

Regular Meeting
January 11, 2016
School Committee Meeting
Council Chambers

The Organizational Meeting of the Medford School Committee was called to order by Mayor Burke in the City Hall Council Chambers at 7:11 p.m. Those present were Ms. Cugno, Ms. DiBenedetto, Ms. Kreatz, Ms. Mustone, Mr. Skerry, Ms. Van der Kloot, Mayor Burke and Superintendent Belson.

Mayor Burke stated that the purpose of the organizational meeting was to elect a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary for the year 2016.

Ms. DiBenedetto placed the name of Robert Emmett Skerry Jr. in nomination for the position of Secretary of the Medford School Committee.

Voted: That Robert Emmett Skerry Jr. be elected Secretary of the Medford School Committee

Yea: 6 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Obstain: 1 Skerry

Robert Emmett Skerry Jr. was elected to the position of Secretary of the Medford School Committee for the calendar year 2016.

Mr. Skerry placed the name of Erin DiBenedetto in nomination for the position of Vice Chairperson of the Medford School Committee.

Voted: That Erin DiBenedetto be elected Vice Chairperson of the Medford School Committee

Yea: 6 Cugno, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Obstain: 1 DiBenedetto

Ms. DiBenedetto was elected to the position of Vice Chairperson of the Medford School Committee for the calendar year 2016.

This portion of the meeting was closed and the regular meeting began.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry that the minutes of December 21, 2015 be approved:

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the motion of Mr. Skerry that the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved:

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

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot that the Payrolls be approved:

Voted: That the Payrolls be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Recommendation to Accept Anonymous Gift to Columbus School

Assistant Superintendent Diane Caldwell reported that an anonymous donation of twenty-five hundred dollars has been made to the Columbus Elementary School. The gift will be used for sustainables for the library/technology.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry seconded by Ms. DiBenedetto to approve the donation:

Vote:

Yes: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

No: 0

Absent: 0

Recommendation to Accept Gift from MIDI Corporation, Dr. Marthinus van Schoor, to fund Robotics Team

Director of Math and Science Carolyn Joy reported that Dr. Marthinus van Schoor, founder and CEO of Midé Technology in Medford has generously offered a gift of \$2,200 to the Medford High School Robotics Team. This gift provides the robotics team the necessary funds for application to the 2016 New England Regional Botball Tournament. This is the fifth year that Dr. Van Schoor and Midé Technology have supported Medford's participation in the competition. The Botball Robotics Team is open to students at Medford High School and Medford Vocational/Technical High School under the advisorship of high school mathematics teacher, Ms. Barbara Chyen. We would like to thank Midé Technology for supporting Medford's upcoming generation of programmers and engineers. Ms. Joy introduced Ms. Chyen and the students in attendance.

Discussion:

Ms. Van der Kloot requested that a letter be sent to Dr. van Schoor. She also thanked the students for their participation. Ms. DiBenedetto thanked the teachers for their continued dedication.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry, seconded by Ms. Cugno to accept the gift:

Vote:

Yes: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

No: 0
Absent: 0

Report on Medford Public Schools Enrollment, Demography and Class Size January 2016

Superintendent Belson stated that As we begin a new School Committee term it is useful to provide a snapshot of our current enrollment, demography and class sizes. These statistics are fundamental facts that affect our program and budget considerations both now and in the future. Please note the following:

1. Overall enrollment is 4462 students grades PK – 12 in our school buildings. This number is down slightly from last year's count of 4514.
2. Our school population is approximately 65.5% Caucasian, 15.3% Afro-American, 8.6% Asian, and 9.5% Hispanic with the remainder being of mixed racial origin. There are slightly more males than females systemwide.
3. There are 23.5% of our students whose first language is not English. The ELL student population is 7.8%.
4. Students with disabilities are 18% of enrollment.
5. Students who are considered "high risk" by state guidelines are 43% of enrollment.
6. Students who are considered economically disadvantaged are 25.9% of the population based upon revised guidelines from the federal government.
7. We have over 400 teachers in our system. The student teacher ratio is 11.5 – 1 compared to the statewide number of 13.3 – 1.
8. 99.7% of our teachers are fully licensed for their teaching assignments compared to 97.4% statewide.

Please find attached charts that supply the following information:

- Enrollment by school, grade and grade level classification
- Elementary class size enrollment by school, grade level, and teacher.
- Kindergarten enrollment by school, teacher, kindergarten aide, and sped inclusion designation.

Overall middle school and high school/vocational school class sizes are good. There is some variation based upon student course selection and specific student requirements. Periodically we will provide additional data to you as the year progresses that will help us jointly plan programs, staffing, and budgetary matters.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto requested the Superintendent provide a report on the cost of Kindergarten Aides. She asked if the larger classes at the McGlynn have full time aides? Superintendent Belson replied that Medford's class size is on of the best in the state and he will provide the information requested. Ms. Cugno stated that looking at the numbers across the district they are incredible but the large kindergarten classes are a concern. She also said that she would like to look at the middle school numbers in the summer so that equally between the schools is obtained. Ms. Van der Kloot aksed for further explanation of the kindergarten aides at the McGlynn. Ms. DiBenetto commented on the increase in the freshman class size at the vocational school saying it is great to see the students staying home. Ms. DiBenedetto asked what the ELL numbers are statewide. Superintendent Belson responded that they are about the same as Medford. Ms.

DiBenedetto wants to make sure that student services are meeting the requirements. Superintendent Belson said that Medford has two nurses per school which is higher than most districts. Ms. DiBenedetto requested a report on class size in all subjects from the Superintendent. Mr. Skerry asked how many students that have left to go to charter/private schools have returned? Superintendent Belson answered that we have thirty-five students at Minuteman and we will see if more return because of the many opportunities now in Medford.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto requesting a report on class size and a report on the kindergarten aides:

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

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

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Report on Spring 2016 (PARCC) State Testing and Parent Notification

Deputy Superintendent Beverly Nelson presented the report. Ms. Nelson stated that in November 2015 the Board of Education voted to develop a new state test (MCAS 2.0) to replace the current version of MCAS that has been the mandated state test since 1998. This new test will have different types of questions that require students to perform tasks and process content. The questions are similar to the types of questions on the PARCC test that was developed for states that had adopted the Common Core. MCAS 2.0 will be the mandated test for all students in the Commonwealth in spring 2017. This year school districts were asked to decide which test they wanted to administer to students. The administration with the approval of the School Committee chose PARCC since the new MCAS 2.0 will be more like PARCC than the current MCAS and will provide students with practice on the types of questions that will be on the MCAS 2.0 exam next year. This week we are asking principals to notify parents/guardians about the spring test which will take place from late April through May. Students who are on IEPs may require adjustments to reflect PARCC accommodations. In more cases the accommodations allowed are the same for MCAS. The Office of Pupil Services will be sending out a letter to parents/guardians notifying them of these differences and offering parent information sessions to answer questions.

Discussion:

Ms. Van der Kloot said that she has received many inquiries and people are disappointed that the students will take the PARCC test this year. She explained to them that she voted for this because she felt she didn't want to do a disservice to our students. Ms. Cugno asked if any dates on the forums have been set. Ms. Nelson replied that they have an administrators meeting scheduled for Tuesday and they will discuss a plan then. Ms. Cugno said that it is all very frustrating and there is much political background regarding the test. She asked if students will be able to opt out? Ms. Nelson answered that she

didn't think they could opt out because it is the state mandated test. Ms. Cugno asked Ms. Nelson to check on this. Superintendent Belson said that there is no official opt out. He also said that it is more performance based. Superintendent Belson also mentioned that they plan to go to each school to discuss the topic with parents. Ms. DiBenedetto said she feels that parents like more condensed information perhaps in a bullet form saying "less is more." She suggested an auto call informing them of this information because so many parents don't read notices or letters. She suggested communication in many different forms so that everyone is reached. Ms. Van der Kloot suggested possibly having school committee meetings at the schools.

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

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Report on ELL School Population and ACCESS Testing

Supervisor of ELL Leslie Trotta presented the report. Ms. Trotta reported that the ELL Department is a complex and fluid arena. ELL students are identified at the Parent Information Center via the home language survey, they are tested for English language proficiency, and based on the test results and available school history, and incoming students are placed accordingly. ELLs are a fluid population, moving in and out of the system throughout the year. Since June, we have placed approximately 45 students, and have lost approximately 35. Our total number of ELLs changes daily, but currently we have 380 students K-12. We have had a large influx of Newcomers, students who have limited or no English language proficiency. This influx has created the need for more staff; we continue to have overcrowded Newcomer classes system-wide. Ms. Trotta briefly gave an overview of the programs within the department. Ms. Trotta continued with an explanation of the state mandated test ACCESS for ELL students. This test determines English language proficiency in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing. All ELL students K-12 must take this test. The results determine placement of ELL students and is the most important factor in determining whether a student can be transitioned out of ELL. This is the first year we will participate in online ACCESS testing. Our testing window is January 7 to February 10. The ACCESS test was introduced in the 2012-2013 school year; the vast majority of our students have shown good progress on the test.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto asked for an update in the spring of the number of teachers that need SEI endorsement. Ms. DiBenedetto asked if we are in compliance in teacher/student ratios. Ms. Trotta said that we are in the elementary school but the middle school and high school numbers are over. Ms. DiBenedetto asked what is being planned for the newcomers program? Superintendent Belson said that the DESE makes recommendations but does not fund them. As of today the numbers are high but in February many students could return to Brazil. This discussion needs to take place at the state level. We are servicing these students. Ms. Van der Kloot asked when the SEI training for teachers must be completed. Ms. Trotta answered July 2016 and we are very

close. Only the core academic teachers need this certification. Ms. Van der Kloot asked when the new comers at the Roberts are able to move out of this program do they go to their neighborhood school. She said this must be hard for them because it is taking them out of their comfort zone. Ms. Trotta answered that they do go to other schools at that time. The problem with having the program at other schools is staffing and space. Ms. Van der Kloot asked if the staff feels the ACCESS test is an accurate placement for the students. Ms. Trotta replied yes but it is not an easy test. Ms. Cugno asked about the number of students in the middle schools. Ms. Trotta said presently there are 50. Ms. Cugno recommends looking at the numbers in the newcomers program. Superintendent Belson said that we can look at this at budget time. Ms. Mustone commented that some ELL students do stay at the Roberts.

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

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

Recommendation to Accept Revised Policy on Student Restraint Protocols

Director of Student Services Kathleen Medaglio presented the report. Ms. Medaglio reported that amended regulations 603 CMR 46.01 were approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on December 15, 2014 and became effective on January 1, 2016. It is necessary for each school district to update local policies to be in alignment with this regulation. Ms. Medaglio highlighted the changes including physical restraint definition, goals of regulation revision, key elements included in the revision, and staff orientation and training to support the implementation .

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto complemented Ms. Medaglio on the report. She said it was very well done and completely explains the policy. Ms. Van der Kloot asked if any other staff members are trained? Ms. Medaglio said that they had to prioritize and are now working on more training sessions. She said that all assistant principals are trained. Mayor Burke asked who provides the training? Ms. Medaglio answered that staff was sent to workshops to become trainers so that they now train our staff. Mayor Burke asked if new teachers can be trained before they go into the classroom. Superintendent Belson answered that they can't provide all the requirements before they go into the classroom but they get this training within thirty days.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto, seconded by Ms. Cugno the recommendation was accepted:

Vote:

Yes: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

No: 0

Absent: 0

Recommendation to Approve the Protocols and Procedures for School Nurse Management of Potential Life Threatening Opioid Overdose
Supervisor of Health Services Toni Vento presented the report. Ms. Vento reported the Medford School Committee authorized the training of our nurse/medical staff in the use of Narcan medication. This training is now complete and we have appropriate amount so the medication onsite at our schools. She continued by explaining the procedure and the protocol for administration which needs School Committee approval at this time. Ms. Vento also informed the committee that the state announced today that Medford has received a five year grant for \$85,000 for opioid prevention.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto asked if middle school and high school nurses are trained? Ms. Vento answered that all nurses are trained at all levels.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry, seconded by Ms. DiBenedetto to approve the recommendation:

Vote:

Yes: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

No: 0

Absent: 0

Report on March 1, 2016 Professional Development Day

Deputy Superintendent Beverly Nelson presented the report. Ms. Nelson reported that the Medford teachers' contract provides for two mandated days of professional development. These days are usually scheduled on the district calendar at the beginning of the school year. This year we scheduled the first day for November 3. Last year because of cancellation of school due to bad weather ended for students very late in June. We did not want this to occur again this year. Based on the fact that we started school prior to Labor Day and to date we have not used any snow days we feel confident that we can now schedule the professional day for late winter. Therefore we have scheduled the second day for March 1, 2016. There will be no school for students. We are in the process of planning for the day and are meeting with administrators this week to finalize activities. Principals will notify teachers, students and parents of the March 1 professional development day. The change to the school calendar will also be posted on the website.

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

On the motion of Mr. Skerry to suspend the rules to place Negotiations and Legal Matters at the end of the calendar.

New Business

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Benjamin Nickerson. Ben was a 1995 graduate of Medford High School. He was the son of Jane Pompeo and the grandson of the late Alfred Pompeo Sr.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Judge Henry Tempone. Judge Tempone was a graduate of Medford High School where he was an outstanding soccer player. He served for many years as Justice at the Somerville District Court where he acquired the reputation of “tough but fair.”

A moment of silence was held.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry to go into Executive Session at 8:58 p.m. for the discussion of Negotiations and Legal Matters pertaining to an update on personnel discipline action and an update on negotiations with collective bargaining units.

Vote:

Yes: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke
No: 0

The Committee returned from Executive Session at 9:55 p.m.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry that meeting be adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Skerry Jr.
Secretary

