

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS
August 22, 2011**

6:30 PM Regular Meeting

Hopkins Academy Music Room

PRESENT: Chair: Ms. Robie Grant, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak. Member Present: Ms. Molly Keegan. Members Absent: Mr. Thomas Waskiewicz and Ms. Linda Dunlavy. Also Present: Dr. Nicholas Young, Superintendent of Schools, Carol Trane, Administrative Assistant, Gazette Reporter, Nick Grabbe. Faculty: Cathy Niedziela, Connie Douglas and Chris Pipczynski. Others: Rene Hembroke, David Moskin and Kim Fawcett. The meeting was not taped by Ch 5.

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair, Ms. Robie Grant called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: (Michalak/Keegan) move to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2011, meeting as presented. VOTE: Unanimous.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

SC Member, Molly Keegan, recognized two Hopkins Academy students who deserved special recognition. Mathew Waskiewicz on receiving his Eagle Scout Award for his project in beautification and landscaping of the Goodwin Memorial Library and Miss Kelly Devine received the Gold Star, the highest award from the Girl Scout Organization, for her work with Fragile X.

V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

a. Academic Presentations to the School Committee

SC policy on academic presentations second reading;

Ms. Grant said, if approved, the first presentation on the lunch program would be made in October.

MOTION: (Michalak/Keegan) move to adopt the policy on Academic Presentations to the School Committee. VOTE: Unanimous

b. Subcommittees: Proposed for Consideration: Finance; Buildings and Grounds; and Policy and Curriculum. Policy BDE – Second Reading

Mr. Michalak asked if the Committee could have more discussion on this proposed policy when the full board is present. While he does not oppose having subcommittees, he would like to understand the goals and objectives for each group.

Ms. Grant said the item would be passed over until the next meeting.

c. Goal Setting and Strategic Framework to Create Continuous Improvement

Ms. Grant noted that Dr. Young would like to discuss the administrative goals at the next meeting. Dr. Young noted that two of his administrators are dealing with family matters that required their attention. He also noted that he would like to bring back the current Strategic Plan that wraps up at the end of this year. This is a five-year strategic plan that started with a comprehensive survey to get parent input and believed the current committee would also be interested in this process. Dr. Young emphasized that a Strategic Plan is the foundation for goal setting.

VI (a and b). HOPKINS ACADEMY and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Dr. Young noted that an article in Sunday's Boston Globe reported on a large number of schools in the commonwealth designated as "Needs Improvement." He said for the last several years he's been

talking about the mathematical improbability of maintaining the hypothetical forward advances and knew eventually it would catch a lot of schools needing improvement. This time around so many schools were identified as needing improvement that the Commissioner has requested a waiver saying it is no longer viable for Massachusetts. However, there are steps Hadley needs to go through depending on the results the Commissioner gets from the Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan. Dr. Young is still receiving information and said he was hesitant to predict what the outcome will be. Historical knowledge tells us one of the things Hadley would need to do is notify families of their option to move their child under school choice, an option they have now; however this would be more of a public acknowledgment of the option to move to another school that wasn't identified as needs improvement. At this time we are not sure if we have any schools around us that are not needs improvement since everyone is working off raw data and the final data won't be available for several more weeks. Dr. Young said we just got notified of this, but were suppose to notify families two weeks before schools starts while only receiving notice one week before school starts without having all the information. In the next couple of days we have to figure out what are the implications, see if the Commissioner will provide some insights into whether or not this is a boondoggle and not necessary to get everyone worked up; plus it is bad PR for public schools across the commonwealth, our school system being no exception.

This is all mentioned in the context of School Improvement Plans because improvement planning is largely suppose to be about the MCAS data thresholds that are necessary to maintain forward progress under No Child Left Behind.

Both Improvement Plans are data driven, as they should be, he said.

The Hopkins Improvement Plan shows fairly solid data in the upper grades, but has challenges in the middle school. The raw data would suggest that there are challenges that are largely isolated to subgroups, that of the special education population in particular. Dr. Young said he believes he is setting the stage for discussing tutoring implications for a certain subset of students in the elementary school and middle school. However, he is not ready to make a recommendation until he reviews our special needs population to determine if it's tutoring that's needed or if there is a need to make adjustments in individual student programs.

Dr. Young continued to review the Hopkins School Improvement Plan, highlighting the goals that have been completed along with the completion of the two-year NEASC report, plus goals for the future.

Continuing the School Improvement Goals and Objectives, Dr. Young said there will be a review of the common core standards that require we adjust our curriculum to meet those standards. We have ELA and Math by 2013 and therefore will be targeting our professional development toward how to improve English Language Arts and Mathematics, along with how do we align state MCAS frameworks to the common core standards which are two separate sets of documents.

Noted that the elementary Plan is very similar in it's target for improvement ELA, which encompasses reading, as well as Math.

In response to Ms. Keegan question on financial implications, Dr. Young responded that as we move forward in ELA and Mathematics centric, these are areas that will need professional development resources that are being dedicated for this purpose with trainers set up out of resources in our professional development line. As far as future expenses, Dr. Young said there will be a review of the elementary reading textbooks that may or may not have to be replaced. It would be at that time that he would request additional funding, perhaps in early fall when he would normally come before the Committee to request supply and material money to keep on the pre-purchase cycle.

The Professional Development Plan is in the works. Dr. Young said he might have to ask for a calendar movement. There is a date in November where we want to work with Granby and Hatfield who are scheduled for Nov. 8 while we are slated for Nov. 1. In response to the amount of time devoted to elem. math schedules, Dr. Young said this is part of an on-going conversation that started with Mr. DiPietro and is continuing with Mr. Udall. How much time is direct instruction in Math vs. hands on?

VII. SPECIAL TOWN MEETING-NOVEMBER 3, 2011

Possible articles: Purchase of the Trustee Land and Virtual Town Hall. Dr. Young suggested removing Virtual Town Hall off the list at this time and will discuss it later in the meeting.

Dr. Young said there is currently a committee that's been entrusted to pursue the dialogue around acquiring the Trustee Land with a \$205,000 price tag; adding, the asking price is far less than the value of that property that the Trustees purchased a better part of twenty years ago, plus paid taxes and had a loss of interest income, etc. While the Land Acquisition Committee will appear before the SC, Dr. Young

suggested a placeholder be requested for the Special Town Meeting in the event the Committee wishes to proceed with placing an article to purchase the land.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

a. School Surveys – Dr. Young is targeting mid-September to send out two surveys. One will go to parents who chose to have their students taken out of the Hadley schools, what kind of feedback can they provide. The other to those parents that chose to have their child enrolled in the Hadley Public Schools under Choice.

b. MSBA Green Repair Roof Project – Dr. Young said we have gone through various phases and have done our paperwork and now have estimates on the costs involved. The OPM has estimated the project cost at approx. \$600,000, the eastern-based architect said it could be upward to \$700,000. MSBA says the number Hadley provides is what they will end up budgeting, so we should budget high because if we budget low we will only get reimbursed up to the number we provided. Once the SC votes the project amount tonight, the project goes before the full MSBA board and their approval of the paperwork allows the project to be bid. The project would be bid in the Nov/Dec timeline; and depending on the successful bidder, that project could be done by one of the larger roofers over the April vacation but the smaller companies would take a number of weeks starting in June.

The grant will fund 49.74% of the approved project. Hadley's portion will be somewhere around \$300,000 to \$350,000 to be funded out of the School Choice account, along with approx. \$70,000 that is in an open warrant article that can be rolled forward toward this project and used first. Dr. Young assured the Committee that he was in contact with the Town Treasurer and Accountant to included them in these discussions, planning and timelines for funding.

MOTION: (Keegan/Michalak) move to appropriate, or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under their direction for a Green Repair Roof Project for Hopkins Academy located at 131 Russell Street, Hadley, MA for a project with an estimated cost of \$700,000, which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"). The Hadley School Committee acknowledges that the MSBA grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the School Committee incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the School Department. Any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) 49.74% of eligible, approved costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA.

AND FURTHER: vote to authorize the Chair, Robie Grant, to certify that on August 22, 2011, the Hadley School Committee voted to appropriate the use of School Choice Funds in the amount of \$700,000 to support the Green Repair Program's replacement of a portion of the Hopkins Academy roof;

AND FURTHER: confirm that MSBA has certified a reimbursement rate of 49.47% for eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA. VOTE: Unanimous.

c. HES Health Curriculum

Members received copies of the updated elementary health curriculum. Dr. Young thanked the teachers and nurses for their hard work. He said each grade is identified with content area, scope and sequence, measurable learning objectives, benchmarks, instructional strategies, methods of assessments that can be matched to the standards and strand along with textbooks and materials. While the SC supports the health program, it is largely funded by the Enhanced Health Protection Competitive Grant.

d. FY11 Expenditures Review

Members received a Vadar printout of all FY11 School Department expenditures. Dr. Young offered to hit the highlights for FY11, noting we started the year with one budget and went through the year with a variety of iterations. The fiscal year started with \$5,309,272 voted at Town Meeting, then added \$100,000 from School Choice for pre-purchases with an additional \$82,000 from School Choice to cover salary increases, added in a payment from 4H of \$470 for custodial services and \$2,512.74 from Park & Rec, bringing the total budget to \$5,494,254.74. Less expenditures to June 30th of \$5,479,306.46, leaving a

balance of \$14,948.28, minus the encumbrances of \$14,703.30. The balance of \$244.89 will be returned to the town. Dr. Young reviewed the encumbrances, a copy of both the balance sheets and encumbrances are filed with and made a part of these minutes.

Dr. Young reminded the Committee that he had predicted that we were running about \$20,000 in arrears. The last fuel delivery, at of cost of approx. \$20,000 plus was made in early July instead of late June so the payment was shifted to the FY12 budget, thereby preventing the FY11 budget from going into deficit. Dr. Young proceeded to review line items covering both under-expended and over-expended cost centers.

e. Enrollment Updated

Elementary has a current enrollment of 339 with three kindergartens. Dr. Young said the enrollment was still in flux. Currently the kindergarten classes number 19, 18 and 18. Hopkins Academy has 312 students. Dr. Young said the secondary schools are always harder to define by class size because of scheduling.

f. New Hires and Coaches

Members received a list of new hires and fall coaches with backup information. Dr. Young reminded the SC that all coaching positions are advertised every year.

g. Hopkins GPA

Dr. Young said there have been questions regarding the GPAs at Hopkins; noting that it didn't appear to be a running GPA. He said there are two ways to look at a GPA average; one is a running GPA that most are familiar with and averages each year of completed high school work; while the GPA on the report card this year was an annual GPA not a running GPA. Most parents are use to the total cumulative GPA. The Hopkins Guidance Counselor was not aware that the software had shifted to an annual GPA.

h. Summer Homework

Dr. Young said it was fair to say there were a number of questions this summer regarding the scope of homework expected of students. A review has shown that the summer homework has increased considerably from previous years. Dr. Young acknowledged that this needs to be studied to have consistency in terms of expectations of homework across teachers across grades. He would like this topic referred to School Councils made up of parents and teachers working together. Parent Kim Fawcett spoke to this issue believing the workload was excessive. Parents who felt the summer homework assignments were inconsistent grade level to grade level also approached Mr. Michalak. Dr. Young said the School Councils will be most helpful in this matter and work it through in a common sense way. Ms. Keegan asked that the community be made aware that this is being studied by the Councils and that there also be guidelines for how the summer work is evaluated so that it is consistent across the board.

i. Water Source for Hopkins Field

Dr. Young called this a follow up of the whole issue of the water available for our fields. One solution was getting a copper pipe out the back of Hopkins but the length of the pipe that was necessary far exceeded the initial project on costs. The authorized amount was \$2,500, but the estimate was closer to \$5,000. In the meantime another option presented itself and seemed like a better long-term solution by putting in a small well at a cost of \$4,500 with approx. \$850 worth of electrical work.

MOTION: (Keegan/Michalak) move forward with installing a well for the watering of the Hopkins Academy soccer field. VOTE: Unanimous.

IX. OTHER

- a. Balance Sheets – FY11-July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011
- b. Balance Sheets – July 1, 2011 to August 22, 2011

X. NEXT MEETING

September 26, 2011, at 6:30 PM, Hopkins Academy Music Room.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Purpose of the Executive Session was read aloud by the Chair

MOTION: (Michalak/Keegan) move to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of strategy planning with respect to collective bargaining with Unit C; and further state, that conducting the aforementioned business in open session will have a detrimental effect on the public body's negotiating position. The committee will reconvene in Regular Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

The Chair called for a Roll Call Vote: Voting Yes: Michalak, Keegan and Grant. (Absent: Dunlavy and Waskiewicz).

Re-entered regular session at 7:58

MOTION: (Keegan/Michalak) move to ratify the Unit C Secretaries contract as signed with the effective dates starting July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012, along with a one-time recognition stipend of \$375 for the contract period, paid to all Unit C employees on a date to be determined by vote of the Hadley Education Association. VOTE: Roll Call - In favor: Keegan, Michalak and Grant. (Absent: Dunlavy and Waskiewicz).

XII. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: (Michalak/Keegan) move to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 PM. VOTE: Unanimous.