

**HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS
October 4, 2010**

5:30 PM Regular Meeting

Hopkins Academy Music Room

PRESENT: Chair: Mr. Thomas Waskiewicz, Vice Chair: Mr. James Michalak (absent). Members: Ms. Linda Dunlavy, Mrs. Tracey Kelley, and Ms. Robie Grant.
Dr. Nicholas Young, Superintendent of Schools. Carol Trane, Administrative Assistant, TV5's Walter Montani, Scott Payne and Rene Hembrough, Kent Haake, Terry Earle, Heather Ciaglo, and Joanne Konieczny. Finance Committee Member Molly Keegan joined the meeting at 6:08 PM.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Waskiewicz, called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MOTION: (Dunlavy/Grant) move to approve the minutes of the August 31, 2010 Regular Session School Committee Meeting, VOTE: Unanimous.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

1. FY11 Budget Update

Dr. Young said this is and will be an on-going agenda item. Members received an updated budget along with a detailed two-page compilation of grants used to offset the current budget.

Referring Members to the last page of the budget, Dr. Young noted the funds received from the town in local appropriation totaled \$5,309,272.00, adding the schools needed a budget that was substantially more than that. Referring to the Grant Offset sheet, Dr. Young noted where these grants were impacting specific budget lines in the amount of \$463,941, leaving a difference of \$8,860.00 not currently covered but may be covered going forward by other grants or taken from School Choice Funds. Dr. Young proposed to do the budget reconciliation in stages to account for any additional revenues or grants. It was agreed to adopt the revised budget as presented knowing it may be brought back again at a later date.

MOTION: (Dunlavy/Kelley) move to adopt the updated FY11 School Budget, with grant offsets, as presented. VOTE: Unanimous.

2. Race to the Top

Dr. Young said this was just a general update, noting that he had previously reported on several grants he was tracking, one being Race to the Top, the other Education Jobs. The Education Jobs money has been accounted for in the Grant Offset sheet. There is \$34,000 available to Hadley in Race to the Top money over a four-year period. Dr. Young said there are a variety of stipulations around Race to the Top funding; noting, some will be a stretch for us as an organization. One option right now is to indicate that we want to seek out the money, have a plan to use this year to develop the plan for subsequent years, not spending the money in the present year. Doing so would give us the opportunity to spend this year to work through some degree of negotiations with the teachers union. Adding, the fact that we are in negotiations now seems like it would complicate things to have to also go in to deal with Race to the Top. Therefore, by putting an application in for next year and using this year to plan, it should buy a few months to get through negotiations and perhaps have a serious conversation in early to mid-spring on how those funds could be used for next year. Dr. Young said he believes we could use these monies to enhance curriculum and other things but some of the guidelines we have to commit to would require some agreement on how we would use standardized test scores to evaluate teacher performance, adding this is a very sensitive subject for teachers across the country, not just specific to Hadley. Dr. Young feels test scores could be used as one piece of information as opposed to the entirety; he believes there are respectful ways to engage the teachers to develop a plan that will be more akin to the \$8,000 or \$9,000 a year over a period of time around

professional development, around test scores used to enhance or improve curriculum or performance and finding some way to look at test scores as just one indicator of a larger performance evaluation.

3. School Choice/Charter and K-12 School Enrollment

Members received enrollment data information (3 pages). Dr. Young noted the school choice numbers did not change that much from last year, adding that Hadley received far more requests to have children enroll in Hadley under Choice than we were able to accommodate.

In response to a question as to whether or not a follow-up is done to determine why students leave Hadley for other districts, Dr. Young responded that many of the students have been out of district for a while and we do have a pretty good idea of the reasons when students leave. Periodically there is an assessment done of parents on this subject, but did admit it's been a few years since a survey has been done and perhaps it's time to do another. In the last survey done, it was determined that we lost the majority of students for non-academic reasons, either for sports or a parent convenience issue, adding we did have some who left for academic reasons but that was not the predominant reason.

4. Hopkins Roof Review/Green Repair Program

Dr. Young noted that we are focusing on roofs at Hopkins, adding that the Elementary School roof is not a problem at this time. At Hopkins there are seven different roofs. What is being discussed this evening are the roofs that are circled on the handout, identified as the 1989 East Wing at 7,150 sq. ft. and the 1989 West Wing which has 14,200 sq. ft. This does not include the Gym roof. The estimate provided by a roofing company as opposed to an architect, included contingencies in the event there is structural damage once the old roof is removed. The average estimate was \$18.00 a sq. ft., adding in contingency money, the estimate to replace the stated area would roughly cost around \$450,00.00. Dr. Young reminded the Committee that they voted to allow him to go forward with applying for the grant through the Green Repair Program, which he did, and now we wait to see if our grant will be honored or not. If it is not honored, then there needs to be a conversation on how we deal with the roofs that are past there warranty and have required patching to correct the leaks.

Assuming that we get the roof grant, MSBA will decide what percentage of reimbursement Hadley will receive. For the sake of discussion say Hadley receives 50%, that would mean that the School Committee/Town of Hadley citizenry would need to make up the difference. Even though we are in a race for matching funds, Hadley would be responsible for approx. \$225,000 which is better than being on the hook for the full amount. If we are successful in securing an MSBA grant, then the Committee will have to deal with how to proceed with funding the project. Dr. Young noted that this is just the first in a series of roofs at Hopkins that will need attention in the coming years.

NEW BUSINESS

1. MCAS RESULTS

Dr. Young provided MCAS Tests results from the Spring of 2010, noting that at the end of this presentation, he will be asking the Committee for funding to address the specific gaps that are identified through this discussion, and mentioned at the last meeting. The results, noted Dr. Young, on many levels were very positive, with two examples that require further attention. Dr. Young then proceeded to review each grade tested from the handouts provided.

Addressing the Grade 4 results, Dr. Young said this was the area that warrants consideration since it scored below state percentages in English Language Arts, with the District having an 82% passing rate with the statewide rate at 89%. There were a larger number of students in this class that are currently receiving services; but in no way should that be interpreted as suggesting that we shouldn't focus on this group, while in fact he believes we should focus more attention on this group. This will be the basis of one of two proposals he will be making to the Committee later in the meeting. Grade 4 Math was slightly better, but not the grade we should feel best about with the District at 87% and statewide at 89%. The concern then, is the current 5th Graders, who were in 4th Grade last year when the test was administered.

Dr. Young proceeded to report on the remaining grades, stopping at the Grade 7 Math results of 84% passing as opposed to the state average of 80%, adding although this was a harder test, he feels this group is in need of remediation. In reviewing the higher grades, Dr. Young noted for example on the Grade 10 English Language Arts shows 99% passing with 2% failing that the term District includes more than Hopkins students, it includes our students who may be in specialized out-of-district programs but are

counted in with the Hopkins population, making us accountable for all of our students but feels it's an important point to consider in terms of the strength of our curriculum and programs.

In response to Ms. Grant's question as to remediation strategy, Dr. Young said every year there is an analysis of the curriculum and ways to improve, using test score data finding strands of things in a particular grade that warrants attention. In this instance when he's advocating for remediation he is focusing on an individual student basis.

For remediation purposes, Hadley has used the Sylvan Learning Center using money from the local budget and money from the Board of Trustees but this has been specific to Hopkins Academy students and has not targeted 7th or 8th grade students. At the elementary school we have volunteers who work with students that are at risk and also use special subject teachers do remediation when they don't have full schedules, but for the most part have not had a comprehensive remediation program, adding for many years it was not needed, but said, we are not in a situation where now we do. To meet these needs, both the elementary and secondary are seeking \$9,000 for each school to provide remediation for students, targeting the 5th Grade class along with a few in other grades for students who have been identified with needs. Since transportation presents a problem with scheduling, elementary students will most likely be tutored during a time when they would be in special subjects. While Hopkins does not have the same limitations; there are still scheduling and transportation considerations being worked out. At this time, Dr. Young said he is asking for the same amount of money for Hopkins, for a total of \$18,000 in all. Dr. Young is proposing hiring someone who is not currently on staff for the elementary students but Hopkins will use Sylvan when possible and work on other solutions for the students who cannot use their services.

(Noted: Both principals provided written proposals for the need for tutorial services, a copy of which are filed with and made a part of these minutes.)

MOTION:(Grant/Kelley) move to approve the expenditure of up to \$18,000 total for remediation services at the Hadley Elementary School and Hopkins Academy. VOTE: Unanimous.

2. Request for Remediation Funding

See above

3. Policy: Concussion Policy (First Reading)

This is the first of two readings for a proposed policy that was constructed consistent with the new law around concussions. This document is a result of the Athletic Directors working together to present the most accepted protocol in the handling and treatment of sports-related concussions. This policy procedure will be presented again at the next school committee meeting for adoption.

4. NEASC Two-Year Update

Members received a copy of the Hopkins Academy two-year progress report to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Dr. Young offered to give a thumbnail review of the report explaining the NEASC process is a ten-year review for accreditation purposes where essentially they specify areas where they feel work is needed; adding he felt it was fair to say we got an outstanding review in 2008. Every two years there is an update required to address the reports suggested areas needing attention. Five years into the process, the school must start on the next set of self-study documents. At any give point, the school is doing something relative to accreditation. The School Council, the Principal and the faculty predominantly drive this train, with the School Committee and the Superintendent's role being quite modest.

Ms. Grant asked about the number of courses in a day being taught by our teachers and not having enough time to plan. Dr. Young said with candor we are not able to follow that recommendation; meaning that to do so would reduce significantly the number of course offerings for students and would call into question other aspects of our program. If teachers dropped to five courses per teacher instead of six, it would eliminate about twenty classes from our schedule and cause our core courses to exceed in terms of numbers and many of our elective courses to be deleted along with our AP program. The cost too would be very expensive plus we don't have a lot of space. Dr. Young said he looked at this issue when he first became superintendent and realized it would be very costly because you would need a lot of teachers that taught one or two courses because it is very difficult to get a teacher that's certified in several subject areas, like Social Studies, Math and Science. NEASC provides general recommendations, but you can say that in a particular case you are not going to follow a recommendation. If we followed the recommendation we would have to expand the building or use portable classrooms. Mrs. Kelley added that the School

Committee members addressed this issue with the NEASC committee about this challenge and that by working with the teachers have developed an acceptable approach, with Dr. Young adding, it is not perfect, but there are not options the community can afford. Over the years the School Committee has made concessions with the teachers in curtailing after school requirements and relieving them of extra duties. The current model has the teachers teaching less than an hour extra once the classes were expanded, it does not amount to a whole extra period. Dr. Young wanted to make it clear that our teachers do go above and beyond and he gives them full credit.

This report leaves us in outstanding shape relative to NEASC, with a great review to begin with and all parties working to address the recommendations and setting goals administratively for the district.

There was a brief discussion on college credit courses and the fact that the agreement with AIC did not materialize because we no longer had a teacher who met the credential requirements. Dr. Young is now investigating the possibility of taking virtual courses for college credit and will report back when he has more information.

In response to the cost of an AP Course, Dr. Young responded there is no cost to take an AP course; however there is an \$86 cost to take the exam. In the past, the Trustees have covered this cost, along with the school budget at times, but the School Committee agreed that the parents would cover the cost except for those students who have an identified need. This need has typically been determined by using Free and Reduced Lunch criteria to identify need but it was also understood that if anybody else had an identified need the cost would be covered. Dr. Young said if the Committee wanted to change their policy and cover the cost of the AP exams, he estimated another \$6,000 would need to be budgeted for this expense.

5. Trip Request to New York City

Members received a request from Hopkins Academy teacher, Jason Burns, along with a detailed itinerary, to take fourteen AP Modern European history students to New York City on April 1, 2011 and April 2, 2011.

MOTION: (Grant/Dunlavy) move to approve the April 1 and 2, 2011, trip to New York City as outlined in Mr. Burns request and submitted itinerary. VOTE: Unanimous.

6. ANTI-BULLYING TASK FORCE

Dr. Young said the subject of anti-bullying will be an on-going agenda item keeping the Committee and community informed of where we are with anti-bullying. There was a presentation for families at Open House at both schools and a presentation on opening day of school for faculty and staff, along with a program for students. A Task Force is being formed to work on developing an Anti-Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Task Force will have general guidelines handed down from the DESE mandated plan provisions. There will be a teacher, a parent, a community representative, principals, counselors and school psychologist plus the police chief who has been working very closely with the schools. The Task Force will compile a survey to collect data from families and may be able to do this in electronic form. Once the data is assembled it will be made available for public comment and input. Adding, if anyone is interested in learning more or wants to be involved in the process, he encouraged them to contact the School Councils.

OTHER:

Reports, and/or Informational Items, etc.)

1. Gym Floor (Clean and Seal) will be cleaned and sealed starting on November 22 to the 24th. The anticipated drying time will take five days.
2. Budget balance sheets covering July 1 to October 4, 2010.
3. Dr. Young offered a brief report from each principal covering the highlights of the past two months. Both reports are filed with and made a part of these minutes.
4. Ms. Dunlavy asked Chairman Waskiewicz to include the discussion of vacation balances, etc. as it relates to a monetary liability to the town as an agenda item for the next school committee meeting since it had not been included in the discussion this evening. Mr. Waskiewicz said he suggested that a portion of the School Choice Account be earmarked to cover future liability and will include it on the November agenda. In response to a question from the audience on releasing information on vacation days for a specific individual, Chairman Waskiewicz said the Town has been provided with a

total liability count for all employees and has been advised by the school attorney not to single out just one individual and until such time as he is advised to the contrary, he will abide by the attorney's advice. Ms. Dunlavy noted that the School Committee accepts the total liability for its employees and will discuss setting that money aside.

5. Members received a copy of a letter issued to Dr. Young by the Department of the Army on behalf of the President of the United States announcing the promotion of Nicholas Dean Young to Lieutenant Colonel in Army Reserve on August 7, 2010. Congratulations were offered.

6. Photo of the cover of Creative Solutions to Contemporary Challenges in Small and Rural Schools Across American edited by Dr. Young and Dr. Michael. The books cover is a photo of the Hadley School Department sign in front of the Administrative office at 125 Russell Street, Hadley. There is a chapter in the book dedicated to our school district and the work of former Principal. Bill Mahoney.

It was announced by Chairman Waskiewicz that Dr. Young was selected, with all expenses paid, to be the featured speaker at an international educational conference in Abu Daubi in late October.

NEXT MEETING DATE

November 9, 2010, 5:30 PM, Hopkins Academy Music Room.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Not Held

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Grant/Dunlavy) move to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM. VOTE: Unanimous.