mrs. Mahoney noted that this is a federal mandate, and is concerned that failure to participate could affect funding and accreditation. She agreed that participation gives us a window into what is coming in the future, there is a benefit to all students and teachers ultimately, especially with the comparison for computer based testing to paper and pencil administration. MCAS has been in place for 17 years, prior to that there was a different testing system, agreed with Mr. Bregoli's concern about students being test-focused. She thanked the team for the presentation, it is overwhelming and will impact time for classroom learning and creativity. Mrs. Mahoney asked test items would be available later as practice items, but it is a secure test and these items will not be released.

Mr. DiBona asked whether MCAS will always precede PARCC. Ms. Roy responded that MCAS is our priority and students will not begin the tutorials or preparation for PARCC until MCAS is completed.

Mrs. Hubley noted that this presentation will be posted on the Quincy Public Schools website.

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Mr. Bregoli read the proposed revised policy into the record, noting that parents have requested our standards be raised above the MIAA minimum standard. Our revised policy is as follows:

Policy Update on
Athletic Eligibility
(9.8.5)

During the last ranking period preceding the contest, a student must secure at least 25 credits and may not receive more than one failing grade. To be eligible for fall sports, a student must have secured 25 credits and not have more than one failing grade on

the previous academic year final report card. All grade 9 students are eligible for fall sports. The academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determining only on the date when the report cards for that ranking period have been issued.

As a support, coaches will be encouraged to check in with players and assess risk of failing in collaboration with deans and guidance counselors. Ms. Isola clarified that this is not part of the Policy.

Mr. Bregoli noted that the draft revised Policy will be posted online for public review and that School Committee would vote on the revised Policy at the April 9, 2014 meeting.

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Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Out of State Travel of Sterling Middle School Grade 6 to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, New Hampshire on June 16, 2014. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion. On the motion, Mr. McCarthy stated that there should be additional chaperones added to the trip. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Out of State
Travel

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Out of State Travel of Montclair Elementary School Grade 5 to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, New Hampshire on June 16, 2014. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

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Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Overnight Travel of Quincy High School Skills USA students to the Massachusetts District Conference May 1 through May 3, 2014. Mrs. Mahoney seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Overnight Travel

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Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Out of the Country Travel of North Quincy High School Italian students to Rome and Florence, Italy April 14 through April 24, 2014. Mr. DiBona seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Out of the Country
Travel

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Mr. DiBona announced that there would be a Health, Transportation, and Safety Subcommittee meeting on Monday, April 7, following the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting.

Additional Business

Mr. DiBona noted that all School Committee members had received a letter from a parent concerned about traffic issues at North Quincy High School. Dr. DeCristofaro has followed up with Quincy Police Department Chief Keenan and he has agreed to provide coverage for through the Community Police Officer to cover for School

Resource officer should he be absent going forward. Ms. Isola asked for an update at the upcoming Health, Transportation, and Safety Subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Bregoli removed the Dedication of NQHS basketball court item from the Policy Subcommittee.

Mr. McCarthy requested that the crosswalk on Hancock Street at McDonalds be repainted. Mr. DiBona said that Mr. Draicchio will be communicating with the Department of Public Works and Traffic & Parking to assess crosswalks at all school sites as part of their summer program.

Mr. McCarthy said there are several potholes on the Lancaster Street side of Point Webster Middle School. This information will be forwarded to the Department of Public Works as well.

Mrs. Mahoney mentioned that parking limits have been imposed on Russell Park by the City Council (2-hour limits). She is concerned about the Quincy High School parking lot and if there is adequate parking reserved for our staff and students. She also asked about the front parking lot and whether the YMCA is still parking there. Dr. DeCristofaro said that the front lot will be for juniors, tennis court parking is for seniors. All staff have been issued tags for their cars and untagged cars will be ticketed. Quincy High School Security is continuing to monitor.

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Mrs. Mahoney announced that the Special Education Subcommittee will be held on March 26 at 6:00 pm at Quincy High School. On Saturday, March 29, the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education will be hosting a Resource Fair at Quincy High School from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Communications

Mrs. Hubley announced that the Quincy Band Boosters would be holding a meeting on Monday, March 24 at 7:00 pm at Quincy High School.

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Mrs. Hubley noted that all School Committee and Subcommittee meeting minutes are posted on the Quincy Public Schools website: www.quincypublicschools.com.

Reports of
Subcommittees

Mrs. Hubley reported on the Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting on Music Programs held on March 10, 2014. Instrumental music staff members provided an overview of the programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels during the school day and as extended educational opportunities. Discussion focused on the scheduling challenges, particularly at the middle school level and the transition from middle to high school.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee
on Instrumental
Music

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2014 Ad Hoc

Subcommittee on Instrumental Music. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. McCarthy summarized the March 18, 2014 Facilities and Security Subcommittee meeting, where Dr. DeCristofaro reviewed enrollment history across the elementary, middle, and high school levels and opened the discussion for explorations to meet the demands of a growing elementary school population across the city. Specifically, Dr. DeCristofaro concluded by noting that the new Sterling Middle School project gives Quincy Public Schools an opportunity to address the facility capacity issues at Lincoln Hancock. Enrollment Projections are due May 5, then the MSBA will work with us to certify enrollment prior to beginning the Feasibility Study.

Facilities and Security
Subcommittee Meeting

At the meeting, Mr. McCarthy also shared a brief update on the construction plan for the Presidents City Inn.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 18, 2014 Facilities and Security Subcommittee Meeting. Ms. Isola seconded the motion.

On the motion, Mrs. Mahoney asked about projecting future enrollment and Dr. DeCristofaro clarified that this will be done as part of the enrollment certification process. Mrs. Mahoney was surprised by the idea of changing the grade level configuration at Sterling Middle School, was not able to attend subcommittee meeting. Dr. DeCristofaro agreed that this is a new idea, there is a process to follow about discussing this with School Committee and with the public. Dr. DeCristofaro said that the information presented yesterday was many hours of development and research and a comprehensive look at the system to provide a basis for these discussions.

Mrs. Mahoney expressed concern about the other schools with capacity issues and how will we move forward. Perhaps a new building there would be an opportunity to relocate some of the citywide Special Education classes. Mrs. Mahoney wants to be sure that we are looking at this holistically. Dr. DeCristofaro said the report is meant to capture the information that presents the opportunities and challenges for the school system.

Mrs. Mahoney asked about the Presidents City Inn and possible corporate partners; this is still unresolved. Mrs. Mahoney asked whether there will be an effort to market the property to a different clientele and that is something Mr. McCarthy will follow up on.

Ms. Isola requested that the enrollment packet be posted on the website; this is a clear picture of the district. Yesterday's discussion was a preliminary review of facts and the information will need to be digested and reviewed along with

ideas. Mr. McCarthy said a similar process was followed a number of years ago when Grade 5 was moved to Point and Sterling. He will be scheduling another Facilities & Security Subcommittee meeting shortly.

Mr. DiBona said that the information presented about the significantly increased Kindergarten and Grade 1 levels is so important and the proximity of the Lincoln Hancock and Sterling sites may allow us to consider this a K-8 campus. This is very early in the discussion. Mrs. Hubley agreed that this presentation was a first step.

Mr. Bregoli said that yesterday's presentation was excellent, made it easy to see where the population growth is located. Mr. Bregoli regrets that the city sold school buildings in the 1980s

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Ms. Isola made a motion to adjourn at 10:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bregoli and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Adjournment