

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 01035
February 23, 2015**

6:30 PM

Music Room Hopkins Academy

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Linda Dunlavy called meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

PRESENT: Ms. Linda Dunlavy, Chair
Members: Ms. Robie Grant, Heather Klesch

OTHERS: Anne McKenzie Superintendent; Christopher Desjardins Business Manager, Pat Bell Assistant Superintendent, Brian Beck HA principal, Jeff Udall HES principal, Jack Horrigan President HEA, Constance Douglas HES teacher, Paula Cristoforo HES teacher, several parents, community members, and students.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dunlavy entertained a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2015. Grant moves to approve. Klesch seconds. Minutes of February 5, 2015 approved 3-0-0.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA – Dunlavy requests to move superintendent report to the end of the agenda. McKenzie reported there will be no CES report; Chris Dejardins will provide additional information in his finance reports. McKenzie requested that all present sign the sign in sheet. McKenzie indicated there would be no student presentation or staff presentations.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Dunlavy read the rules for public comment. The school committee welcomes the public to its monthly meetings and appreciates attendance from the public. Individuals or groups are allowed three minutes to present material. The chair would like to limit public comment to 15 minutes. Members of the school committee and audience will not address comments from speakers but may ask clarifying questions after being called on by the chair. The chair will not allow defamatory comments about personnel. Dunlavy reminded the audience personnel is outside of the realm of the school committee. Dunlavy reminded audience members that inappropriate comments would not be allowed. Dunlavy called on Molly Keegan. Ms. Keegan's comments delineated concerns about human resource policies and procedures, specifically the responsibilities of the school committee. Ms. Keegan referenced policy AE. Ms. Keegan underscored the need to hold personnel accountable for specifically delineated performance objectives aligned to state objectives. Ms. Keegan expressed concern over the non-reappointment of the Boys Varsity Baseball Coach. As a former school committee member, Ms. Keegan recalls having conversations about the need for clearly delineated policies and procedures regarding hiring and evaluation of coaches. Ms. Keegan was under the impression that policies pertaining to these matters were in place. Keegan believes the district lost a valuable employee. She is concerned about how HR policies are carried out for non-union personnel. Dunlavy called on Mr. Garand, parent of students at HA and HES. He echoed Ms. Keegan's concerns. Mr. Garand reviewed his understanding of the former coach's hire date and employment record with Hadley Public Schools highlighting the former coach's

accomplishments, contributions to the community and positive evaluations. Garand read from the Unit A contract, specifically that sitting coaches would normally be given first consideration for positions. Garand indicated that these facts have caused confusion for some community members. In the absence of an obvious reason for not rehiring this coach Garand states that there are several questions. Garand presented his own explanation for the coach not being reappointed. Garand stated that the explanation may be due to retaliatory action against the coach. Parent David Graves asked for additional information about the retaliation Garand referred to. Klesch asked about the change in number of panel members for the coach interviews, if there is a policy and why the change. Dunlavy indicated that no official school committee policy exists regarding composition of interview committees. Klesch asked if the SC knew of the rationale for having a five person panel. McKenzie and Dunlavy were not aware of the rationale. Lisa Sanderson, parent, indicated all parents present were there to support Branson. Sanderson requested that the district stay the decision to not rehire Branson and rehire him until such time that appropriate policies and procedures are in place that can fairly and objectively evaluate coaching staff. Sanderson presented 70 signatures and petitions that support her request. She indicated that she believed she could get at least 300 signatures. Sanderson asked if people would be able to speak during regular session. Committee members indicated that the coaching decisions would not be specifically discussed in regular session. Keegan made the following coaching comments. Keegan stated she was on school committee when the decision to have a five person interview panel was made. Keegan stated the rationale was to eliminate any appearance of conflict by having objective third parties on the interview panel. It would reduce conflict of interest and undue influence when people get to know each other too well. It was intended that this was a practice that would be carried forward. Klesch asked if the practice was put in a policy. Keegan said that in the absence of policy committee should defer to practice. Keegan indicated that the decision not to reappoint Branson should be overturned. Keegan said it is an issue of equity and fairness. It is an image issue for the district. Parents feel very strongly that this is a human resource situation that has gone bad. Having this lack of reappointment happen so late in the game and in close proximity of the season the individual cannot find a job. Failure to provide a reason for not reappointing could potentially leave the public with the perception that "there must be something." Keegan hopes the superintendent conducts a thorough investigation of what happened, what are our policies and practices, not just in baseball but in all of our other programs. Keegan asked that going forward there are clear policies and procedures in place. Dunlavy thanked all people who attended public comment. Dunlavy moved on to information and discussion.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS –

Leadership Team Reports

Pat Bell, Assistant Superintendent – Bell reviewed the request presented to the committee last month to develop and fund a substantially separate program at Hadley Elementary School for students with significant special needs. Bell indicated that program development would require hiring a certified teacher and rearranging existing classroom space. The FY16 budget presentation did not include this program; however failing to create such a program will necessitate spending additional money in out of district placements. Grant asked if the program would require transferring funds from the district's special education reserve fund (school choice). Desjardins responded it would require using special education reserve funds, there is not money in the current operating budget. Dunlavy asked for

clarification on FY15 costs for the program. Bell said it would approximately half of the estimate presented. Dunlavy asked when we hoped to have a teacher hired. Bell said early to mid-March. Dunlavy clarified that the district would probably spend less than half of the estimate. Klesch asked if the district could anticipate recouping current out of district expenses. Bell clarified that we are looking to avoid future costs rather than reduce current costs. Bell did say that two Hadley students may be appropriate to bring back to the district but that is a team decision. McKenzie stated that tuitions for out of district programs will increase next year. Grant asked if the program would have a summer component. Bell said it may. It would depend on student needs. Dunlavy clarified that the committee would need to vote to approve creation of the program with the understanding that school choice funds would be used to fund the program in FY15 and possibly in FY16. Although the need for the program and cost avoidance were presented to the select board at the February presentation on the school department budget, the cost of the program was not included in the FY16 request. Grant reinforced developing the program was the right thing to do in terms of providing least restrictive environment and avoiding costs associated with out of district programming. Dunlavy suggests changing budget request for FY16 to the town.

MOTION: (Grant/Klesch) to use special education reserve funds for FY15 to develop a special education classroom in FY15 with the hope that the classroom will not require use of FY16 special education stabilization but understanding that it may.

VOTE: 3-0-0; Unanimous

Brian Beck – presented a request from the organization called People Link that would like to organize a visit of approximately 15-30 students from Japan to visit HA. Beck will vet the organization and based on his assessment organize the details of the visit. The visit would occur in early March. Beck updated school committee on developing a new schedule at HA. Beck anticipates that prior to the March school committee meeting he will have information on a new schedule for the school committee to review. 23 of 29 faculty members have endorsed the new scheduled. Faculty has discussed the new schedule in faculty meetings (about 10 hours) and in online conversations. New schedule changes the high school schedule from 8 periods to 7 periods; blocks will not be locked in to the same time each day except for two blocks. Beck asked the committee if they had any questions he should research prior to the next meeting. After the March meeting, Beck will convene students to discuss what faculty should take into consideration. Beck stated that the new schedule will require changes to the program of studies that will require school committee approval. Klesch asked if there would be changes to start time. Beck said yes. Beck said the high school snack period would change. Grant verified that students would not be precluded from doing internship or work study. Beck stated the two fixed periods would allow for that. Paula Cristoforo, parent/teacher, requested that the administration and faculty take into consideration the amount of homework if classes meet every day. Beck reviewed the process of hearing student concerns during schedule development.

Business and Finance-

Expense Report - Desjardins reviewed budget summary report (see handout). Desjardins reported things are looking good. District will be encumbering additional payroll in upcoming weeks which will appear on next month's report. Desjardins will be moving school choice funds to operating budget and that will be presented in the next report. Desjardins said finances are in good shape.

Grant Report- Desjardins reviewed the grant report (see handout). Desjardins reviewed cuts to Kindergarten grant. Desjardins is encouraging staff to spend grant money early. There will be transfers from the operating budget into grants. Goal is to spend grants by early June.

Disposition of Surplus – Desjardins would like to donate old uniforms to students and fans at HA and HES rather than selling the uniforms. Dunlavy indicated this was done in the past. Cristoforo stated that younger children were encouraged to take old uniforms at sports games. Dunlavy supports giving away the uniforms. Desjardins will inform AD Sudnick.

Reconciliation of Stabilization Fund Accounts – Desjardins reported that there are funds in the generator account and the school department is ready to go out to bid. Dunlavy asked if all funds would be used. Desjardins said yes but it will depend on what prices come in. There is money in the HA repairs account. HA has used about six thousand dollars this year. Desjardins expects that money to be spent this year. Desjardins said there are a few accounts that have been around for a while (the elevator lift account and HA feasibility study). Desjardins and town hall will work on getting clarification. Dunlavy asked that Desjardins send an email to the school committee with updated information on these accounts.

Superintendent's Report – McKenzie reviewed the monthly superintendent's report (see attached).

Recognition – McKenzie expressed appreciation to parent Nancy Cracker-Yahman who has been instrumental in expanding the work of the Embracing Diversity Club at HA and for doing a presentation to HES students on Dr. Martin Luther King. McKenzie thanked the PTO for the lunch they provided the staff on February 13th.

Draft Entry Report – McKenzie reviewed entry report and data sources (see handout). McKenzie asked the school committee for feedback on the report. Dunlavy stated how important it is to have quantitative measurements for district goals. Dunlavy believes we are off to a good start. Grant reminded McKenzie that the goals for MCAS were very robust. Klesch liked how all surveys and stakeholder input were included in the report. Dunlavy asked for clarification on the superintendent evaluation document.

Formative Evaluation Superintendent – McKenzie reviewed the development of the tool. McKenzie used the format recommended by MASC rather than the forms suggested by the DESE. McKenzie reviewed how the school committee could approach formative evaluation. Since McKenzie has two year goals, the committee could do a progress check in sometime during the spring and do a formal formative evaluation in June of year 1. The committee must do a formative and summative rating. In order to achieve an overall rating of proficiency the superintendent must achieve a rating of proficiency in standard 1. McKenzie strongly discourages the committee from giving ratings of exemplary. McKenzie acknowledges that there is always room to improve and underscored the fact that she is a first year superintendent. Committee members must rate each standard and each goal. These ratings create a single summative rating. Discussion of superintendent performance must happen in open session. Committee members need to agree on the tool. McKenzie will need to create an additional page that allows for a single summative rating. Each committee member will do an individual assessment and then the chair will create a single evaluation document. The committee may complete individual forms privately or discuss individual ratings in public and come to consensus in public. Dunlavy asked when the committee needed to make a decision about the process. McKenzie suggested that the committee agree on the instrument this evening. Klesch liked the instrument. Dunlavy suggested the committee adopt the

instrument at its March meeting. Klesch asked if the rating would be determined in March. McKenzie suggested doing a progress check in April, doing a formative in June and a summative in June in year 2.

Athletics Program – Evaluation of Policies, Practices, and Procedures- McKenzie reviewed a school committee discussion in the fall in which committee member Sean Mackin offered to assist with a program evaluation. Mr. Mackin is no longer on the school committee but is still willing to assist with the evaluation. McKenzie expressed her appreciation for Mr. Mackin's assistance and the resources he brought to their meeting/planning session. Mackin shared a self-study document from the Connecticut Athletic Association. McKenzie suggests that Hadley utilize the Connecticut model for its self-study and evaluation. McKenzie recommends making all documents reviewed during self-study and evaluation be made public. McKenzie also reviewed recommended Booster guidelines Mackin had shared with her. Grant asked who does the self-study. McKenzie said she, Sudnick, and Beck would do self-study and then outsiders (ADs and principals) would review the self-study documents, analysis and findings and make recommendations. McKenzie said the timelines for self-study would be tight in order to complete the process expeditiously. Grant asked about school committee role. McKenzie affirmed that the role of the school committee would be to wait for the report and make recommendations for policy changes as needed. Dunlavy indicated she preferred this process to creating an athletic subcommittee of the school committee since operations and procedures pertaining to athletics are really outside of the role of the school committee. Klesch asked if we find that there are not policies around hiring is it the school committee's role to develop these policies. Grant suggests the committee check with legal counsel since the school committee is not directly involved with hiring. Dunlavy agreed that once we have findings, legal counsel should delineate what is in the purview of school committee and what is in the purview of administration. Dunlavy also wants clarification on policies for groups that raise money for the schools. Klesch agreed. Cristoforo asked about the committee's role in hiring. It is her understanding that coach salaries are paid through Hadley Public Schools. Grant stated the committee does not hire teachers. The committee can set standards. The committee only hires the superintendent. Cristoforo asked for further clarification. Grant reviewed how education reform changed the role of school committee. McKenzie reviewed that the building principal is the primary hiring authority in each school. The principal may bring together a committee of people; ultimately the principal makes a recommendation for hire which comes to the superintendent. The law states that the superintendent has ultimate authority to approve or deny a hiring recommendation. McKenzie stated she would not deny a hiring recommendation unless she believed the basis for not hiring someone was a violation of the Unit A contract or of policies pertaining to equal opportunity employment practices. McKenzie referred to the employee handbook for non-union personnel which states all non-union personnel are considered employees at will (unless otherwise specified by contract). Employees at will are not protected under a bargaining agreement. McKenzie's hiring authority is to decide whether or not there is a reasonable basis to withhold an approval of recommendation. The business manager signs off on hiring recommendations indicating that there is money in the budget for the position. Barb Andersen, parent, asked about how Booster clubs work. Klesch indicated that mission statements and organization of Boosters is not part of school committee policy. School committee policy simply recognizes Booster clubs. The school committee occasionally publicly recognizes donations. Andersen asked if Boosters run as they want. Grant said yes they are private organizations. Dunlavy said part of doing an evaluation will be to adopt best practices. McKenzie said that most Boosters operate autonomously and that guidelines are not ubiquitous. Self-

study will provide an opportunity to decide what Hadley needs. Andersen expressed concern over the lack of guidelines and looks forward to guidelines being forthcoming. Tina Knightly asked about looking at the hiring process and if it is the district's intention to put more checks and balances in the process.

McKenzie said there is no foregone conclusion about what needs to be done. The self-study should unearth what is lacking. Bell commented that there are procedures in place if anyone feels as though a civil rights violation has occurred. Cristoforo asked about the timeline for the study. She stressed the need to begin quickly and do a thorough job. Cristoforo believes there is room for improvement. Dunlavy said we will begin the process now and we need to commit to doing a thorough evaluation. Dunlavy stated that for the past ten years there have been issues in athletics. McKenzie shares the community's sense of urgency around addressing athletics. McKenzie will bring an anticipated timeline for the self-study to the March meeting. Lisa Sanderson expressed her appreciation for the time McKenzie has spent listening to concerns but echoed her dismay that there appears to be no reason for not reappointing Branson and suggest reappointing him while the self-study takes place.

Monson Site Visit- The district will host a visit from Monson teachers to discuss educator evaluation.

Five College Partnership Dialogue- McKenzie will facilitate a discussion on equity on March 5, 2015 that is being sponsored by the Five College Partnership.

Personnel Report – McKenzie reviewed the personnel report (included in handouts).

Student Events- McKenzie encouraged the community to support our drama club and attend the performance this weekend. Girls and Boys Varsity Basketball continue to do well.

School Committee Reports-

Budget Presentation to Tri Board- Dunlavy reminded the audience that if the school department is limited to a 2% increase to local contribution it would be detrimental to the schools. Dunlavy is hopeful that the town will support the school department budget. Grant and Dunlavy praised Desjardins and McKenzie for their budget presentation.

Barnes and Noble-Klesch met with community relations manager at Barnes and Noble. B and N will do a community giveback day to support Helping Hearts. Klesch presented a donation from B and N to Mr. Udall for HES. McKenzie complimented the work of teachers at HES.

Next meeting is March 23, 2015. At 8:30, Dunlavy entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and not to reconvene in open session and to adjourn in Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: (Klesch/Grant) to go into Executive Session to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions and to reconvene in open session. Roll call vote: Klesch – Yes; Grant-Yes; Dunlavy-Yes.