

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – November 18, 2015

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at the Coddington Building. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Noel DiBona, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mayor Thomas Koch, 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; Mrs. Kathryn Clancy, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mr. Michael Joyce, Mr. Patrick Lane, Mr. James Mullaney, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Robert Shaw, Mr. Lawrence Taglieri, Ms. Judy Todd; former School Committee member Emily Lebo; Quincy Education Association President Allison Cox; and Student Representatives to School Committee Sarah Clancy (Quincy High School) and Nicholas O'Connell (North Quincy High School).

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There was a moment of silence for service members overseas.

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Ms. Isola made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bregoli, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for October 28, 2015. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Regular Meeting Minutes Approved 10/28/15

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

Open Forum

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Dr. DeCristofaro opened the Superintendent's Report with recognition of five National Merit Scholars from Quincy High School and North Quincy High School. Each year, 1.5 million Grade 10 students take the PSAT exam and the top 50,000 are Commended Scholars, recognized when they are seniors. Quincy Public

Superintendent's Report

Schools has five Commended Scholars this year: Megan Fox and Alicia Walker from Quincy High School and North Quincy High School's Gary Hu, Alexander DeJesus, and Ken Zou, who placed in the top 16,000 nationwide and is a semi-finalist for the National Merit Scholarship.

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Athletic Directors Patrick Lane and Michael Joyce then presented the Fall Athletics teams who qualified for the MIAA post-season tournaments:

- Quincy High School Girls Volleyball, Coach Jacqueline Niosi, Seniors Amanda Broughton, Catherine Buttomer, Sarah Gibbons, Anxela Hoti, Nicole Jorgensen, Tien Li, Si Li, Maggie Parker, Andrea Pomaloza, Robin Ross, Alicia Walker. With a 20-1 regular season record and Co-Championship of the Patriot League-Keenan Division, the team won their first two playoff games to qualify for the Division 1 sectional finals.
- Quincy High School Boys Soccer, Coach Mark Spendlove, Seniors Derek Andrade, Antonio Barbosa, Rene Carbajal, Enes Ekren, Mason Francouer, Ahmad Hamdi, Hashim Hamdi, Ben Morse, Uyi Ogiugo, Robert Smith, Aidan Smyth, Xhuljo Zyba. With a 9-8-1 record, the team qualified for the Division 1 Quarter Finals.
- North Quincy High School Girls Volleyball, Coach Kerry Ginty, Seniors Trina Liang, Cassidy Lothrop, Katie Sautter, Sarah Tsan. With a 15-5 record, the team qualified for the Division 1 Quarter Finals.
- North Quincy High School Girls Soccer, Coach Paul Bregoli, Seniors Emily Anglehart, Molly Kate Cannon, Kara Carchedi, Charlotte Chretien, Ali Coleman, Annie Doherty, Molly Donahue, Shaina Donovan, Hailey Houlihan, Marissa McGue, Julia O'Donnell. With a 12-5-4 record, the team qualified for the Division 1 Quarter Finals.

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Dr. DeCristofaro then introduced the Inspire Quincy video, which featured the Motor Skills Activity Day at Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center, Aspen Gradebook Professional Development for Elementary School teachers, Veterans Day at Sterling Middle School, Middle School Cross Country, Middle School Tennis, the Mini-Grant Reception, and Emily Z's BOKS Quincy launch at Clifford Marshall.

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Aspen Publication #17 was shared with School Committee. At the November 17 Parent Academy, 20 elementary parents attended to learn about the access to student report cards through Aspen. Another Parent Academy for Elementary Parents and Aspen will be held on December 1 at Atlantic Middle School.

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Dr. DeCristofaro reminded School Committee that American Education Week will be celebrated at the December 9 meeting at Central Middle School at 6:00 pm.

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The Middle School Lego League meet will be held at Newton North on Saturday, November 21 with over 100 students from all five middle schools with teacher coaches taking part in the meet.

At the 17th annual Educator Mini-Grant reception held on November 12, \$32,000 was awarded to over 100 educators representing 87 grant proposals. Mini-grants will enhance curriculum, classroom technology and equipment, and fund special projects and field trips. This year’s grant recipients were: *Laura Anderson, Michelle Andrews, Carol Austin, Deborah Baird, Kate Baldwin, Janet Bargar, Rachel Bloom, Lori Cahill, Laurie Carnes, Erina Carr, Paul Carson, Loren Catrambone, Diana Cavallo, Matthew Cavanaugh, Mark Chella, Paul Cheney, Natalie Coady, Theresa Corbo, Rebecca Cordero, Michelle Cunniff, Jennifer Currie, Amber Dame, Casey Deaguero, Kimberly DeBello, Melissa DeGraan, Michael DeMarco, Taylor Dennehy, Thomas Doucette, Marcy Eaton, Matthew Edgerly, Katherine Ell, Jackie Fitzpatrick, Susan Foley, Marisa Forrester, Dan Frank, Trish Gannon, Jennifer Garrett, Julie Graham, Sean Greene, Jill Griffith, Mary Griffith, Kelli Guarino, Lauren Guarriero, Wendy Hanlon, Deborah Harper Padula, Tracey Hennault, Laurel Hendrickson, Elise Higgins-Steele, Mary Ann Hunter, Mary Hurley, Michael Imhoff, Lauren Jensen, Anna Jorgensen, Sally Joyce, Robin Kaplan, Michelle Kaye, Richard Kenneally, Sarah Kearns, Julie Krieger, Danielle LaRose, Jennifer Leary, Maureen Lynch, Alicia Lyons, Sarah Magnuson, Michael Maguire, Joanne Martell, Helen Mastico, Rachel Matzdorff, Aileen McGinnity, Colleen Meskell, Kimberly Michaud, Clare Murphy, Deirdre Murphy, Emily Murphy, Jennifer Murphy, Lisa Nasanofski, Sarah Norwood, Katherine O’Connell, Johanna O’Connor, Alyse Olivieri, Debra Peters, James Phelan, Mary Ellen Phillips, Kenneth Reichel, Holly Rendle, Caitlin Schmidt, Aliza Schneller, Maura Shaughnessy, Jessica Sikora, Timothy Smith, Lynn Sullivan, Kim Taglieri, Dennis Thibault, Abby Thorell, Desiree Troy, Dorinda Vale, Bridget Vaughn, Ellen Wallace, Loksze Wong, Jessica Worden, Hallie Yohe, Angela Yu.*

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Rachel’s Challenge will be presented to over 700 Grade 7 students this week, thanks to the support of the Rural Lodge of Masons, Maura Papile and the Student Support staff at all five middle schools.

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On November 17, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education met to make the determination on the state assessment plan for 2016 and beyond. For 2016, districts who administered MCAS in 2015 may stay with MCAS (which will contain a limited number of PARCC-like items) or move to PARCC. Districts that administered PARCC in 2015 will remain with that assessment. Grade 10 students will continue to take the MCAS through 2017. The board recommended that a new hybrid exam will be developed for Spring 2017, containing elements of PARCC and MCAS. Massachusetts will remain a member of the PARCC consortium.

School accountability data will be released on Thursday, November 19. School Committee may choose to select PARCC as the Spring 2016 assessment option and the deadline for notifying the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is December 18.

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At the November 18 Massachusetts School Building Authority Board Meeting, the Sterling Middle School project was moved from the Feasibility Study phase to the Schematic Design Phase. Mayor Koch addressed the Board and Mr. Timmins, Dr. DeCristofaro, Mr. MacDonald, and Dr. Franceschini all attended today's meeting. Mayor Koch said that the Board was very complimentary of Quincy's Educational Plan and the project team was recognized for the work put into preparing for this stage of the process. One of the reasons we have been successful in working with the MSBA is due to the hard work of the Superintendent and the whole team.

Dr. DeCristofaro said that architects from Ai3 began meeting with Sterling Middle School staff and Superintendent's Leadership Team members today to begin developing the Schematic Design; the meetings will continue throughout the week.

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On November 10, 37 Quincy Public Schools staff members were trained in the BOKS program. In memory of Central Middle School teacher Emily Zarnoch, "Emily Z's BOKS Quincy" will be supported through a donation from Reebok International of \$50,000 per year for four years, benefitting all elementary and middle schools. Thanks to Mayor Koch, Mr. Bregoli, and the Zarnoch family for attending the launch, and Ms. Isola for introducing Quincy to the program. A part of the program is a research study with Harvard University that will begin in February.

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Upcoming events include "Tis the Season on Thursday, December 3 and the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education Gingerbread Decorating event on Friday, December 4. Dr. DeCristofaro concluded his report by noting that the

Wollaston, Atherton Hough, Montclair, Squantum, and Beechwood Knoll Elementary School and Quincy High School monthly newsletters had been shared with School Committee.

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Elementary Curriculum Director Erin Perkins shared a Curriculum Update on Handwriting Instruction in the Quincy Public Schools. In Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, the *Handwriting Without Tears* program has been adopted. Developed by occupational therapists, the program is conscious of developing fine motor skills. According to research studies, practicing handwriting assists in comprehension and brain development since it becomes automatic, freeing up brain space for other skills. The program starts with pre-writing skills and follows a developmental sequence. Pre-Kindergarten begins with readiness skills: body awareness, drawing and pre-writing, counting, and building. Letter part manipulatives assist in developing comprehension about letter forms. In Kindergarten, more formal structure and writing begins. Capitals are taught first, and lowercase letters follow. Writing form is emphasized, holding the writing instrument correctly.

New Business
Curriculum Update:
Handwriting Instruction

Professional Development included a voluntary training in August 2015 for Occupational Therapists and Kindergarten teachers. In September, all Pre-Kindergarten teachers and therapists were trained. On November 24, all remaining Kindergarten teachers, ELL, and Literacy teachers will be trained. In Summer 2016, training will begin for Grade 1 teachers for 2016-2017 school year implementation.

Within educational research, there are two differing opinions about cursive writing: (1) it has been replaced by technology or (2) it is critical as a developmental tool. Mrs. Perkins surveyed current practices of cursive instruction in Quincy Public Schools elementary schools. Across the district, cursive is taught in Grade 3, an average of 2-3 times per week for 15-20 minutes. It is most commonly taught as part of ELA or as morning work. Schools are using a variety of curriculum resources. In Grade 4, cursive writing is expected, but not usually practiced. Mrs. Perkins shared samples of student work for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Next steps will include assessing the efficacy of the *Handwriting Without Tears* pilot and implementing next year for Grade 1 and possibly Grade 2. In the meantime, Mrs. Perkins will research materials to pilot for Grade 3 cursive instruction as there is a need for consistent curriculum through all schools.

Mr. McCarthy complimented Mrs. Perkins, it is nice to take a step back in time and recognize that this fundamental skill is still being taught in Quincy Public Schools

Ms. Isola thanked Mrs. Perkins, she asked for the agenda item as she has been concerned that we were losing cursive writing in the face of technology and is pleased to see what QPS has been doing. Keyboarding is important, but cursive writing is integral to brain development. In the workplace, Ms. Isola sees the ramifications of illegible writing. The ability to read cursive writing is also critical to understanding historical documents.

Mr. Bregoli thanked Mrs. Perkins for her terrific presentation. Mr. Bregoli for follow up later with information on whether there is a decline in Occupational Therapy referrals as a result of this program. Mrs. Perkins said one of the goals is to build up stamina and develop correct form. Mrs. Perkins said that the Professional Development is key to the success of the program, allows teachers to know how to identify and correct problems with student positioning and form.

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Athletic Directors Michael Joyce and Patrick Lane presented the Athletics Program Improvement Plan. The purpose of Athletics is to provide learning experiences which contribute to physical, mental, social, and emotional growth. Mr. Joyce and Mr. Lane outlined the Athletics program goals for 2015-2016 and shared supporting documentation for the progress of meeting these goals.

Athletics Program Improvement Plan

Goals for 2015-2016: To continue to work (1) with coaches in order to monitor the School Committee Policy of “zero tolerance” in regard to hazing, harassment, and bullying to ensure compliance and (2) in collaboration with the high school Deans, Guidance, and Coaches to monitor student-athletes who may be at-risk or who have attendance/disciplinary issues. (3) To collaborate with the system-wide Wellness Team to ensure compliance with current QPS Wellness Policy and comply with the new State and Federal regulations governing nutrition and wellness in schools and to provide guidance and support to individual school wellness teams throughout the school year. (4) To collaborate with the Athletic Advisory Team to address current QPS athletic issues, with specific focus related to continuing to increase the participation rate in athletics at both high schools by 2% by June 2016 as compared to the 2014-2015 school year participation rates.

Mr. Lane also spoke about growth in the middle school Athletics programs, with new offerings for 2015-2016 for tennis and competitive swimming in the fall and wrestling (Winter 2016).

For high school students, Winter Sports signup is underway and school-wide efforts to promote athletics continue through communication with students, parents. The Athletics pages on the Quincy Public Schools website have been revamped and both schools utilize social media and Channel 22. Athletics Assistants Mr. Mahoney, Mr. Niamke post daily updates on the Athletics websites with game schedules. The Athletics registration process is online through

FamilyID, organizationally streamlined, verify medical and academic clearances, Athletic Directors are both teachers, talking with students daily and have shown increases at both schools in participation.

Mr. McCarthy complimented both Athletic Directors and their Assistants, the Athletics department has made much progress utilizing online tools and sharing information. All efforts have shown the results of getting more students involved in Athletics. Mr. McCarthy suggested consideration of re-classifying the Athletic Assistants jobs. He complimented the Program Improvement Plan and appreciates the Athletic Directors hard work.

Mr. DiBona thanked the Athletic Directors for their work and asked whether the success of the teams has begun to improve with the increased participation. Mr. Joyce said the coaches' enthusiasm and recruiting has bred some slight success, community support is important, students see that the city is supporting them. Mr. DiBona asked whether the coaches who are not QPS employees can access student information. The Athletic Office sends information to all coaches – the Athletics Assistants generate reports from Aspen and create PDFs to share. Mr. DiBona asked for and received confirmation that absence makes a player ineligible to play or practice.

Mr. Bregoli asked if a student is tardy, does that affect their eligibility to play or practice and if there is a rule about missing a certain percentage of the day. Mr. Joyce said this is handled on a case by case basis, even a student who is consistently 10 minutes late may have their ability to play affected. Mr. Bregoli said perhaps a policy should be set that holds students accountable for tardiness. Mr. Joyce said most coaches are very strict, many do not allow any unexcused tardiness at all.

Mr. Bregoli asked about Varsity Coaches being employed within the building. Mr. Bregoli noted that he is not a NQHS staff member and it does make it more difficult to monitor student academic performance. Mr. Lane said that's where the in-building Athletic Director is important.

Mr. Bregoli asked whether progress reports are being helpful in monitoring academic performance. Mr. Joyce said there has been no increase in academic eligibility problems. Mr. Joyce said the progress report is an effective tool, as teachers he and Mr. Lane are primarily focused on the students' athletic success. Mr. Joyce said the Athletic Assistants are checking attendance daily and surfacing concerns as needed.

Mr. Bregoli requested updated participation rates for fall athletics in the Patriot League.

Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Athletics Program Improvement Plan.

Mr. McCarthy asked about North Quincy High School Boys hockey, there will be a team for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Dr. DeCristofaro thanked Mrs. Clancy for her work with the Athletics Directors.

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Mr. Mullaney reviewed the need to transfer \$250,370 from the Academic Support salary line to the Computer and Technology Acquisition line. This funding was provided to fund salaries for Kindergarten aides when the Full-Day Kindergarten grant was unfunded. Since the state Legislature has restored the grant funding, Mayor Koch has made this appropriation for one-time purchases.

FY2016 Additional
Budget Appropriation
(Vote)

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to transfer \$250,370 from the Academic Support salary line to the Computer and Technology Acquisition line in the FY2016 budget. The motion was seconded by Ms. Isola and on a roll call vote, the ayes have it 7-0.

Dr. DeCristofaro said that the intention of the funding is to purchase classroom technology as was outlined at the November 9 Budget & Finance Subcommittee meeting. A final plan purchase plan will be presented at the December 9 School Committee meeting.

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Mrs. Hubley attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) conference from November 4 through 6 and representing the Quincy School Committee, voted on the resolutions that were presented. All resolutions were passed, except for Resolution 5 which the Quincy School Committee had declined to vote on at the October 28, 2015 School Committee meeting.

MASC Conference
Resolutions

The moratorium on Student Assessment which was approved at the November 2 Teaching & Learning Subcommittee meeting was not allowed to be presented as it was beyond MASC's deadline for submission. Mrs. Hubley attempted to attach to Resolution 3 as an amendment, but the Parliamentarian would not allow it. After a challenge, the delegates were allowed to vote on whether to accept the amendment and it was defeated. A survey of delegates was allowed, with favorable results 66-44.

Ms. Isola thanked Mrs. Hubley for her efforts, it is a huge task to challenge parliamentary rules in front of a large group.

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Ms. Isola made a motion to approve the Out of State Travel of the Sterling Middle School Chorus to the Providence Bruins, Providence, Rhode Island on November 22, 2015. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Out of State Travel

Mayor Koch made a motion to approve the Out of State Travel of Point Webster Middle School Grade 8 to New York City, New York from June 9 to June 10, 2016. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mayor Koch made a motion to approve the Out of State Travel of Sterling Middle School Grade 8 to Washington, D.C. from June 6 to June 9, 2016. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

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Upcoming meetings were announced: Regular Meeting on December 9, 2015 at 6:00 pm at Central Middle School; Subcommittee Meetings for Teaching & Learning on Monday, December 7; and Policy on Monday, December 7.

Communications

Mrs. Hubley noted that the Parker Elementary School PTO has posted a petition in support of the Community Preservation grant request to update the school playground. This is the last step needed to fulfill the grant submission requirements.

Mr. Bregoli announced that the North Quincy-Quincy High School Football Hall of Fame dinner will be held on Tuesday, November 24 at the Sons of Italy on Quarry Street.

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Mrs. Hubley noted that all Subcommittee meeting minutes are posted online at www.quincypublicschools.com.

Reports of
Subcommittees

Mrs. Hubley reviewed the Budget & Finance Subcommittee Meeting held on November 9, 2015. Mr. Mullaney presented the FY2016 Quarterly Report as of September 30, 2015, reporting that all accounts were on target. Also discussed was the additional \$250,000 appropriation for technology investment due to the partial reinstatement of the Full-Day Kindergarten grant.

Ms. Isola reviewed the Teaching & Learning Subcommittee Meetings held on November 2, 9, 12, and 16, 2015. On November 2, 2015, the subcommittee met to review the resolution calling for a moratorium on standardized testing. At the November 9 and November 12 meetings, all Elementary School Improvement Plans were presented and at the November 16 meeting, all Middle School Improvement Plans were presented by their respective principals and were

approved.

Mr. McCarthy reviewed the Facilities & Security Subcommittee meeting held on November 16. Custodial Coordinator Kevin Segalla presented the Custodial Services Program Improvement Plan and Director of Safety & Security Michael Draicchio presented the Security Program Improvement Plan, with both being approved.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to add an outside review of our security practices to the Facilities & Security Subcommittee. On the motion, Mr. McCarthy also asked School Committee to consider establishing a senior security position at each high school. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bregoli and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

As there were no corrections to the meeting minutes for the November 9, 2015 Budget & Finance Subcommittee; the November 2, 9, 12, and 16, 2015 Teaching & Learning Subcommittee; and the November 16, 2015 Facilities & Security Subcommittee, all minutes were approved as presented.

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Mayor Koch made a motion to adjourn for the evening at 9:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bregoli and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Adjournment