

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – October 7, 2009

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall. Present were Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mrs. Elaine Dwyer, Mr. Nicholas Puleo, Mrs. Jo-Ann Bragg, and Mr. Dave McCarthy, Vice Chairman.

Regular Meeting

Vice Chairman Presiding

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The Superintendent called the roll and Mayor Koch and Ron Mariano were absent. Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary; Mrs. Tefta Burrelli, Clerk; Messrs. Mullaney, Murphy, O'Brien, Draicchio, Segalla, Ms. Roberts, Todd, Tenaglia, and Hughes. Ms. Tracey Christello, Citywide and Ms. Allison Cox, QEA. Emily Hajjar and Daruis Varmahmoodi, Quincy High Student Representatives.

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On a motion by Mr. Puleo, seconded by Mrs. Bragg, the School Committee approved the regular session minutes for September 23, 2009 with a change in the order of steps to be taken for Central. The ayes have it.

Reg. Session. Min.
Approved 9/23/2009

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The Superintendent thanked staff and parents who came to the various school open houses. Ms. Colleen Roberts and the Superintendent met with the Italian Exchange Students at North Quincy High School. The Superintendent has sent out letters inviting people to be on the Open Enrollment Ad Hoc Committee. He will report back to the Committee with the names. He congratulated Jen Fay-Beers and Colleen Roberts for doing a fine job overseeing the Teacher Mentoring Program.

Supts. Report

Mr. Keith Segalla invited the Committee to the annual Mini Grant Reception to be held on Tuesday, October 20 and 3:00 p.m. in the Quincy High School rotunda. Out of 175 proposals submitted, 85 were selected. Twenty-one thousand dollars will be awarded.

The Center for Technical Education Advisory meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 19 in the new Quincy High School. Dinner will be served by the Culinary Arts students. They will be discussing the Perkins grant.

School Improvement Plans will be reviewed by the Leadership Team on October 16. Mrs. Bragg has called Policy Subcommittee meetings for October 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on November 5 from 11:3:00 pm, and November 12 from 11-3:00 p.m.

SIPs

Mr. Jim Rendle was present to review the Quincy High School winter sports schedule. Planning was difficult because of the construction at Quincy High School. All the games will be played in the Atlantic and North Quincy High School gyms. Mr. Rendle thanked everyone for helping out, especially North Quincy High and Atlantic for the use of their gyms. The members received a copy of the sports schedule.

QHS Winter Sports

Quincy will do a partnership with Boston University that will bring 20-30 student teachers to our middle and high schools. This will begin mid-January.

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Ms. Jane Kisieluis passed out information packets regarding the H1N1. The consent forms for the seasonal flu have been sent out. It is also posted on our website and Channel 22. Over 650 consent forms have been returned. Parents will be notified as soon as we are ready via Channel 22, Instant Messaging. We are ready and are waiting for the serum.

H1N1

Mr. Puleo wanted to make sure that we are sending home information telling parents that “if you don’t return the slip, you won’t get the shots.” Shots will only be given to students who bring back a consent form.

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The official enrollment total for October 1, 2009 is 9,169 students. Mrs. Roberts spoke to the enrollment of all elementary schools--where we are at each grade level and the total enrollment of each. Our Kindergarten enrollment is still up 700 plus students.

Official Enrollment

We are up 27 students at the Merrymount School and have added a new Kindergarten at that school. We also added a Kindergarten class at Squantum. The middle and high schools are fairly consistent from 2008-2009 except for Sterling. Sterling had a new grade configuration (5-8) this year. They are up 70 students. As for the high schools, the 9th grades are even. We do anticipate that the new high school will attract more students. The middle and high school total are only up 5 from last year. The district total is up 15 students.

Class size – Grade 4-5. There are 19 students in each classroom. We had a couple of fifth grades that increased just before school started. We hired two half time skill support teachers for that. They work each morning teaching Math language arts and reading. The two classes split into three classes for

those classes.

Mrs. Bragg asked if there was any discussion at this time to make the half time teachers full time.

The Superintendent said he would have to go back to the budget. At this time it would be difficult to produce additional .5 positions. He thought it was doable right now the way it is. Wollaston does not have a lot of space.

Mrs. Bragg asked him to look at it.

Mrs. Bragg asked for a listing of the different types of population for each school.

Mrs. Dwyer put the part time teachers into the Budget Subcommittee.

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Mrs. Joanne Morrissey gave an update on the Food Services Program. There are 80 staff members. We serve breakfast and lunch at all schools every day. Last year, we served over 130,000 breakfasts, 70,000 lunches, and over 40% of the students are qualified for free and reduced meals. We purchased over \$1.2 million in food and supplies and receive \$1.6 in state and federal commodities.

Food Services

Summer Serve ran at 15 sites and served 25,000 lunches and 13,000 snacks. Mrs. Morrissey gave an update of the goals and initiatives for the next school year. She encouraged every parent that may qualify to fill out the forms to take advantage of the free and reduced lunch meals. Forms are online. They can be submitted to their school or the Food Service Office.

Four middle schools are using computers. Menus are on our webpage. A new page will be added with all our foods and nutritional information.

Two schools are considered Universal schools - Parker and Snug Harbor. They are at 60% or more free and reduced lunch.

Mrs. Morrissey will work with the system-wide Wellness Team on October 22. They plan to add a webpage on Wellness. They are working on an Employee Handbook and the Policy Subcommittee to revise Section 5.6.1.

Mrs. Bragg put Policy 5.6.1. Food Services into the Policy Subcommittee.

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Ms. Linda Perry spoke to Bullying Prevention Awareness week this week October 4-10. Parents are very pleased that Quincy has an Anti-Bullying

Open Forum

policy.

Mr. Tattlebaum spoke to the fifth grade classes at Montclair School. There were always three classes all on the same floor. Now there are only two classes on the third floor and the other is down on the first floor. Now there are only two teachers and a half time teacher. The results are too negative. Students are bouncing up and down floors. He asked that the Committee restore the teacher to full time and put all the classes back on the third floor.

Ms. Linda Monaco spoke against the Hanlin Charter School in Quincy. She also told the members that watching the meetings has been painful and embarrassing. She asked the members to talk about only the job they are charged with; they need to stay on task and leave personal issues aside.

Ms. Barbara Isola said she supports the new site of Central Middle School. It is close to the center of the city. She also asked the Committee to consider moving the Public Forum to the beginning of the meeting. Scheduling is difficult for some parents and residents to come and speak.

Mr. Chris Chetywnd spoke to the new Anti bullying campaign in our schools. There is bullying through the phone calls and instant messages and they can spread rumors further now. Adults, he said, need to set an example. He expressed his dismay with a member of the committee whom he accused of blogging about him in his website. At this time, Mr. Puleo questioned the relevance of this to the Quincy Public School. Mr. McCarthy told him to speak to Mr. Puleo after the meeting.

Ms. Tracy Christello, Citywide, announced a candidates evening at Broad Meadows on Thursday. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

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Mr. Murphy reported that the carpenters built book shelves at Beechwood Knoll, replaced ceiling tiles at Atlantic. Maintenance will begin work at the Stadium. The major work is to re-shingle the roof at the concession stand. They have installed four new heating boilers at Bernazzani, repaired security PA system at Lincoln Hancock, men are working on all emergency exit signs and painting in the common areas. We are in compliance with the ADA state regulations and guidelines. These vary with the age and structure of the buildings.

Bldg. Update

Mrs. Dwyer has called a School Facilities meeting on October 19 at 4:00 p.m. She asked members to bring any concerns about the ADA to that meeting. They will not deal with **Honeywell** at this meeting.

Mr. McCarthy asked that the gas company take a look at the Atrium at Quincy High School. He detected an odor of gas there.

Mrs. Mahoney asked about the energy star efficient schools. The Superintendent will get that information.

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Mrs. Dwyer reported that the Quincy High School Building Committee met Friday, October 16 at 9:00 a.m. A topping off ceremony at the new Quincy High School has been scheduled.

QHS Bldg. Committee
Mrs. Dwyer reports

We will be monitoring what Gilbane has put in place for site security. In Mid-October we will have night security as well.

They authorized \$2,500 to change the circuit breakers in the Science lab. This is not a permanent fix, but we are isolating the problem.

We have multiple punch lists – Mrs. Dwyer has asked Tishman to put together one list so that we can track them better.

We will get a ruling in two week whether or not we are awarded the electric solar grant.

Mr. Gillon will take a look at the safety issue on Saville Ave. He will come back at the next meeting to see what ideas will work. They would like to block off that parking lot. The area between the two houses on Saville Ave is the problem.

Mrs. Mahoney asked if the extension cords being used in the Science labs are a safety issue. Mrs. Dwyer said no. She has already asked about it. They are checking to see if the receptacles used were the correct ones.

Mr. McCarthy asked who from Quincy is the point person for this project. Mrs. Dwyer stated that Mr. Cunniff is the person in charge.

Emily Hajjar asked about the solar panels for the science class. Mr. Swanson had a meeting with Gilbane and they are skeptical how they were going to work it in the system. Mrs. Dwyer said we should hear soon. We need another grant to install the panels. The panels are already on the roof.

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City Solicitor Jim Timmins presented a map outlining the property that the City wishes to build the new Central Middle School. Before the City can process the site; it has to be approved by the School Committee. Mr. Timmins requested approval from the Committee of this site for a new Central Middle School.

Central Bldg. Committee
Mrs. Bragg Reports

Mrs. Bragg reviewed past processes. The original site is too small, if we tore the building down, reconstruction of the old building is too costly. That leaves construction of a new Central Middle School at a new site. The Building Committee looked at all five acres proposals in the city – Merrymount Park which includes the NIKE and Pageant Field site, Furnace Brook Golf Course, the Nike site and the Winfield House with four acres. We can include the green space around there. There are some traffic issues that need to be resolved.

Jen Fay-Beers spoke in favor of the whole project. After touring the new Quincy High School she was very excited to have a new Central Middle School. Mayor arrives at 8:50 p.m.

The site is north of Furnace Brook Parkway. By locating Central here, it will provide assistance to Atlantic Middle School and Broad Meadows. The Building Committee is recommending it to the School Committee for approval.

Mrs. Dwyer said she loved the site. She asked if he had any documentation associated with the cost of tearing down the old building and putting up a new building, or to renovate or to reconstruct then to rebuild. Also what is the cost of acquiring the land and what will we do with the old Central building.

Mr. Timmins answered that the Mayor is talking to the three property owners. They have to go through an eminent domain process. We will have to retain our own appraisers to be sure of the price. The building valuations total is less than \$7 million. The old Central building will be returned to the City to be sold. As far as the current site, it is impractical.

Mrs. Bragg said it is her intent to file for a 600 student school.

Mrs. Bragg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. McCarthy to accept the Winfield House and surrounding businesses as a site for the Central Middle School.

Motion to accept
Winfield House &
Surrounding Businesses
For a new Central

The Mayor asked that the motion state that the old building will be returned to the City to be sold and put that back on the tax roles. However, Mrs. Bragg was reluctant to do that until securing the site is more secure. On a roll call vote the motion to accept the Winfield House and surrounding businesses as a site for the Central Middle School passed 6-0. Mr. Mariano was absent.

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On a motion by Mayor Koch, seconded by Mrs. Bragg, the Committee approved the request by Atlantic Middle School to go to Camp Burgess, Sandwich, MA from 10/31-11/1/09. The ayes have it.

Student Travel
Atlantic to Camp Burgess

Mrs. Dwyer asked that teachers consider taking trips during school vacation or weekend to reduce the cost of substitutes. She has a problem when they take nine or ten days off during the calendar year.

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Mrs. Mahoney asked that the School Committee send a letter to the MDOE in opposition of any charter schools. On a motion by Mrs. Mahoney, seconded by Mrs. Bragg, the Committee approved the following resolve:

Charter School

Be it resolved that the Quincy School Committee is opposed to the proposed Hanlin International Academy Charter School currently being considered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and

Be it further resolved that the Quincy School Committee rejects the notion that any ethnic, social, linguistic, or cultural group is being underserved in their attempts to improve language and academic proficiency; and

Be it further resolved that the Quincy School Committee stands by its strong record of service to the English Language Learner population and strongly supports the many dedicated teachers and staff who dedicate their time and effort to educating this population.

On a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-0. Mr. Mariano was absent.

Mrs. Mahoney also asked that they invite Mr. McFarland and the City Council to submit this letter together as a City.

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Mrs. Bragg congratulated Tracey O’Sullivan in creating and continuing the After School Instrumental String Program.

Staff Recognition

Mrs. Bragg put into the Facilities Management Subcommittee the garden at Snug Harbor. She has concerns over some of the things, particularly with the lighting. The two huge drawings dealing with the garden look more grander and more involved than what she was expecting. She did not want six huge lights facing the houses across from that school.

To Facilities Mgt. Subcommittee

Mrs. Bragg moved into the Policy Subcommittee the policy that deals with the new requirements for the class of 2010. All of our high school students will have to pass the Science and Technology MCAS. Principals would like more flexibility in students’ schedules. Right now the high school requirements don’t allow for a lot of flexibility for those students that might

To Policy Subcommittee

need some extra learning opportunities to pass the science and technology MCAS. Mrs. Bragg I would like to allow principals to have the option to forgo a four year social studies if the child really needs help in Science. Everyone will get a copy of the proposed policy. She called a subcommittee meeting for 6:30 p.m. just prior to the next regular meeting.

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Mrs. Dwyer congratulated Rich O'Brien who will be retiring this coming January 2010.

Communications

The Mayor spoke to the Italian Exchange students that came into his office. He thanked the host families and congratulated Sabrina and those families.

Mr. Mariano is out of the country today.

The Committee congratulated Ms. Stephanie Buckley, a Sterling teacher, who was recognized by the *Patriot Ledger*.

Staff Recognition

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A Policy Subcommittee was held tonight prior to the regularly scheduled School Committee Meeting. The Committee discussed:

Policy Subcommittee
Report by Mrs. Bragg

Physical Restraint of Students - File 10.9.3: Quincy has a policy in place which goes much further in protecting the rights of students. The only two changes in the policy were changing the name of the Massachusetts Department of Education to Mass Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Mrs. Bragg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mahoney, to approve the policy. The ayes have it.

Observation of Special Education Programs. A new requirement has come down from the state regarding observation of Special Education classes. Parents want to observe their child's classroom. Ms. Todd presented a policy in this regard. This will deal with Special education classes only.

On a motion by Mrs. Bragg, seconded by Mr. McCarthy, this policy was approved as amended. The ayes have it. An updated copy will be presented at the next meeting.

Next Year's School Calendar: The members received a copy of next year's DRAFT Calendar. Mrs. Bragg asked that Citywide, Special Ed parents, QEA, and all city unions go through Rich O'Brien's office to take a look at the calendar. There is presently a policy stating that school shall begin the Wednesday following the first Monday of September.

The Committee is soliciting opinions from those groups to see if we want to change the start of the school year. We may choose to make a change or no change at all. We will report back at the October 21 meeting.

Progress Reports: This has been discussed several times over the years. We are having the same problem that we had over the years, although we have improved the Progress Report. The problem is how can parents be notified on the Progress Report when the student is an A student and is dropping to a C. The present system is a pass/fail and really does not tell the parents the scope. It is a big jump between a 90 and a 70, although 70 can still be passing. We have added check lines so that the parent can have a conference with the teacher and a signature line. We also have instructions to new teachers and all teachers on the options that are available. These types of codes, if they are utilized will let parents understand if that child was slipping from an A to a C. This should be a red flag to the teacher and parents should be made aware of it.

The Superintendent said he has had a lot of discussion with teachers and Mr. Phillips. It is more a matter that teachers felt strongly that this would add another grading time. Instead of grading three times a year, they would be grading six times.

Mrs. Mahoney said that this is not helpful to the parents at home. She suggested adding a line "if you want to communicate by email."

Mr. O'Brien said it is tough to call in mid term because students have a chance to turn around. He is trying to get a portal on the webpage so that everyone can see their own grades.

The Superintendent asked if they want to speak with Mr. Phillips or a few teachers. This item will remain in subcommittee.

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On a motion by Mr. Puleo, seconded by Mrs. Mahoney, the meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m. for the evening. There was no executive session. On a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-0. Mr. Mariano was absent.

Adjournment

ATTEST.....Secretary