

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – June 11, 2014

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, June 11, 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; Mr. Michael Draicchio, Mr. John Fagerlund, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mrs. Jane Kisielius, Mrs. Robin Moreira, Mr. Joseph Newton, Mr. James Mullaney, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Dr. Maryanne Palmer, Mrs. Maura Papile, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. John Sullivan, Ms. Judy Todd, Ms. Julie Tuite; Quincy High School Representative to School Committee Ms. Lindsay Schrier; and Ms. Allison Cox, President, Quincy Education Association.

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There was a moment of silence for Mrs. Ann Cannon, former secretary at the Snug Harbor Community School.

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Mayor Koch made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bregoli, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for May 21, 2014. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Regular Meeting
Minutes Approved
5/21/14

Ms. Isola made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bregoli, to approve the Public Hearing minutes for June 4, 2014. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Public Hearing
Minutes Approved
6/4/14

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Ms. Melissa Juarez spoke in favor of continuing with MCAS testing.

Open Forum

Mr. Scott Alessandro expressed concerns about the National Background Check being implemented for volunteers. Not all volunteers will have direct and unmonitored contact with students. He is requesting further discussion.

Mrs. Courtney Perdios spoke on the proposed Sterling Grade 4-8 configuration and suggested adding a Grades 6-8 configuration to the Feasibility Study and that School Committee vote on adding this configuration option.

Ms. Serenity Bello spoke in opposition to the Sterling Grade 4-8 configuration and asked School Committee to consider what other options are possible.

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Dr. DeCristofaro opened the Superintendent's Report by recognizing retiring Health Services Coordinator Jane Kisielius. In her 20 years of experience with Quincy Public Schools, she leaves a legacy of professional and management skills, rapport with students and families, connections outside our school system, leadership, grant writing, professional development, and effective and personal collaboration with staff.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. John Fagerlund then introduced the Department of Public Works Contest Winners for 2014. The many events celebrating Public Works Week included the Bike Rodeo, displays of high school Science Fair projects, a luncheon prepared by Quincy High School Culinary students, and the Name the Robot Contest. The Grade 5 Banner contest was sponsored by Bay State Recycling and the winners were recognized: Parker (1st place), Sterling (2nd), and Point Webster (3rd). The Grade 4 Essay Contest winners were also recognized: Song Yu Chen, Parker (3rd place); Nancy Chen (2nd place); Marissa Maher, Atherton Hough (1st place)

Recent events included the 10th Annual Special Olympics on June 6 for 168 students at Pageant Field; the Student Athlete Summit, sponsored by Granite Links, Quincy Medical, SSYMCA, Stop & Shop, where 100 Grade 11 students learned about injury prevention, nutrition, leadership skills. QARI honored QPS on May 31 for their many years of partnership. At a Boston Financial Data Services event for 200 managers at Quincy High School on June 9, Skills USA students hosted and the combined high school chorus and band performed. Dr. DeCristofaro thanked School Committee for participating in the recent high school graduation of 678 students in the Class of 2014. Debbie Cheung, Guidance Counselor at Atlantic Middle School, received recognition from the Norfolk County Teacher's Association at their annual dinner on June 3.

Dr. DeCristofaro concluded his report with the *Inspire Quincy* video featuring the Central Middle School chorus and band concert, the Broad Meadows Science Fair, Point Webster Author visits, the Student Athlete Summit, the Clifford Marshall, Squantum, and Merrymount spring concerts; the Beechwood Knoll health initiative; and the high school Commencements.

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Ms. Roy began by reviewing the PARCC Field Test that was held this spring in all school districts in Massachusetts. Quincy Public Schools tested at twelve schools (5 elementary, all five middle, and both high schools). 680 students were assessed in either Performance-Based or End of Year Assessments. Students were selected randomly; three schools administered paper and pencil versions, and nine schools tested online. The Information Technology staff supported the principals, 88 teachers, and school office administrators along with Mary Fredrickson who managed this test administration. Most students were able to complete the tests in the designated time frames and on the whole, Quincy Public Schools was able to successfully implement the PARCC field test requirements.

New Business
 PARCC/MCAS Testing
 (Vote)

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is asking districts to choose which test to administer in Spring 2015. Mrs. Fredrickson presented consideration for School Committee, including information from DESE meetings, conversations with principals and SLT. Districts selecting PARCC must also designate whether they will administer the test online or paper and pencil. The deadline to notify DESE is June 30, with a final deadline of October 1. Districts that do not respond by October 1 will administer MCAS.

Regardless of School Committee’s decision, at the high school level, students graduating through 2018 will continue to take MCAS at Grade 10. Students may choose to take high school level PARCC tests in Grade 11 to qualify to take credit bearing courses at state colleges. Students in Grades 5 and 8 will continue to take the MCAS for Science.

Comparisons of the MCAS and PARCC testing windows were shared. MCAS would follow the usual schedule of March for ELA and May for Math. Sample testing schedules for Grades 3 and 8 illustrated the differences in testing time for ELA and Mathematics. MCAS, Grade 3: 210 minutes total; PARCC, Grade 3: 740 minutes total. MCAS, Grade 8: 310 minutes; PARCC, Grade 8: 945 minutes. In evaluating technology needs, most middle and high schools and but only some elementary schools meet the minimum needs for online PARCC administration. In term of reporting, PARCC performance will be analyzed against previous MCAS performance.

DESE has collected post-administration survey data and learned that students were able to be engaged with the new online assessments; schools and districts will benefit from more time and support as they prepare for online testing. The majority of schools need more devices to test all of their students. DESE is planning to support schools by planning for a much longer training cycle, grade-by-grade maps of computer skills and tools that students need, practice tests and tutorials, and short quick start guides for principals and teachers. PARCC sample sets and tutorials will be available. School districts administering PARCC will be held harmless, meaning their performance level cannot decline from 2014. School districts choosing to administer MCAS will not be held harmless.

Mr. Bregoli asked if DESE is definitely planning to move to PARCC; Mrs. Frederickson said that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) will make that decision in November of 2015 after comparing data for the two tests. Mr. Bregoli said resources were expended for no return this year, and expressed concerns about the amount of testing, time practicing and taking tests is time spent away from learning. Ms. Schrier asked if the format of test questions is similar to MCAS, part of success for past students was familiarity. Mrs. Frederickson said that the released items online show the level of challenge; PARCC assesses in a different way than MCAS.

Mr. McCarthy thanked Mrs. Fredrickson and Ms. Roy for their diligence in administering the field test. He asked for clarification on timeline, if we opt out this year, will we have another opportunity to vote again in the future or will PARCC be implemented by BESE without choice. Ms. Roy said the choice before us is just for Spring 2015 and BESE will make the decision in November 2015 to go with PARCC or not and we will not have a choice at that point.

Mrs. Mahoney asked for clarification on what this year's choice is. Mrs. Fredrickson said that we are choosing to administer MCAS or PARCC in Spring 2015: if we choose PARCC, this is an operational assessment with results. If we choose MCAS, we will receive results as always. DESE will be comparing the results of both tests and comparing exemplar student work. Mrs. Mahoney is concerned about the level of rigor that goes into preparing and taking these assessments, opportunities for creatively engaging with students becomes more limited. If we take PARCC, our students may or may not do well; it is a risk, or do we allow other communities to take the risk. Mrs. Mahoney asked if students or parents have been surveyed for their feeling about the transition. This is a lot of information to absorb before voting this evening.

Dr. DeCristofaro reminded the School Committee that this is not Quincy Public School's timeline. MCAS will be phased out and we will have to prepare to transition to whatever DESE mandates. We can learn from other communities even if we do not administer PARCC ourselves next year. From the field test, we know the demands on a school to administer these tests and we have to focus on how we prepare our students.

Mrs. Mahoney said this is a huge leap of faith to move to the PARCC; sometimes it is better to let others take the lead. She is very uncomfortable with the idea of giving up a year's worth of MCAS data and the assistance it gives with challenging our students.

Ms. Isola said that her concerns center around data analysis by DESE, and whether classroom educator input into the value of PARCC will be a factor. Ms. Isola asked about data upload and staffing needed to manage this, another unfunded mandate. Mrs. Fredrickson said the state is looking at the issue and talking about

providing unspecified support. Ms. Roy said that on the DESE conference calls, there was discussion about assistance with initial uploads only. QPS would still have to verify student rosters and accommodations and any move-in students. Ms. Isola is concerned about technology preparation and the additional funding needed. Ms. Isola said that Common Core was instituted to raise standards, but Massachusetts already had high levels of achievement and teachers have been required to revise their teaching perhaps unnecessarily. She also noted that the number of hours that Grade 8 students will be testing is tripling to 15.75 hours. Ms. Isola is also concerned about data; so much of our School and Program Improvement Plans are focused on student achievement and progress. School Committee's use of that information informs the decisions for budgets. Ms. Isola appreciates all the work the Curriculum team has done to keep School Committee informed and is frustrated at the pace of information and decisions from DESE.

Mr. Bregoli thanked Ms. Roy and Mrs. Frederickson and wondered since DESE plans to transition to PARCC anyways, why ask School Committees to make a decision for each city and town. It seems that DESE is making decisions without educator input.

Mayor Koch added that he agrees with the comments and frustration of the colleagues. Bureaucrats at every level who are appointed, not elected, are making decisions that significantly impact local cities and towns. Mayor Koch suggested sending a resolve with cost estimates from the School Committee to the State Auditor to ask for input on the economic effects. The constraints placed on teachers to focus on assessment takes away from their ability to make connections with students and families.

Mr. DiBona said that this is a lot of information to absorb and asked for clarification on PARCC field test participation. Ms. Roy said 2/3 of Massachusetts cities and towns participated, along with students in 15 states. Mr. DiBona asked whether the students were surveyed and they were as part of the field test. The students were honest with their evaluation, but they were not specifically asked to contrast the two types of exams. Mrs. Fredrickson said some of the feedback was shared, students were generally in favor of computer-based testing. If we choose the PARCC test, there will be some type of individual, school, and district reporting.

Mrs. Hubley thanked the presenters and noted that she is really struggling to see any positive to choosing the PARCC for next year. Mrs. Fredrickson said that it would give us insight into this next generation of assessment types; MCAS will reflect the Common Core, but not the newer style of assessment.

Dr. DeCristofaro said there are not a lot of clear positives to selecting the PARCC. He feels that the testing time alone should be a factor in the decision. There is more and more assessment every year and we are getting into an untenable situation. Staying with MCAS would give us the insight into performance against Common Core standards. MCAS is reliable and valid, provides proven results;

PARCC results are not yet validated. We don't know of any summary reports that would be provided, nor would we have any input. Dr. DeCristofaro is concerned about technology in the short term and pacing and alignment for math are a concern; March testing would drive a very compressed instructional schedule. Implementing the PARCC now would conflict with many Quincy Public Schools initiatives: District-Determined Measures were developed this year and will continue into next year and this is the second year of Educator Evaluation. Schools have been selected to administer the NEAP and TIMSS, MKEA is being implemented for Kindergarten, and Aspen training will continue for the Gradebook and teacher pages. Dr. DeCristofaro would like to continue to focus on teaching and learning and retain MCAS for 2015.

Ms. Isola made a motion to select MCAS as the Quincy Public Schools testing system for academic year 2014-2015. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a roll call vote, the ayes have it 7-0.

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Dr. DeCristofaro thanked the School Committee, the Principal and Superintendent's Leadership Teams for their collaboration in developing the FY2015 budget. Steady and sustained growth continue with this budget that includes maintaining favorable class sizes, expands the English Language Learner, Foreign Language, Technology, Instructional Music, and Special Education programs. Restoration of Full-Day Kindergarten Teacher's Aides was another School Committee goal realized through this budget appropriation.

FY2015 Budget
(Vote)

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the FY2015 Budget, seconded by Mr. McCarthy. On a roll call vote, the ayes have it 6-1. Mrs. Mahoney voted NO.

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Mr. Mullaney presented recommendations for transfer of funds to address surpluses and deficits in salary and expense accounts and balance the FY2014 budget prior to the end of the fiscal year.

FY2014 Budget
Transfers (Vote)

Mayor Koch made a motion to approve the recommended transfers of funds. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCarthy and on a roll call vote, the ayes have it 6-1. Mrs. Mahoney voted NO.

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Dr. DeCristofaro left the meeting.

City Solicitor Jim Timmins presented on the Central Middle School Principal hiring process. Dr. DeCristofaro presented the question, given that his son is a candidate and his role in appointing principals conflicts with the law to avoid conflict of

Central Middle

interest. Mr. Timmins consulted with the State Ethics Commission Attorney and Dr. DeCristofaro is not subject to the Rule of Necessity. The two options are for Dr. DeCristofaro to apply for an exemption or to absent himself from the process. Dr. DeCristofaro has chosen to absent himself from the process.

Since School Committee is the Superintendent's appointing authority, School Committee must select someone to act in Dr. DeCristofaro's stead. The interview committee that screens the candidates would still be in place and the appointed party would fill Dr. DeCristofaro's role to consider the final recommendation of the committee. Dr. Peter Kurzberg, retired Braintree Public Schools Superintendent, is willing to fill this position, participate in assembling the interview team, and vet the candidates who will be interviewed.

Mr. McCarthy asked whether a vote will be required this evening and that is the goal. He also asked if Mr. DeCristofaro is appointed Central Middle School Principal, how would the reporting structure be changed. Mr. Timmins said that a Section 19 public disclosure would have to be filed and the supervisory role would fall to the Deputy Superintendent. Mr. McCarthy asked about the makeup of the interview team. Mr. Mulvey said typically the team is made up of the Directors of Student Support and Special Education, the Senior Curriculum Coordinator, the QEA President, three teachers, a QPAC representative, a Citywide Parent Representative, and a parent representative from the school.

Mrs. Mahoney asked how many applications have been received to date. Mr. Mulvey said that there are over 25 applications, one internal and the rest external through SchoolSpring.com. The posting closes on Friday, June 13. Mrs. Mahoney asked how many applicants will be interviewed. Mr. Mulvey said typically five candidates are interviewed, but Dr. Kurzberg is willing to screen all applications and decide how many candidates will be interviewed. He is also willing to sit in on all interviews. Mr. Mulvey said that since Dr. Kurzberg will not be familiar with any of the candidates, he is planning to be involved in any opportunity to observe them.

Mrs. Mahoney is concerned that only one internal candidate is interested in this position. Mrs. Mahoney is not suggesting that Mr. DeCristofaro is not qualified, but his candidacy may deter other qualified candidates. Should Mr. DeCristofaro be appointed, reporting to Mr. Mulvey who reports to Dr. DeCristofaro still causes appearances of conflict. Dr. DeCristofaro would be evaluating the other four middle school principals. Mr. Mulvey, although licensed, does not have the classroom or curriculum experience to evaluate and supervise a principal.

Mr. Mulvey said the Section 19 public disclosure provides public notice of the situation; School Committee would be the check and balance. Mrs. Mahoney reiterated the issue is the inequity of Deputy Superintendent supervision without an education background. One step away is still giving the appearance of impropriety. Mr. Mulvey said that as a licensed Assistant Superintendent, DESE feels he is qualified and he has completed professional development on the

supervision of educators and principals over the last five years. Mr. Mulvey hopes School Committee has confidence in his ability.

Mrs. Mahoney said this is very difficult, while she feels Mr. DeCristofaro is doing a great job as Assistant Principal, his relationship to the Superintendent impacts internal candidates. She asked if other Principal positions had only one internal candidate. Mr. Mulvey said North Quincy High School had one internal candidate for the principal position.

Mr. Mulvey said should Dr. Kurzberg be appointed this evening, their first meeting would be held on Tuesday, June 17. The goal would be to have a new principal in place for July 1. Mrs. Mahoney said that there was six months for this position to be filled, would anything have happened if she hadn't raised the issue. Mr. Mulvey said the position was posted on May 23 and as soon as Mr. DeCristofaro applied, the issue was surfaced to School Committee. Mr. Timmins said that under the law, Superintendent DeCristofaro's position cannot impede Mr. DeCristofaro's candidacy. Mrs. Mahoney said she can't believe that there is such a lack of interest in this position at the premier middle school in Quincy Public Schools.

Mayor Koch reminded School Committee that there is a precedence for this, many years ago, Superintendent Lawrence Creedon appointed his brother Eugene Creedon as a Quincy Public Schools principal. Two attorneys have presented their opinions, and Mayor Koch is comfortable with both Mr. Mulvey's and Dr. Kurzberg's integrity. Mayor Koch noted that his father was Director of the Parks Department and his brother was appointed there through Civil Service. The reality is there is a conflict and we are dealing with it the most responsible way possible.

Mr. McCarthy objected to Mrs. Mahoney's characterization of Central as the premier middle school in Quincy. All of our middle schools are outstanding with great leadership. At all levels, many veteran teachers and administrators have retired and have been replaced by young, outstanding leaders. Mr. DeCristofaro is talented and with a different name, wouldn't warrant this scrutiny.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to appoint Dr. Peter Kurzberg as the independent appointing authority for the Central Middle School principal. Ms. Isola seconded the motion, and on the motion, agrees with Dr. Kurzberg participating in the early review of the total resume pool.

On the motion, Mrs. Mahoney said it is very unusual for their only to be one internal candidate. We should be encouraging people to seek these opportunities, and she is not suggesting that Central Middle School is better than other middle schools.

Mr. McCarthy said that all the new principals that stepped up quickly during the years of veteran principal retirements have performed very well, and given the chance, Mr. DeCristofaro will be a strong performer. Mr. Mulvey would certainly participate in the review of the other four middle school principals to assist in his

ongoing supervision of Mr. DeCristofaro, should the appointment come to pass.

Ms. Isola said the position was posted on May 23 and Mr. DeCristofaro did not apply until June 6, so there were two weeks for other interested parties to apply without knowing about other candidates. The Ethics Commission has ruled that this hiring process meets their guidelines for avoiding conflict of interest.

On a roll call vote, the ayes have it, 6-1. Mrs. Mahoney voted NO.

Dr. DeCristofaro returned to the meeting.

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Mayor Koch made a motion to accept the gift of 5' x 8' American flags for each Quincy Public Schools building from the National Association of Government Employees. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Gift: Flags

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Ms. Isola made a motion to add the National Background Check for Volunteers to the first Policy meeting agenda in Fall 2014. Mayor Koch seconded and amended the motion, asking that it appear on the regular agenda first to be referred to Policy Subcommittee. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Additional Business

Mrs. Mahoney made a motion to address the issue of grade level configuration for the new Sterling Middle School to remove Grades 4-8 as an option. Mayor Koch seconded the motion and on the motion said he appreciates the healthy dialogue, but this is a moot point unless the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) certifies the data. Mayor Koch agrees we should take a vote, but it is premature until we hear from the MSBA. Mayor Koch appreciates the work done by the Superintendent and the actions of the parents; School Committee could have a special meeting this summer if necessary.

On the motion, Ms. Isola agreed with Mayor Koch, noting that it is very early in the planning process. If the proposed enrollment is approved, she has always expected there to be a full discussion, but it is premature to discuss now. Ms. Isola agreed that parent input is very important and that she always listens to Open Forum.

Mrs. Mahoney withdrew the motion.

Mrs. Mahoney made a motion to consider a Grades 6-8 Sterling Middle School. Mayor Koch seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion, saying that this must be placed on the Regular meeting agenda. Mrs. Mahoney said she wants this to be added to the configurations under consideration by the MSBA. Mayor Koch said this could be an agenda item for a future meeting. Mrs. Mahoney asked if there a closeout date for submission; Dr. DeCristofaro said there will be 21 days to

respond to the enrollment certification letter once it is issued between now and August 1. Mayor Koch said as a point of information, that is what he was saying. Mrs. Mahoney said that there has been a lot of misinformation and she wanted to clarify.

Mayor Koch withdrew his second and Mrs. Mahoney withdrew her motion.

Mayor Koch announced that the annual Flag Day Parade and fireworks will be held on Saturday, June 14. Wayne and Chris Batson will be receiving the Richard Koch Youth Service Award.

Communications

Mayor Koch announced that on Monday, June 16 at 6:30 pm, the City Council Finance Subcommittee will see the proposed North Quincy High School field enhancement projects and vote on the appropriation at the regular 7:30 p.m. City Council meeting.

Mr. DiBona acknowledged North Quincy High School Track and Field athletes Emily Bryson, who placed 2nd in the state for the mile and Maya Umoren, who placed 2nd in the state for short putt. Mr. DiBona thanked Mayor Koch for the track facility that these students have to Geoff Hennessy for his work with the track program.

Mrs. Hubley noted that full Subcommittee meeting minutes are posted online on the School Committee page at www.quincypublicschools.com.

Reports of
Subcommittees

Mayor Koch reviewed the Sterling Building Committee meeting held on Tuesday, May 27 which was a brief meeting to introduce the committee members to each other and featured an overview of the process of working with the MSBA.

Sterling Building
Committee

Mrs. Hubley waived reviewing the Budget and Finance Subcommittee meetings held on May 27, 2014 as this meeting was discussed under New Business.

Budget and Finance
Subcommittee

Mr. Bregoli made a motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting for May 27, 2014. Ms. Isola seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. Bregoli reported on the Policy Subcommittee Meeting held on June 10, 2014. High School Principals Robert Shaw and Lawrence Taglieri and Community Service Coordinators Meg McMillen and Kerry Ginty reviewed that 100% of graduating

Policy Subcommittee

seniors completed their Community Service requirement. The QPS website and Community Service database were great resources for students and parents, along with communication through Naviance, Channel 22, Instant Alert, and other means. School Committee voted to continue the current Community Service Pilot for the Classes of 2015, 2016, and 2017; they will need 20 hours of Community Service in order to walk at graduation. The Class of 2018 will need to complete 30 hours of Community Service, beginning as Grade 9 students.

Mr. Mulvey then reviewed the changes in disciplinary regulations under the new law 37H³/₄, and suggested that School Committee adopt the regulations in their entirety. There are two laws currently on the books, 37H (possession of drugs, a weapon, and causing seriously bodily injury) and 37H¹/₂ (felony offense in or outside of school that would impact school environment) and now there is 37H³/₄.

The new law requires that school systems provide educational opportunities (alternate environment or home services) for anyone suspended under 37H, 37H¹/₂, and 37H³/₄. 37H³/₄ covers all other suspendable offenses; students may not be excluded for more than 90 days; students and parents must be notified in writing of the charges and invited to participate in a meeting. Long-term suspensions are those that exceed 10 days or more. Non-consecutive smaller suspensions can add up to this provision and appeal to the Superintendent reached earlier.

New reporting requirements began in 2013-14 school year and are logged into the Student Information System. Violence, drugs, and criminal acts must be reported whether there are suspensions or not. Exclusion is defined as a school day suspension, not athletic or extracurricular events. Students suspended for Grades K-3 must be approved by the Superintendent.

This item will sit on the table for the September 3, 2014 meeting and be voted on at the September 17, 2014 School Committee meeting.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Policy Subcommittee Meeting Minutes from June 10, 2014. Mr. DiBona seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. Bregoli removed Extracurricular Eligibility from the Policy Subcommittee.

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

Adjournment