

*Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – September 25, 2013*

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 at the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. David McCarthy, and Ms. Barbara Isola, Vice Chair.

Regular Meeting

Vice-Chair Presiding

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The Superintendent called the roll and Mr. Bregoli was absent. Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary; Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mr. James Mullaney, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd; and Ms. Allison Cox, President, Quincy Education Association.

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There was a moment of silence in remembrance of Mrs. Minukus, a Quincy Police Department Traffic Supervisor and member of the North Quincy High School Football Hall of Fame.

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Mrs. Hubley made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCarthy, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for September 11, 2013. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Regular Meeting  
Minutes Approved  
9/11/2013

Mrs. Mahoney made a motion, seconded by Mayor Koch, to approve the Executive Session minutes for September 11, 2013. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Executive Session  
Minutes Approved  
9/11/2013

Mrs. Lebo made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Hubley, to approve the Special Meeting minutes for September 18, 2013. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Special Meeting  
Minutes Approved  
9/18/2013

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As no one wished to speak at Open Forum, the School Committee moved on to the next item on the agenda.

Open Forum

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Superintendent DeCristofaro introduced an Inspiring Quincy video presentation. The video focused on recent Quincy Public Schools events including the beginning of the Middle School Cross Country Program, the ongoing Educator Evaluation Training, the two new High School Athletic Directors, and the new Central Middle School.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Bregoli arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Dr. DeCristofaro announced that there would be a dedication ceremony and Open House for the new Central Middle School on Sunday, October 20. The first day of school for staff and students at the new building will be Monday, October 21.

The North Quincy High School NEASC visit is scheduled for October 20 through October 23; the School Committee interviews will be held on Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 pm. School Open Houses continue this week and next; all information is posted on the Quincy Public Schools website. Class size issues are continuing to be monitored; a report will be presented at the October 9 School Committee meeting. 178 students have been awarded Abigail Adams scholarships in honor of their performance on last Spring's MCAS tests.

Upcoming Quincy Public Schools events include a College Fair for High School students on October 10 and the Professional Educator Evaluation Status reception on October 3, 2021. Seventeen educators will be honored at this year's event.

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Ms. Isola reviewed the Special School Committee Meeting held on September 18, 2013 and attended by members of the School Committee, the Superintendent and Leadership Team. Goal setting creates a road map and is a way to look forward at the beginning of the year and review at year's end. Each Subcommittee chair met with members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team and reviewed and set their goals.

Old Business

School Committee Goal Setting 2013-2014

For the *Budget and Finance Subcommittee*, their goal and purpose will remain as presented. For the *Facilities and Security Subcommittee*, the items in Facilities and Security will be reviewed and prioritized at the first Subcommittee of the year. For the *Health, Transportation and Safety*, the first two items on the School Committee Agenda will be retained. A third goal will be added: Increasing communication with parents on nutritional guidelines and standards of our new Wellness Policy.

For the *Policy Subcommittee*, all items currently in Subcommittee on the Agenda will be retained. Mr. Bregoli noted that the item related to CPR training might be something to work with the new High School Health Interventionists moving forward. For the High School Community Service pilot, the Community Service Coordinators will be invited to the first Policy Subcommittee meeting to discuss student completion of hours during the summer and increased roles for the Deans and Class Advisors. At the end of the year,

Mr. Bregoli would like to assess adding Grade 10 to the pilot. The Math Graduation Requirement discussion is waiting on information from the state on whether this will become a mandate. Facility dedications will be discussed at the first Subcommittee meeting and at subsequent meetings, there will be discussions about extracurricular eligibility and advertising/ sponsorship. A review of the Residency Policy was added to the items in Subcommittee.

The *Special Education Subcommittee's* goal for this year is to facilitate communication about the implementation of the Special Education Program Improvement Plan by monitoring and reporting on compliance with Special Education regulations and supporting initiatives to increase communication and professional development for parents and teachers. The *Teaching and Learning Subcommittee* made wording changes to Goal 1, adding a step to review the District Profile in Winter 2013 and amending the first step to include review of a Library Program Improvement Plan. For Goal 2, "and assessment" was added after "curriculum" and the third goal was changed: To be informed and updated on all issues regarding the implementation of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation process and its effectiveness. Action steps will be added to this goal as the year progresses.

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Superintendent DeCristofaro then presented on the District Improvement Plan and explained that this is the key way that Superintendents identify tasks that need to be completed and areas for improvement. The District Improvement Plan is an expression of the beliefs of the school system; all of the Quincy Public Schools staff members participate in a decision-making model where leadership is distributive and collaborative. Decision-making is close to the students as possible and this participation trains the next generation of leaders; most of the current principal team are career Quincy Public School educators.

New Business  
District Improvement  
Plan 2013-2014

The cycle of Planning/Implementing/Reflecting and Assessing is the basis for the District Improvement Plan. The Design Framework is the structure to manage change – a constant flow of factors and initiatives from DESE and the Federal Government. With the Design Framework, the first step is the Plan Your Work phase (Standards/Key Questions) that is general/ideal/conceptual, followed by the Indicators (What) and Benchmarks (How) and Documentation/Evidence (Who/What).

In the Planning phase of the Improvement Cycle, we begin with the Framework for District Accountability and Assistance. As a Level 3 school district, we have a level of technical assistance through DSAC and access to grants. The MA Conditions of School Effectiveness are correlated to the Quincy Public Schools Framework.

Implementation is the next phase of the Improvement Cycle: the creation of the Plan and Components, according to the timeline presented in the cycle. The Plans include the Superintendent's Annual Plan (collaboration between Superintendent and School Committee), School Improvement Plans, and Program Improvement Plans (Academic

and Academic Support). All of the Plans are connected to individual Subcommittees, providing opportunity for input and monitoring. Other District Improvement Components include the Curriculum and Assessment Plan (expanded from last year's Curriculum only), the Professional Development Plan, Technology Plan, District Profile, Team Organization and Goals, Educator Evaluation (new this year), and the Budget.

All of the Program and School Improvement Plans feature smart goals for improvement. Some of the teams have been reworked this year to address the changes in the organizational focus: combining Curriculum & Assessment into one team, creating new vertical teams for K-2, 3-5, middle school, and advanced placement, and a refocused Athletic Advisory Team. Other key teams include the Teacher Mentor Team and the Safety & Security Team which both are the beneficiary of community members.

At the end of the cycle, there is time for Reflection and Assessment of the goals of each School and Program and then the planning for the next year begins. Communication about managing goals and monitoring progress is done through the Superintendent's Monthly Message, Principal Staff Weeklies, School Curriculum Newsletters, Program Newsletters, Team Meeting Agendas and Notes, QPS Website/Social Media Platforms, and Channel 22.

Mrs. Fredrickson then reviewed that the Academic Program and School Improvement goal-setting process began with the System Goal Alignment process. The Curriculum and Assessment Management Team (Madeline Roy, Elizabeth Hallett, Erin Perkins, Mary Fredrickson) worked through the summer to assess data and the focus on full implementation of the Common Core. Mrs. Fredrickson shared the progression of proficiency on Grade 10 MCAS from 1998 to 2012. Quincy mirrored the state, rising from 34% in 1998 to 88% in ELA; in Math 18% to 78%.

In the 2013-14 school year, DESE is expecting to continue the transition away from MCAS with the PARCC field test. This year's MCAS will be on the Common Core standards but still utilize the MCAS format.

The Curriculum Management Team formulated a key question: what does Proficient student achievement look like under the new standards? After disaggregating the data, a profile of a student emerges, with their accompanying reading level. Quincy's strategies are to implement research-based approaches from the Data Coach Course and to assess the Conditions for School Effectiveness (providing aligned curriculum and aligned assessment, and providing effective instruction)

To monitor student progress, the Curriculum Management Team recommends monitoring percent correct going forward. Both new elementary curriculums provide many opportunities for diagnostic and progress monitoring. Schools will be monitoring progress throughout the year. DIBELS is a good example of how this can work; it is a focus on consistent measures of progress and what students can do. Student progress will be monitored through Weekly Assessments, Chapter Tests, Common Benchmark Assessments, Mid-Term Assessments, MCAS Assessments, and End-of-Year

Assessments. Pre-requisite skills assessments will be consistently given at the beginning of the school year. This will allow teachers to assess appropriate placement and targeting effective instruction. When we understand data, we understand what are students can do. Emphasis should be placed on everyday assessment and less focus on MCAS.

Field testing of the PARCC Test will involve 10% of MA students in Grades 3-11, randomly selected by grade and classroom. More than 50% of schools in QPS have been identified for potential participation. These assessments will be performance-based assessments in ELA & Math and End of year assessments in ELA and Math.

Superintendent and Curriculum & Assessment Team Goals will be the basis for School and Academic Program Improvement goals: increasing the average percent correct on MCAS by 2%. To achieve this goal, Action Steps will be constructed so that in ELA, the focus is on Key Ideas and Details. In Mathematics, the focus will be on constructed/open responses. PARCC Assessment content is infused in the new curriculum to assist students in learning how to construct appropriate responses.

Increasing the average percent correct by 2% is a complex goal. In order to increase the average, each student must increase by 1 point. Rather than targeting certain groups near proficient, this is a goal for all students, and highly challenging. Mrs. Lebo's concern is that the state wants us to look at achievement gap for high needs category. Mrs. Fredrickson said that historically, when we increase the percent correct, we increase the level of proficiency. Mrs. Lebo would like to be sure that this is going to give us the improvement that we need.

Mrs. Fredrickson said that high needs groups make up 61% of our population, and this focus is on all students. Other states have seen plummeting scores with the inception of the new tests. Massachusetts has long had a rigorous assessment, so we may be in better shape. Since we can't control the arbitrary line of achievement the state will impose, this goal that is focused on results for all children. Mrs. Lebo asked if we will have targeted interventions for Mathematics along the same lines as DIBELS and Literacy program. Mrs. Fredrickson said we are looking at differentiated instruction and may need to look at different ways of collecting and managing data (similar to DIBELS). Vertical teams will monitor progress and curriculum pacing guides. Teams will be getting closer to student work and teacher work. This work will allow for confidence in what the end of year assessments show.

Mrs. Lebo asked whether there were new curriculum materials purchased for high schools; this year's MCAS will reflect the common core. Mrs. Fredrickson said more information is to come about the PARCC field testing for the high school levels. Mrs. Lebo asked if we will be focusing on percentage correct, we know that there are issues with correlation between classroom grades and MCAS. Measures of progress will include performance levels, growth data, composite proficiency index, progress & performance index, and percent correct by standards. (New reports from EDWIN Analytics that will be provided on the teacher level, by standard.) Mrs. Lebo is also concerned about progress on each standard. Mrs. Fredrickson noted that a teacher may

be able to see that across last year's students, there was success or failure with a certain standard and that will inform their teaching practices. For new students, teachers will have information on performance and that will inform instruction going forward. Pacing guides and curriculum maps will provide detailed information to be shared among colleagues to standardize practices. Mrs. Lebo complimented the work of the Curriculum & Assessment team.

Mrs. Fredrickson reiterated that this is a year of high transition and that the aligned goals will see us through this complicated year. Dr. DeCristofaro said that this is a paradigm shift and information will be shared throughout the school year through School Committee and Subcommittee meetings.

For the Superintendent's Annual Plan, Mrs. Lebo proposed that she and Ms. Isola review the goals and discuss with Dr. DeCristofaro in an Ad Hoc School Committee meeting to be scheduled. They will present recommendations at the October 9 School Committee meeting.

Mr. McCarthy praised the Superintendent and Leadership Team for addressing all the different initiatives as they arise and keeping the School Committee informed. He is very impressed by the work of the Curriculum Team and Kevin Mulvey on Educator Evaluation. Quincy Public Schools is changing gears once again to implement the Common Core and the Superintendent's Leadership Team's hard work is really evident.

Mrs. Mahoney acknowledged the challenges of the Common Core implementation and likes that the ongoing assessment will allow for addressing gaps before the end of year MCAS. Even though the new PARCC tests are not available. We have challenges throughout the school system, but information will now be available at a level that was not previously a resource. Mrs. Mahoney asked about the number of different resources accompanying the new reading and math programs. Mrs. Frederickson said that it will be our challenge to utilize all the resources provided in the best way. Teacher participation in developing pacing and curriculum maps is key to the progress. One major challenge is how to capture all of this data: technology vs. portfolio or a combination of the two.

Mrs. Lebo asked about the DESE Learning Management System, but Quincy Public Schools is not part of this right now as it is for Race to the Top districts initially. Mrs. Mahoney feels that the technology management of data is the key to moving the district to a Level 2 or 1 school system. In our District Improvement Plan, identifying the challenges or weaknesses would assist in developing future budgets, including the coming need for PARCC testing to be completed online.

Mrs. Lebo said that there are many districts who have technology but no underlying structure for the data, so Quincy Public School's approach to this process will develop ownership of the data and the system and accompanying analysis. Mrs. Mahoney said that future budgets will need to address the technology needs to enhance what we are already doing in terms of data collection and assessment.

Ms. Isola thanked Dr. DeCristofaro and Mrs. Fredrickson; when we look at the challenges, there is much to be fearful about -- so many unknowns that make this difficult for educators, students, and parents. The Superintendent's Leadership Team presentations are consistently informative and she would like to see parent workshops focused on this issue. The more publicity we can provide will help decrease the anxiety level of students, parents, teachers, administrators.

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Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Out of the Country Travel of North Quincy High School to France and Spain April 17 to April 26, 2014. On the motion, Mr. McCarthy asked about details about the itinerary; details will be provided to School Committee closer to the date of the trip. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Out of the Country  
Travel

Mrs. Lebo asked that information about the per student cost be added to the Student Travel Request form.

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Mr. McCarthy asked for an update on the new Athletic Directors. Dr. DeCristofaro said that all indications are good; the additional on-site connection to students is a plus and the two Athletic Directors will be on the Agenda for the October 23 School Committee Meeting.

Additional Business

Mr. McCarthy asked about the High School Health Interventionists positions and Dr. DeCristofaro said that one has been hired and there is a candidate for the other position, so both should be in place shortly.

Mr. McCarthy asked about the status of access cards for building entry. All cards have been distributed; some school buildings will be having a second access point added in the next couple of weeks.

Mrs. Mahoney asked about communications for parents at the new Central Middle School about traffic and dropoff and pickup procedures; she suggested that the information be distributed to the neighbors as well. Dr. DeCristofaro noted that there was a recent meeting about traffic patterns at the school site. Information will be shared possibly through the website, Instant Alert, and possibly a parent meeting. Mrs. Mahoney noted that there hasn't been a Central Building Committee meeting since June.

Mayor Koch provided additional detail about the meeting that was held in his office with members of the Traffic Department, Superintendent DeCristofaro, and Mr.

Draicchio, reviewing the recommendations provided by the Traffic Department and an outside consultant. The Quincy Police Department will provide additional coverage for the first few days and City Councilor Kirsten Hughes is part of notification process. Once building is open, the traffic pattern will be assessed and adjustments will be made. Street paving and relining surrounding streets have been completed and new bus stops established with the MBTA.

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Mrs. Hubley noted that she has been volunteering at the Lincoln Hancock School library with their reshelving efforts. Mrs. Mahoney suggested that the high school students might be able to help with reshelving as a Community Service opportunity.

Communications

Mayor Koch mentioned the class size concern that was raised at the last meeting; Dr. DeCristofaro noted that a full report on class size averages will be presented at the next School Committee meeting.

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Mayor Koch made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCarthy and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Adjournment