

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS
November 28, 2011**

5:30 PM Regular Meeting

Hopkins Academy Music Room

PRESENT: Chair: Ms. Robie Grant, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak. Members Present: Ms. Molly Keegan, Mr. Thomas Waskiewicz and Ms. Linda Dunlavy.
Also Present: Dr. Nicholas Young, Superintendent of Schools; Dee Rex, Secretary; Ben Storrow, Gazette Reporter; Kris Garand, Ch. 5; Cathy Niedziela, Hopkins Teacher; Connie Douglas, Elementary Teacher; Jack Horrigan, HEA President; Renee Denenfeld, District Nurse Leader; Parents and community members: Terri Earle, Renee Hembrough, Jennifer Lapis, and Nina Pollard.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair, Ms. Robie Grant called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Correction: Student Council Representative is Matt Jacques, not Matt Chase.

MOTION: (Michalak/Dunlavy) move to approve the minutes of October 24, 2011, with one correction noted above. VOTE: Unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Grant announced that the next SC meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 19th @ 6:30pm in the HA Music Room. We are deviating from the 4th Monday of the month because it falls on a school holiday. Representative Scibak will be joining the Committee. It's time to bring your budget requests to us. We currently have one from SPED PAC and one for a Media Specialist at the elementary school.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Captain Mike Spanknebel, Emergency Management Director, thanked everyone for their help and overwhelming support and assistance during the late October storm. There was a warming shelter held at the elementary school with warm food and refreshments for all who needed it. Dr. Young thanked Captain Spanknebel and his team for all their support and dedication in getting us back to school in 3 days.

Molly Keegan suggested that Mike Spanknebel submit a punch list that the schools could contemplate for future financing purposes to be better prepared for emergencies.

Captain Spanknebel is working with Diana Bonneville, HA Principal, to practice different emergency scenarios that we have plans for, but have never practiced.

DISTRICT GOALS

Ms. Keegan said part of the district goals are tied in with superintendent's evaluation tool. What many school districts do is take 2 or 3 of the district goals that they consider to be most important and they add them to the superintendent's evaluation.

Ms. Dunlavy went through the goals and suggested who the responsible person or groups are.

1. Personnel: Teacher evaluation is an important one to be on Dr. Young's performance evaluation, but also thinks that the Policy and Curriculum Sub Committee would also be involved. Ms. Dunlavy said the goals that she thinks should go on Dr. Young's evaluation, does not mean that he is singularly responsible, but he would be involved in creating an action plan. Finance Sub Committee and Dr. Young would be responsible for getting a Media Specialist. Dr. Young is accountable to the state for Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program and he will work with the principals on this.

2. Fiscal: Ms. Dunlavy stated that the fiscal goals are for Dr. Young and the Sub Finance Committee.

3. Communication: Improve home/school community communication. Ms. Dunlavy gave Dr. Young the responsibility since he is already working on the new district website. Investigate comprehensive school/home communication plan - everyone has to work on this.

Dr. Young will evaluate and come back to the committee with an action plan. There are components that are costly, such as automated phone messaging and Edline. Facilitate School

Committee/School Council responsibility to the Policy and Curriculum Sub Committee. Dr. Young said that we should benchmark some of these goals for this year and carry some of them over to another year.

4. Facilities: Plan and implement Hopkins athletic field expansion. Evaluate Hopkins parking lot and pedestrian safety. Ms. Dunlavy suggested Mr. Michalak for these responsibilities.

5. Academic Improvement - Dr. Young is working on the reexamination of homework policy with the full administrative team, teachers and the school committee. Policy should be ready in April or May and Dr. Young will present after all the different steps have been reviewed. Ms. Grant asked are we talking about just the summer homework policy? The parents are interested in a more holistic vision of the policy, rather than just the summer homework. Dr. Young said we would have a broader discussion. We have a summer problem that we are targeting. We will have basic parameters, but this is the one we will have to have serious discussions with our teachers. We will have to come back with general guidelines that will have to span summer and the academic year homework policy. We currently have general guidelines about the homework policy. Ms. Grant said that the primary concerns of parents regarding homework is "stress on children." Homework amount is too much and there is difficulty around communication with the school and the families. Dr. Young said homework is a tricky issue because he has complaints that we do not give enough. Dr. Young said organizing what we have is 90% of it. He stated that we have to be clear what our guidelines are, communicate them and say this is where we stand collectively. Dr. Young said that the discussion should be brought to one of the spring meetings that would include the teachers, their representatives and the school council. We will have guidelines at that point. Ms. Dunlavy suggested that Dr. Young would handle student achievement strategies and identify data to demonstrate progress with particular attention to HES and Hopkins MS. Dr. Young stated we are focused on ELA and Math this year and next year would be the integration of the common core into the other curricular areas. This is a two-year process.

6. School Climate: Implement Bully Proofing Series for students in grades 7-12. Increase positive school climate through mentoring programs. This is a role for all of us, the administration, the school committee, school council, teachers etc. Increase awareness and acceptance of diversity among students and staff. Dr. Young stated that we have just had 2 years of professional development that incorporated that subject. This is a very important issue. Currently, we are addressing common core. We have a calendar of what we have for time and space. The common core standards are really eating our clock. I will certainly look at an action plan for school climate.

7. Professional Development: Focus on collaborative problem solving, provide opportunities for faculty to examine methods for improving MCAS math scores and annual in-service training on bullying. We need to work on all of these and work as sub committees and committees and administration to do that.

Question from the audience. What are our subcommittees? There is the Finance Sub Committee, a Policy and Curriculum Sub Committee and a Buildings and Grounds Sub Committee. How do we find out when the Sub Committees are meeting? The Sub Committee meeting information should be on the District website. It will definitely be on the new District website in the next month or two.

Communication is #1 for Ms. Grant. What is a priority for Hadley Schools and what is mandated by the state? Dr. Young will let the Committee know what is mandated for the next 2 years by the state. Dr. Young, because of RTTT, we will have to adapt state-mandated teacher evaluation plan for next year. Half of the evaluation piece still has to be negotiated. Policy and Curriculum Sub Committee are moving to have a workshop with the teachers and administration. We are not only developing an instrument and a procedure that works, but there is also a negotiation piece to all of this. The state is handing down about half of the information. The other half is very gray and there is a lot of work to be done there. We will be in conversation for 3 or 4 months about the new teacher evaluation.

Facilities are a much bigger project than I think we have highlighted. There are going to be some very substantial grants. Dr. Young has been in contact with Rep. Scibak and he suggested some sites to look at. That could be a mammoth project. The field will be done in stages. Mr. Michalak stated that we really have to plan what we want to do and then work towards that goal.

Dr. Young will take a shot at trying to clean up the district goals by the January meeting. If we took this plan to most districts, they would say that it is far too ambitious for one year. We need to lay out an improvement plan over time. What are we tackling first and what are our priorities? It should be a running item for a couple of months. In a way it is forcing prioritization and there is enthusiasm in a lot of different areas.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION TOOL

Ms. Grant states that it is basically the evaluation tool that has been used previously. She took out a few things because they asked the school committee to evaluate things that they did not have enough information on to evaluate. Also, added an overview. Under the new open meeting law, every evaluation performed by a school committee member becomes a public document. She thought it was helpful to try and have everything in context. Example: If someone wants to see Robie Grant's evaluation, they could see what I was supposed to have in mind about each topic as I was going through and reviewing it.

Dr. Young states that the only potential wrinkle is that the state is going to release a new set of forms. We are in an unusual situation. We were not evaluated as a district under the old educational quality assurance audit standards, where many districts were. It is more about making sure if we are going to come up for an audit, that we follow whatever the audit procedures are at that moment in time. Dr. Young will review the standards for audit to make sure that nothing was removed that was an auditable standard. Ms. Grant would like the superintendent's evaluation tool to be reviewed and approved so that Dr. Young can be evaluated at the end of this school year.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY

a. Revise Social Media Policy - Dr. Young presented a slightly revised Social Media Policy and would like to introduce this as a first reading. The MASC policy was attached for comparison. Having the rules of the road clear is extremely important. Ms. Dunlavy stated that this is an oddly written policy. It puts the responsibility on the superintendent and principal to define and clarify what 1-7 means.

Would rather have a policy that says that this is defined as what is not okay written as a policy, rather than rely the superintendent and the principal to interpret that. Dr. Young questioned what have the MASC lawyers said? They left it open for interpretation. (There are things that are gray zones and that good judgment prevails.)

Discussion from the audience related to all e-contacts with students should be through the district's computer. Dr. Young - we do have employees that do not have the access to the district's computer. There were a few adjustments to make sure the policy is manageable. This is just a 1st read. Ms. Keegan will discuss with Mr. Lemieux, athletic director, wording around a possible parent sign-off on communication between coaches and players. The most important issue is to "Protect Students First."

b. Student Representatives to the Hadley School Committee - We have 3 students that have been elected as student representatives. This was the 1st reading of the policy outlining their responsibilities.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

a. School Closings/Snow Days - We have lost 2 schools days. Students are scheduled to go to school until June 15th and the staff until June 18th. There is no reason to extend the school year at this point.

b. School Choice Surveys - Incoming School Choice surveys; 103 surveys were sent out and we received responses from 25 = 24.3% participation. The responses from incoming were relative to the experience they had in their previous school. Outgoing School choice surveys; 107 surveys were sent out and we received responses from 38 = 35.5% participation. The responses from outgoing were: standardized testing, home schooling preferred, access to teachers, curriculum not varied enough, not enough diversity. Major theme is more communication with parents and standardized testing. The state believes that these tests are important. State is also going to evaluate teachers by how their students do on standardized tests. Parents would like to see more varied classes and field trips to broaden student experiences. Dr. Young suggested that we start next year with a district-wide survey.

c. Bus Replacement Cycle - We received a new 71-passenger bus today. We try to replace a bus after it reaches 100,000 miles. It replaced a 2000 bus that had 118,294 miles. Safety of the students is the most important issue. We keep a bus inventory and submit it to the town annually with the current mileage included for each bus.

d. Coaching Appointments - List of winter coaches was distributed.

e. Personnel Updates - Maternity Leave for 104 days, Medical Leave for 33 days and a LT Para Sub hired for a class with behavioral issues for 106 days. Total cost not in the budget = \$33,799.45.

OTHER

Hadley demographics are changing. We are seeing more students that are receiving Free Lunch. We are sending people to urban settings to see what some of these students are coming from. We are looking at having more participation in summer school for those in need.

Balance Sheets dated July 1 to November 28, 2011

NEXT MEETING

December 19, 2011, Monday @ 6:30pm in the HA Music Room.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: (Keegan/Waskiewicz) move to adjourn the meeting at 7:05pm. VOTE: Unanimous.

A workshop was held immediately following the meeting. It was open to the public.

Subject: School Committee Self-evaluation and Professional Development

Presenters: Mr. Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of MASC

Ms. Patricia Correia, Field Director MASC, Training & Development