

Regular Meeting  
November 21, 2016  
School Committee Meeting  
Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Medford School Committee was called to order by Mayor Burke in the City Hall Council Chambers at 7:05 p.m. Those present were Ms. Cugno, Ms. DiBenedetto, Ms. Kreatz, Mr. Skerry, Ms. Van der Kloot, Mayor Burke and Superintendent Belson. Ms. Mustone was absent.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Kreatz that the minutes of November 7, 2016 be approved:

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot that the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved:

Voted: That the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 1 Mustone

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Cugno that the Payrolls be approved:

Voted: That the Payrolls be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 1 Mustone

#### Report of the Secretary

Secretary Skerry reported that on Wednesday, November 2, 2016 I attended the MASC Delegate Assemble in Hyannis. The meeting began at 3:15 p.m. in the Ballroom of the Conference Center. There were representatives from school committees across the state in attendance to review and take action on the four items brought forward by the 2016 MASC Resolutions Committee. The Delegate Assembly overwhelmingly supported each of the resolutions. As your delegate I voted in the affirmative on each item.

As directed by the Medford School Committee I and several other delegates from communities across the state emphasized the importance of ensuring that the funding of the foundation budget (Resolution 1) be sufficient to cover all communities. The key words were “equitable and adequate.” There was a recognition that all communities must benefit from any increased funding of the foundation budget. This is especially true since funding must come through the legislature. If communities are left out then the votes won’t be there for appropriation. Resolution 2 which dealt with tax reform (Millionaires tax) was seen as an important way to fund the foundation budget. There was great support for Charter School Reform. Also a lot of anticipation for the ballot question on the Charter Cap lift was expressed. The resolution on social and emotional well-being of students was heartily endorsed. It was the main theme of the conference.

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your delegate. It is important that Medford have a voice in MASC decisions.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot seconded by Ms. Kreatz the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Report on Project 351

Principal D'Alleva told the committee that his student was on route and asked to table the report until their arrival.

On the motion of Ms. Skerry seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot report was tabled.

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Recommendation to Approve Service Learning Trip to Dominican Republic

Deputy Superintendent Nelson reported that two years ago a group of high school students with chaperones participated in a very successful service learning trip to Ecuador. This year another group of students some of whom are younger siblings of those on the trip two years ago would like to participate in a similar trip to the Dominican Republic. All trip logistics are organized and overseen by EF which was the company that organized the trip to Ecuador. Victoria Glaser, a guidance counselor at MHS is the lead faculty member for the trip and will accompany students on the trip along with two other Medford educators. All students were required to purchase trip insurance as part of the cost of the trip. Ms. Nelson introduced Tory Glaser and Courtney from EF to answer any questions.

Discussion:

Mr. Skerry asked if the students know they must buy insurance and asked the cost. Ms. Glaser answered that insurance is \$155 per student and is mandatory. Ms. Cugno asked at what point do students get refunds. Courtney answered that it depends on the reason and if the required documentation is submitted. Ms. DiBenedetto asked how many students have signed up and if the vocational school is included. Ms. Glaser said that twenty students have signed up and that the vocational school was included. Ms. Kreatz commented that she was on the website and it said that students should be aware of the location of the hospital and the embassy. Courtney commented that an EF guide/director will be with the group at all times. Ms. Van der Kloot asked if the flight is a charter or on a regular airline. Ms. Glaser answered a regular airline.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry, seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot to approve the trip to the Dominican Republic:

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot seconded by Mr. Skerry to suspend the rules for the Report on Project 351:

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

### Report on Project 351

Principal Paul D'Alleva presented his student delegate and the report. He reported that Project 351 is a youth service organization dedicated to building unity and leadership through the yearlong engagement and enrichment of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade service Ambassador from every city and town in Massachusetts. Youth are selected by hometown educators for an exemplary ethic of service and the values of kindness, compassion, humility, and gratitude. Created as an event of Governor Patrick's second inaugural and now convened by Governor Baker, Project 351 is a statewide non-profit that partners with an extraordinary community of educators, service and non-profit organizations, private sector and civic leaders, families, and volunteers to achieve this mission. The Ambassador year is one of impact, growth, and transformation. In partnership with non-profit leaders and educators, Project 351 challenges, motivates, and supports the young leader's journey as change agent. Each year, Ambassadors are invited to "unite, act, and lead" at a January celebration and service day in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Spring Leadership Reunion, and two signature statewide service days that hone leadership skills and scale impact for select non-profit partners. Through Project 351, youth develop confidence and compassion, build leadership and communication skills, engage peers and civic leaders in common purpose, and open hearts and minds with their passion for making a difference in their community and our world. And, they expand their horizons and sense of what is possible through friendships with diverse peers from every corner of Massachusetts and exposure to issues and opportunities that challenge and enrich. And as they learn, lead, and grow, they create extraordinary impact in community. Since 2011, five Classes of Project 351 Ambassadors have "unite, act, led" with an inspirational passion for service and bold ideas for making positive change in their community. This year Medford will be represented by a student from each of our middle schools. The McGlynn Middle School has selected Josephine Rizzo as Ambassador for Project 351.

Academically, Josephine is an outstanding student. She is a member of the National Junior Honor Society who has received numerous Student of the Week certificates during her time at McGlynn Middle School. At the end of grade six, she qualified for the Accelerated Math Program and is presently taking Algebra in grade eight. Recently, Josephine was elected by her peers to serve as Treasurer on our Student Council thus, she will also serve on the School Council. Academic achievement and leadership are only part of the story when it comes to Josephine Rizzo. She is a very positive, mature and respectful young lady who has overcome challenging health issues in her life. Josephine's "never give up" attitude has been an inspiration to her peers and school community. She is a solid choice for Ambassador to Project 351. I have full confidence that she will represent our school and the Medford community extremely well. The Andrews has nominated Marvin Michel to serve as our ambassador for Project 351. Marvin has been enrolled at the Andrews since the fall of 2013. He distinguished himself immediately as a person who was most filled with passion, enthusiasm, and excitement being a student at the Andrews Middle School. Our initial impression of him did not abate as the years progressed. Marvin has earned great respect from the faculty by being critically open-minded about expanding the parameters of the overall operation of our school. He has a quality that makes him motivated and motivates others with his dedication and accountability. He has also been actively engaged in community activities, in which he has been involved in outreach and organizing. These activities have allowed him to demonstrate and refine skills that will benefit any community. Marvin is an optimistic person who finds solutions in times of crisis. His fellow students look to him for advice, but he is also fun to be around. Work gets done but at the same time new avenues of thinking are opened. He pursues the goals of his groups with passion without letting his own needs or interests get in the way.

Discussion:

Ms. Cugno commented that she had the pleasure to attend the event a few years ago and it was a wonderful day. She is very proud of our students and she asked Marvin to come back to report on his experience.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto seconded by Ms. Kreatz the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Report on Veteran's Day Program

Director of Humanities Dr. Nicole Chiesa presented the report. She stated that his year's program took place Thursday, November 10, 2016 and was co-coordinated by Director of Veterans Services, Mr. Earnest Lindsay; Director of Humanities, Nicole Chiesa and lead social studies teacher Nicholas Kain. The day began at 7:30 AM in the Superintendent's Conference Room with a light breakfast of coffee, donuts, juice, muffins, and fruit donated by Dunkin' Donuts in West Medford. Sandwiches and various salads were provided by the Food Services Department at the high school for lunch. Sixteen veterans from several eras, including the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and the Iraq War visited thirty-eight classes and gave an overview of their military experiences and contributions. The program provided our students with an authentic oral history of personal experiences that will enhance their study of history in the classroom. Feedback from students, teachers, and veterans from this year's program was overwhelmingly positive. This year Noah Kreatz, a junior student at Medford Vocational Technical High School, organized his exhibit of war memorabilia. This exhibit included helmets, uniforms and newspaper headlines from World War II and helmets from World War I. This is Noah's private collection that he graciously shared with students, staff and the veterans.

Discussion:

Ms. Kreatz thanked all involved in the day. She said that Noah enjoyed the day tremendously. Ms. DiBenedetto requested letters be sent to the Veterans. Superintendent Belson replied that they receive certificates of appreciation. Dr. Chiesa mentioned that the students write letters of thanks to the veterans.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot seconded by Ms. Kreatz the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Recommendation to Approve Medford Public Schools "Responsible Use Policy"

Superintendent Belson asked the committee to table the request because additional information has just been received from the ACLE and administration needs time to research the information.

On the motion of Ms. Kreatz to lay the report on the table until the next meeting:

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

## Report on MASC/MASS Conference

Deputy Superintendent Beverly Nelson presented the report. Ms. Nelson reported that the conference was held from November 2-5, 2016 in Hyannis. There were a variety of workshops that focused on important current topics in education. School Committee members Ann Marie Cugno, Paulette Van der Kloot and Robert Skerry attended various segments of the conference. Superintendent Belson, Deputy Superintendent Nelson, and Assistant Superintendent Caldwell also were in attendance. As in the past conferences the group worked as a team trying to cover as many workshops as possible. Some of the highlights included a workshop on the new MCAS 2.0 which will be administered to students grades 3-8 this spring. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wolfson led the discussion. DESE is moving forward with its very ambitious testing program that will continue to transition to totally computer based testing by 2019. Jessica Minahan led a session entitled *Between a Rock and a Calm Place – Behavioral Intervention Strategies* which offered many tangible suggestions on ways teachers can assist students with SEL issues. There were several sessions that focused on legal updates as well as some of the issues that schools are currently dealing with such as safe school programs for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. The charter school expansion issue was a prominent topic. There was also the opportunity to meet with vendors which is helpful for our planning and future projects.

### Discussion:

Ms. Cugno voiced her frustration regarding the next generation of MCAS. She is concerned that no one has answers about the online testing cost or implementation. Ms. DiBenedetto asked how the information received at the conference gets to administrators. Ms. Nelson answered that she holds monthly meetings and distributes this information at that time. Ms. DiBenedetto asked what the Superintendent brought back from the conference. Superintendent Belson answered that he learned of the tier 2 of Erate which amounts to approximately \$700,000. He also spoke with roof vendors and learned of a new application and also how will ESSA be implemented with the new administration.

Ms. Kreatz asked if there was any discussion as to how MCAS will be handled with students and if there will be tutorials scheduled. Ms. Nelson answered that they are waiting for DESE to send practice tests to districts before scheduling anything. Ms. DiBenedetto asked for an update on School Brains. Superintendent Belson said that we are making progress. Middle school and high school parents have received their user names and passwords. Elementary schools will be rolled out soon.

On the motion of Ms. Cugno seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

**Report on Legalization of Marijuana with Recommendations for Legislative Modifications**  
Superintendent Belson reported that on November 8, 2016, 54% of voters legalized recreational marijuana without sufficient regulatory provisions in place. While the existing medical marijuana industry is subject to guidelines that can control product safety, the new law in its current form will allow for significant safety hazards. Furthermore, the new law goes into effect on December 15, 2016 which does not allow for swift legislative modification since the General Court is only meeting in informal sessions until January. The Cannabis Control Commission under the State Treasurer has not yet been established or funded. Governor Baker, Senate President Rosenberg, and House Speaker DeLeo have all agreed that the law generated through initiative petition needs to be “fixed.” They all believe that there is a need to make changes necessary to protect public

health and safety. The Superintendent has discussed the new law with House Leader Paul Donato and he assures me that actions will be taken as soon as possible to improve the control of recreational marijuana use and distribution. He recognizes that there are many challenges associated with the specifics of the law.

Considering the recent emphasis that has been placed on the use and abuse of opioids, the introduction of recreational marijuana into the Commonwealth without sufficient controls is troubling. Although the law sets the age at twenty-one, it is unrealistic to believe that with significantly increased availability and the advent of “homegrown” production that younger, school age persons will not gain substantial access. It is imperative that School Committees and School Officials urge the legislature and Governor to take the necessary actions to prevent the misuse of this substance. As your Superintendent, I recommend the following for your consideration:

1. Provide for a local “opt in” provision. Currently the law would require communities to hold a referendum to “opt out.” The “opt in” provision would mirror the Colorado law where 70% of the communities banned marijuana outlets locally. It is one thing to agree that legalization is acceptable and another to support it in your own community.
2. Substantially increase the tax rate on marijuana. There will be a significant cost for regulating this new law. The revenue seems enticing but the expenses may wipe it away.
3. Eliminate the “Home Grown Plant” provision. This provision will not be adequately enforced/taxed. Also the potential for contaminated product is dramatically increased. It also makes it more possible for under age persons to access the product.
4. Strengthen the Control Commission to better understand the impact and to effectively regulate the industry. The commission should have a staff that collects data to inform future modifications that may be necessary to protect public safety.

The initiative petition process can be a valuable part of our democratic system. However, it is a blunt instrument that needs to be refined. The will of the people can be respected, but it deserves the review of our lawmakers before it unleashes harmful, random outcomes. This is especially true when we consider our continuing struggle with addiction prevention and public safety. Superintendent Belson said that he would like to send a letter to our legislators highlighting these points.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto said that she would like to see a copy of the draft prior to sending.

On the motion of Ms. Cugno seconded by Ms. Kreatz to receive a copy of the draft letter

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

On the motion of Ms. Cugno seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

#### Report on Medford Public Schools Disciplinary Statistics

Superintendent Belson reported that DESE just released the 2015 – 2016 statewide school discipline statistics. This report is pursuant to Chapter 222 and state regulations that went into effect in July 2014. The goal of these regulations is to focus school systems on the reduction of lost educational time related to excessive school suspensions and discipline.

Medford rates are well below the state average. Nevertheless we continue to work on methods that reduce lost educational time. We will do a deeper analysis over the next few months and provide the Committee with more analytical information. As you know we are committed to addressing the needs of the whole child and promoting social and emotional learning. We recognize that this is an ongoing effort and that requires continued emphasis and commitment.

#### Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto asked what students are categorized as “high needs”. Superintendent Belson answered economically disadvantaged, sped and ELL. Ms. DiBenedetto requested a more detailed report. Ms. Van der Kloot said the data is unclear and it does not break down the data. Superintendent Belson said that they will break it down.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot to get a report with data broken down by elementary, middle school and high school:

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

On the motion of Ms. Cugno seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

#### Report on School System Guidance on National Election Results

Superintendent Belson reported that school systems around the state have received multiple inquiries from parents and citizens regarding classroom discussions about the recent national election results. Concerns have been raised that some teachers/staff might introduce their personal opinions and feelings into this very “charged” current topic leading to conflict. Elections are a fundamental element of a democracy. The process of elections and the substantive issues are a legitimate part of citizenship education. We cannot eliminate either process or substance from our schools and/or classrooms. Naturally, discussions must be age appropriate and devoid of any hostility for expressions of opinion. There can be no discussion that is racist and discriminating towards any group. Adult personnel must ensure that inappropriate comments are not introduced.

On Wednesday morning, November 9<sup>th</sup> the Superintendent emailed principals the following message:

*Colleagues:*

*Last evening citizens elected a new President of our country. I recognize that this election was extremely contentious and polarizing. Undoubtedly, there are many strong feelings among faculty, staff and students. It is extremely important that we do not engage in divisive discussions that can inflame feelings and behaviors. As educators we must strive to help our student understand that we have a democratic process and that we need to go forward in a constructive way to support our country and all people. There is no room for hate messaging. Our students must learn that in this country we accept the constitutional process that transfers power after a legitimate election. This does not mean that there can be no discussion of the election. Any*

*discussion must be respectful and constructive. Thank you for your attention to this guidance.*  
*REB*

Principals were expected to instruct faculty and staff of the above expectation. I have not received any information from principals that inappropriate discussions have taken place in our classrooms. We will continue to emphasize the importance of the above message and we will monitor behavior as we go forward.

On the motion the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Recommendation to Approve graduation Date MHS/MVTHS Class of 2017

Superintendent Belson stated that Dr. Perella has requested the approval of commencement exercised for the Class of 2017 to be held on Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Gantcher Center at Tufts University.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Cugno to approve June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as the date for graduation at the Gantcher Center.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

On the motion of Ms. Kreatz seconded by Mr. Skerry to move negotiations and legal matters to the end of the calendar.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Superintendent Belson presented the following update on the Crossing Guard issue.

Pursuant to our discussion on acquiring a crossing guard from DCR at an appropriate location on the Fellsway, the Superintendent has spoken with our legislators to emphasize the importance of this request. Assistant Majority Leader Paul Donato has taken the lead on this matter and has convinced DCR to review the situation in earnest. DCR will be sending Rangers to evaluate the traffic patterns at specific Fellsway locations and to report the findings. We expect an answer by the end of November. We will continue to pursue this matter and keep you informed.

Discussion:

Ms. Kreatz said that she has spoken to Senator Jehlen's office and they said they are looking into adding an additional 7 seconds to the walk signal which should help. Representative Donato is scheduled to meet with the DCR the first week in December.

Attorney Greenspan read his opinion regarding the conflict of interest with AIC. Attorney Greenspan said it is of his legal opinion that there appears to be no conflict of interest for teachers and/or administrators to work for AIC.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto asked if the decision went through the state ethics commission. Attorney Greenspan said that he spoke with an attorney at the commission and they cited the general laws.

Ms. DiBenedetto said that she wanted the request sent to the state ethics commission. Ms. DiBenedetto asked if we are charging AIC the same as all other renters. Superintendent Belson answered that they pay \$60,000 per year and it is consistent with others. On the motion of Ms. Cugno seconded by Ms. Van der Kloot the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

New Business:

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Manfredo Scaramuzzo. Mr. Scaramuzzo was the father of Rita DiCarlo, Director of Foreign Languages.

School Committee Resolution:

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Denise Riley Bates. Ms. Bates was the mother of Medford High School Hockey Coach Shawn Bates.

A moment of silence was held.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot seconded by Mr. Skerry to go to Execution Session at 8:43 p.m. to discuss Negotiations and Legal matters regarding an update on teacher grievance(s), negotiations with cafeteria workers and negotiations with school security personnel

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, , Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 1 Mustone

The Committee returned from Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. Cugno the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 1 Mustone

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Skerry Jr.  
Secretary

