

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – March 5, 2014

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at the Montclair Elementary School. 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. Shane Abboud, Dr. Rachel Bloom, Mr. Joseph Boss, Mr. Ricardo Cordero, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Dr. John Franceschini, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mr. Daniel Gilbert, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mr. James Imhoff, Ms. Nancy Joyce, Mrs. Alicia Kane, Ms. Julie Krieger, Mrs. Jill Kyranis, Mrs. Judy Letteney, Mrs. Chris McBride, Ms. Courtney Mitchell, Mrs. Robin Moreira, Mrs. Janelle Morris, Mr. James Mullaney, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Ms. Tracy O'Sullivan, Mrs. Maura Papile, Ms. Carolyn Parsley, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Marisa Qualter, Ms. Janice Ronayne, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd; City Councillors Brian McNamee and Kevin Coughlin; Ms. Lindsay Schrier, Quincy High School Representative to School Committee; Ms. Allison Cox, President, Quincy Education Association; Ms. Linda Perry, President of the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education; Ms. Paula Reynolds and Ms. Fiona McGarry, Citywide Parents Council Co-Presidents.

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There was a moment of silence for Mrs. Joyce Bannister, wife of Atlantic Middle School custodian Robert Bannister.

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Mayor Koch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Isola, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for February 12, 2014. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Regular Meeting
Minutes Approved
2/12/14

Mayor Koch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Isola, to approve the Executive Session minutes for February 12, 2014. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Executive Session
Minutes Approved
2/12/14

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Ms. Linda Perry, Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education President, announced the QPAC Resource Fair will be held on March 29 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Quincy High School. She also mentioned that the next Special Education Subcommittee will be held on March 26, 2014 at 6:00 pm at Quincy High School. Ms. Perry then read letter on behalf of QPAC, requesting online School Committee meeting broadcasts.

Open Forum

Ms. Paula Reynolds, Citywide Parents Council Co-President presented a petition from parents of five schools requesting online access to School Committee meeting broadcasts.

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Mrs. Hubley introduced Ms. Nancy Joyce, Assistant Principal of the Montclair Elementary School who spoke on behalf of Principal Renee Malvesti and the Montclair staff. Ms. Joyce thanked Mayor Koch and the School Committee for their commitment to providing an exceptional learning community for all schools. Montclair enjoys a strong partnership between staff and parents. Student learning is at the center of everything the staff does;

Superintendent's Report

Montclair School Student Recognitions

Montclair Student Council representatives from Grades 4 and 5 highlighted recent events: collecting donations for a local food bank and Toys for Tots, raising money for the Home for Little Wanderers. The chorus sang several songs and gave a preview of an upcoming assembly on anti-bullying.

City Councilors McNamee and Coughlin recognized Ms. Ronayne for her work with the Student Council. They presented each Student Council member with a City Council recognition certificate and celebrated the students as future leaders.

Dr. DeCristofaro recognized the dedicated staff of the Montclair School, and described the recent Curriculum Night held for families; many staff participated in the planning and execution.

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After a brief recess, the agenda was taken out of order and moved to New Business, Item A, a presentation on School Climate and Culture

New Business

School Culture and Climate

Mrs. Papile introduced students and staff from Sterling and Broad Meadows and explained that all five middle schools have substance abuse awareness and anti-bullying programs. The student leaders represent the initiatives across the school system. Mrs. Papile thanked the students, parents, staff, and principals for their support of these programs.

Ms. Kyranis, guidance counselor from Sterling Middle School presented their ongoing efforts, including Rachel's Challenge and associated Peer Leader group.

Student leaders presented on different facets of their school community, Black Out Bullying Day, Mix-It-Up Day, and Project 351. Future project includes Spring Greening with Cradles to Crayons to provide essential items to homeless students. Broad Meadows Guidance Counselor Mr. Boss presented the Peer Leaders who spoke about the You Lead Conference hosted by the MIAA, Walk for Change with IMPACT Quincy, and shared the Broad Meadows anti-bullying pledge.

Mrs. Papile thanked all the presenters. Dr. DeCristofaro thanked the students, staff, and principals. We are fortunate for the tremendous staff, a snapshot of the great work done every day in all of our schools. Supportive parents make all the difference.

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Mayor Koch spoke briefly about Solar Installations on school roofs; a full presentation was held at Facilities and Security Subcommittee on March 4, 2014 and information is available in the Subcommittee meeting minutes.

Solar Panel Installations

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Ms. Roy opened the presentation on District-Determined Measures (DDMs), explaining that these are measures of student learning, growth, and achievement related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks that are compatible across grades and the district. In 2014-15, every educator must administer two DDMs per year and collect/analyze data to review with their Education Evaluation supervisor. DDMs measure growth over time, not achievement. These DDMs will provide the second Educator Evaluation rating on Student Impact (High, Moderate, or Low growth) and will be based on 2 years of data trends. One of the two DDMs will be the MCAS (or replacement PARCC test). In this school year, we are piloting DDMs, designing and evaluating created assessments and utilizing some commercial products (DIBELs). At the end of this school year, Quincy Public Schools is required to submit the final assessment plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

District-Determined Measures

Quincy Public Schools sees DDMs as an opportunity to view student progress through multiple measures to inform instruction and improve learning for all students. The other part of the opportunity is to incorporate research-based approaches including the assessment sequences practiced in effective schools and unleashing the power of collaborative inquiry. DDM Key Questions are used to assess whether the measure is aligned to content, assesses what educators intend to teach, and what is most important for students to learn. They also assess whether the measure is informative and the results provide valuable information to schools and districts about their educators.

Quincy's approach to DDMs has been inclusive and broad-based and has involved as many educators as possible. Inclusion connects this initiative with other important

district and state initiatives, such as ongoing curriculum alignment and new core resources; common benchmark assessments; school and program improvement goals; educator evaluation; and DESE compliance. The big picture evolved from creating a central DDM team to include principals, members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team, teachers, and Quincy Education Association representatives. The DDM initiative has had a big impact on Professional Development. During the planning phase, DDM working teams were established and by the end of the year, teams will propose DDMs for their grade level or course to the Educator Evaluation Work Group. All participating team members have been awarded Professional Development Points (PDPs).

Teachers are taking leadership roles as learners and team members and have been provided time for collaboration beyond the scheduled Professional Development calendar in vertical, grade-level, and facilitator team meetings. DDM information is captured in the Aspen Student Information System. The team organization chart documents facilitators and team members, working groups. Every teacher is a member of a team -- some teams only have one member (vocational courses); others can have 40 members (elementary school math). Team meetings and connections to other system-wide teams are documented.

Mrs. Perkins introduced representative teams and members: for ELA Grade 1: Mrs. Moreira, Mrs. Letteney, and Ms. Qualter shared how each team member brought different experiences and perspectives, but all had a common commitment to their students, content, schools, team, and QPS. As a team, the evaluated assessments currently used in Grade 1 and decided to focus on Reading Comprehension given the grade's critical impact on literacy. After discussion, the team created an assessment to be administered by the classroom teacher. Students read a passage (not timed) and teachers assess reading accuracy. The test will be given in September and December. The full ELA Grade 1 team is appreciative of the DDM, a developmentally-appropriate tool with information that can be used immediately.

For Mathematics, Grade 5, Mrs. Morris and Dr. Bloom explained that their focus was on fractions and the team developed a pre-test and post-test DDM based on Core Curriculum standards, PARCC performance questions, and that incorporated all seven math strands. The pre-test is administered before fraction work begins. Post-test is at the end of March after three chapters of instruction. Timing will allow for assessment of data and additional interventions prior to MCAS administration in May. Feedback was positive and teachers were enthusiastic about the usefulness of the tool. Content alignment and expectations for students were carefully considered; the team is proud of the product developed and all Grade 5 math teachers piloted.

For Foreign Language, Grade 8, Mr. Cordero and Mrs. Kane thanked the administrative facilitators and principals for all of their support. It was a challenge to develop a language-based assessment and the team spent time researching, writing, developing grading rubrics, and developing administration protocols. First

steps were analyzing the curriculum guide/pacing plan and collaborating with high school teachers on vertical alignment. Since there is no MCAS for foreign language, two DDMs must be created. One assessment is a descriptive writing passage, with specific prompt that requires vocabulary and sentence structure and will be given mid-year. The second assessment is a listening comprehension assessment and administered in the spring.

For Middle School Physical Education, Mrs. McBride and Ms. Parsley described the difficulty in deciding how to differentiate this unique area. The teacher group evaluated their current curricula and compared how they assess. Two DDMs are required, so the team decided to focus on improving cardiovascular endurance and flexibility. Middle School students already take a physical fitness test in the spring, students will now also take it in the fall as a pre-test. Ms. Hallett talked about the special nature of some of the middle and high school teachers and shared a document they used to track their progress in developing and assessing DDMs,

For Middle School Student Support, Mr. Abboud presented on the creation of the middle school Scope and Sequence. Rachel's Challenge student survey and MARC survey will assist in assessing needs for program enhancements. Middle School guidance counselors meet and prioritize interventions, share ideas and create curriculum and assessments.

For High School Biology, Ms. Krieger and Mr. Imhoff described how the Science teachers from both high schools met several times and teachers collaborated on topic selection. For Biology, Cells and DNA were selected as the topics and Biology teachers shared their own assessments. Items were selected to create a common assessment and the group then created grading rubrics. Teachers piloted the assessment and scheduling has been finalized.

Ms. Roy thanked all of the teachers and facilitators -- teachers are doing the work at the school level that impacts the students directly. She reviewed the Aspen tool as a storehouse for documenting and sharing the process and progress at system-wide Professional Development days. This is also a place to capture teacher feedback; a survey has been sent to all team participants and data will be collected and analyzed. Critical information will be gathered about the process and the resources teachers feel will be important for implementation.

Mrs. Perkins reviewed the Implementation section and the information stored there and the value of teams being able to explore information from other teams. Hyperlinks go directly to team information, meeting agendas, and notes. Pacing and alignment guides are also stored here and reposted whenever they are updated. Some teams are sharing draft DDMs. Under Resources, historical information is organized. Aspen is providing a powerful communication to share information across teams, grade levels, schools, and disciplines.

Ms. Roy summarized the next steps for QPS on the DDM process: reflect on this

year's DDM process, analyze district-wide results from the DDM pilot assessments, determine a plan for data collection and storage; assess readiness for full implementation next year; continue QEA involvement on behalf of membership; and submit an implementation plan to DESE.

Ms. Isola expressed a feeling of relief after hearing the presentation; she appreciates the amount of work that has gone into creating these DDMs. Ms. Isola was struck by the fact that even though DDMS will impact teacher ratings, teacher concerns are about student learning impact. Ms. Isola asked about the two-year cycle for student growth; Ms. Roy said there is the opportunity to revise assessments during the two-year cycle which would restart the cycle. Ms. Isola asked if a teacher moves to a different school or grade level, their data would carry forward and be utilized.

Mr. Bregoli asked about the Student Impact Rating; Ms. Roy said that is a new rating based specifically on the data patterns from the DDMs and measures a teacher's impact on their student learning. Mr. Bregoli asked if MCAS is being used as a measure; Ms. Roy said that is state-mandated. Mr. Bregoli said that he feels that is an unfair measure for teachers. Mr. Bregoli is concerned about the DDMs for Art, Music, Physical Education, and Guidance. He is concerned about the subjectivity. Ms. Hallett spoke about the DDMs for the non-traditional areas. She said that the teacher teams decided on what would be the most helpful in assessing student progress; this is the first year and adjustments can be made. Other subject areas have done the same process of coming together and decided what is most critical to be assessed. For example, instrumental music teachers have selected common pieces of music. Dr. DeCristofaro said there are many unanswered questions about how student progress will be assessed in these areas. Mr. Bregoli asked if a student doesn't recognize letters at the beginning of Grade 1, how can their reading be assessed. Mrs. Letteney said it is in the administration, students will be allowed to pick out words if they can and in the post-test, there will surely be success. Some students will enter 1st grade and read with 100% accuracy, others will have low accuracy. There is a discontinue option for a struggling student. There will never be a perfect assessment that shows high growth for everyone.

Ms. Hallett clarified that the Grade 10 MCAS cannot be used as a DDM.

Mr. McCarthy thanked all the presenters and praised the Quincy Public Schools proactive approach to initiatives and the great opportunity for grade-level teams. Although a work in progress, this is a good foundation. He complimented the use of Aspen and the potential for this powerful tool.

Mrs. Mahoney thanked all of the teachers and facilitators for the presentation, this represents an enormous amount of work. Collaboration is important, and the immediate feedback of information so valuable for improving student opportunity. Everything that we do is focused on students, differentiating instruction to suit their needs, and preparing them for college and careers. The professionalism is so evident and she understands the challenge of the more

subjective areas and assessing progress. Mrs. Mahoney worries about the pressure on students and educators; would not like to see talented teachers turned away from the profession because of the level of scrutiny. She reminded the audience that this is not a QPS initiative. In recognizing all the efforts of these many educators, she is also glad to see Aspen used as a tool for sharing information.

Mayor Koch expressed frustration with the continuing demands imposed on Quincy Public Schools, but is grateful for our teachers' professionalism, humor, and embracing of these initiatives. Noting that this initiative has had to be bargained with the QEA, he thanked all for participating.

Dr. DeCristofaro thanked the teachers and facilitators for sharing their valuable insights from their classrooms. He also thanked Allison and the QEA for continued collaboration and input.

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Mayor Koch made a motion to approve the Out of State Travel of North Quincy High School Juniors to Rhode Island College in Providence, Rhode Island on April 14, 2014. Ms. Isola seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Out of State
Travel

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Mr. Bregoli made a motion to name the North Quincy High School basketball court in honor of former coach Robert Nolan. Mr. DiBona seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the ayes have it 7-0.

Old Business
Facility Dedication:
NQHS Basketball
Court

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After a brief recess, the Superintendent noted that it was almost 10:00 pm, so he would not show the Inspire Quincy video, but noted that it will be shown on Channel 22 and posted on SchoolTube. Most of the items on the Agenda are also in their packets, so School Committee can contact him with any issues.

Superintendent's
Report (Resumed)

For the Massachusetts School Building Authority projects, we are moving forward on Sterling Middle School Eligibility Phase tasks. One of the next deliverables is about enrollment, so Dr. DeCristofaro is requesting that a Facilities and Security Subcommittee meeting be scheduled to review projected enrollment and a grade configuration change proposal. He would like to share data publicly well before the submission date, giving an opportunity for comment.

Dr. DeCristofaro also thanked Boston Scientific Corporation for their recent donation of 16 Surface tablets and accessories to support third and fourth grade teachers with STEM content delivery. A second gift is planned for September 2014.

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Mr. McCarthy mentioned the traffic situation at North Quincy High School detailed in an email from a concerned parent to all School Committee members. Dr. DeCristofaro said that a Quincy Police Department School Resource officer is at North Quincy High School most days, but occasionally is at a conference or training. He has expressed concerns to Chief Keenan about the traffic at North Quincy High School.

Additional Business

Mr. Bregoli commended Kevin Murphy, Kevin Segalla, and the Custodial and Maintenance staff for their preparations for the recent North Quincy-Quincy basketball game.

Mr. Bregoli asked whether a revised elementary report card is in process. Dr. DeCristofaro said some research has been done; Ms. Roy said this is a goal for next school year completion.

Ms. Isola requested that the North Quincy High School traffic issue be added to the Health, Transportation, and Safety Subcommittee agenda.

Mrs. Mahoney mentioned the Citywide Parent Council and Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education request for online access to School Committee meetings. She has spoken to City Council President Joe Finn, since this is also an issue for City Council meetings. She would like the School Committee and City Council to collaborate with the Mayor on this initiative, perhaps Comcast money to be used. Mr. Finn will be in touch with Mrs. Hubley.

Mr. DiBona said a parent approached him about establishing a middle school wrestling program and he directed the parent to contact the high school athletic directors. This could be a relatively low-cost program to establish with parent support and could have great impact.

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

Reports of
Subcommittees

Ms. Isola made a motion to waive the reading of Subcommittee minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. DiBona and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the minutes of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting minutes from February 24, 2014. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. Bregoli made a motion to approve the minutes of the Policy Subcommittee meeting minutes from February 25, 2014. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. DiBona made a motion to approve the minutes of the Health, Transportation, and Safety Subcommittee meeting minutes from February 26, 2014. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the minutes of the Facilities and Security Subcommittee meeting minutes from March 4, 2014. Mr. DiBona seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

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Mayor Koch made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 10:00 pm for the purpose of contract negotiations. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a roll vote, the ayes have it 7-0. School Committee will return to Open Session.

Executive Session

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School Committee returned to Open Session at 10:35 pm.

Superintendent
Contract

Ms. Isola made a motion to offer Superintendent DeCristofaro a three-year contract, retroactive to November 1, 2013 with a 1% raise and a \$2,300 longevity payment in each year of the contract. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a roll call vote, the ayes have it 6-1. Mrs. Mahoney voted NO.

Mrs. Mahoney said that as a formal review was not completed, she cannot support the contract.

Mayor Koch feels that a review is absurd, the Superintendent has provided exceptional leadership and lays it on the line every day. Dr. DeCristofaro meets every challenge head on and has put the right people in place. We have an outstanding leader who does an exceptional job seven days a week. Mayor Koch is proud to support the contract and resents the implication that the School Committee did not do its job.

Mr. McCarthy said it is a pleasure to have Dr. DeCristofaro as Superintendent; he is reviewed every day, his leadership is proactive, he is always available, has built a great leadership team, and adapts the organization to meet the changing landscape. Mr. McCarthy fully supports the Superintendent, he has a great rapport with the QEA, teachers, and staff, and is a solid superintendent.

Ms. Isola said her vote speaks for itself. Now more than ever, we need stability in the Quincy Public Schools. So many changes are happening, this is an unprecedented time in education. Tonight's presentation on District-Determined Measures underscored the Superintendent's preparation and organization as did the Superintendent's mid-cycle review on February 12, 2014. His responsiveness to parent concerns is invaluable. We are fortunate to have Dr. DeCristofaro.

Mr. Bregoli said that as a 36-year veteran of Quincy Public School, he didn't always appreciate the Superintendent's position, but now he has a greater appreciation of his work from his School Committee role.

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Mayor Koch made a motion to adjourn at 10:40 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Isola and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Adjournment