

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
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PRESENT: MAYOR MITCHELL (arr. at 6:09), DR. FINNERTY, DR. FLETCHER, MR. LIVRAMENTO, MR. NOBREGA, MR. OLIVEIRA, MS. POLLOCK,

ABSENT: NONE

IN ATTENDANCE: DR. DURKIN, DR. LARKIN, MS. BRADSHAW, MRS. DUNAWAY (Recording Secretary)

Adam Vieira, Student Representative, was in attendance.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Ms. Pollock, to accept and approve the following minutes as submitted:

- Sub Committee Meeting - Curriculum: July 9, 2013
- Sub Committee Meeting - Finance: August 8, 2013
- Sub Committee Meeting - Finance: September 16, 2013
- Special Meeting: September 23, 2013
- Regular Meeting: October 21, 2013

Superintendent's Report:

- New Bedford High School Update:
 - Strategies in place to keep students and staff safe
 - Headmaster updates at noon and at end of day
 - Continue to identify students that need assistance in programming – outside of New Bedford High School or contained within NBHS and those needing a case manager check-in with them in the morning and afternoon
 - Disciplinary issue follow up – clerical staff to help
 - Will visit and meet with staff on a regular basis; Admin. Team to be in contact with staff as well
 - Assaults categorized as when a teacher is targeted directly/ Altercations are when staff are hurt while intervening in student disruptions

Ms. Pollock asked if there is professional development for teachers to help with de-escalation. Dr. Durkin answered that there is a misconception that the goal of reducing warning and needs improvement by 40% in MCAS scores included suspensions too. That is not so. Dr. Durkin stated that there has been no change to the suspension policy, only what is a suspendable offense, such as procedural issues. Professional development will be made available to those teachers who may need help.

Mr. Livramento asked about the recent large number of teacher absences. Dr. Durkin answered that there were two days where there were over 20 teachers absent. Mr. Livramento asked how teachers kept abreast of their course work when they are absent. Dr. Durkin said that teachers are required to leave lesson plans which are reviewed by the Housemasters or Headmaster.

Dr. Fletcher stated that he was happy that there is an honest dialogue and glad it was addressed in light of community concern.

Mr. Nobrega asked if teachers leave lesson plans in case they are absent. Dr. Durkin responded that she is not sure if there is a problem but would look into it.

Mayor Mitchell asked what the difference is this year. Dr. Durkin responded with the following:

- Fifty less staff members
- Change in schedule from block to seven periods to block again (due to budgetary problems)
- Not enough preparation to realign resources as the result of layoffs
- School year started off on a confused basis
- Becoming a Level 4 school wears on staff and morale

Dr. Durkin went on to say that staff should not worry and temper emotions for the good of the students. Also, there is a sense that block scheduling is not working for most students, therefore the proposed schedule will be reviewed again with the re-design team.

At this time Dr. Durkin introduced Debra Letendre/Principal/Parker School, Wendy Weidenfeller/Principal/Hayden McFadden School, Sarah Ventura/Teacher/Parker School and Julie Bosworth/Teacher/Parker School to present what it means to see students become actively engaged in the new *Reading Street* reading program.

Dr. Durkin presented her Self Assessment and 2013/2014 District Goals. The following is part of a Power Point presentation Dr. Durkin presented to the Committee. (Supporting Document 4A)

Turnaround situation:

- Chronic and pervasive underperformance for many years
- Need for strong leadership and management
- Focus on the **right work**
- A clear strategy
- Paying attention to the culture, climate, and people.
Also, changing what we do as adults to improve practice, set rigorous goals and realize opportunities.

Entry Plan Highlights:

- I. **Visiting every classroom by Thanksgiving**
 - 5 more schools to go
 - Side-by-side Learning Walks and extensive feedback to Principals
- II. **Building competency and capacity**
 - Need for structured opportunities for conversations about teaching and learning
 - Lack of appropriate materials at the elementary level
 - Revised schedule for additional support at the middle schools
 - FY14 Budget repercussions
 - Central office reorganization
- III. **Community Relationships**
 - Over 60 meetings/events since July
 - Your Voice Matters*
 - Focus Group input

Turnaround situation:

"In a turnaround situation, a strong leader must create urgency, provide hope, set a clear vision, maintain focus, and cajole, push or invite many to embrace change." – District Management Council, Fall 2013

Process:

- Self- Assessment
- Proposed Goals
- Mid-Cycle Review Progress Report
- End-of-Year Summative Evaluation

Proposed Student Learning Goal:

New Bedford Public Schools will reduce by at least 40% the # of students who are not proficient or advanced on the ELA and Math MCAS by the end of the year.

Dr. Durkin stated that if teachers and principals are taking the risk of reaching this ambitious goal, so will she.

Proposed Professional Practice Goal:

Through the Urban Superintendents' Network, I will improve my practice by learning from and with colleagues from other urban districts as to the most effective strategies for raising achievement in a Level 4 district as well as manage the DESE requirements for New Bedford High School and the Parker School as a result of their new Level 4 and 5 designations.

District Improvement Goals (4):

1. By the end of the year, the district data team, school instructional leadership teams, and teacher collaboration teams will be functioning at an effective level as evidenced by a representative sampling of team meeting observations, review of minutes, and the impact of meeting decisions on classroom practice.
2. By the end of the year, 100% of evaluators will be demonstrating improvement toward proficiency in identifying effective instruction with a focus on rigor as measured by the quality of observations, growth-producing feedback, and overall use of the educator evaluation tool.
3. The FY15 Budget will be devised and proposed according to agreed-upon timelines, reflecting the district's priorities outlined within the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) and communicated to all stakeholders so that the connection between the district's educational plan and the necessary fiscal plan is clear.
4. By the end of the year, over 70% of families and community members responding to a survey, or other ways, will demonstrate an understanding of the overall vision and new direction for New Bedford Public Schools.

Dr. Durkin added that there is a need to go slower and build a foundation, principals need more support than she thought, there needs to be a better understanding of what rigor is and the AIP has to align to the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Also, help those who are in need and validate those who do well.

Dr. Durkin went on to say that the Human Resources department has to be sharp and be the best. Business Office will need ongoing monitoring but hopefully, implementation of MUNIS will help.

Community: Seek how to best communicate with families, how to better partner with parents

Professional Culture – Dr. Durkin stated the following:

- There is escalated tension in the district.
- Staff can take prominent role in raising achievement.
- There is a need to ensure a level of confidence.
- There is a need to manage conflict in New Bedford.
- Some conflicts have become personalized to individuals.
- I will continue to reach out to get people to the table.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to take item 4D, School Committee Reports, out of order.

Dr. Finnerty reviewed the Superintendent's Evaluation procedure and timeline with the Committee and explained that it is carefully aligned with the AIP. There are four standards and 12 evidence indicators, which is the same as administrators and teachers in the district. Mid-Cycle review will take place at the end of March. Evaluation will be completed in June. (Supporting Document 4D)

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Oliveira and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to adopt the agreed upon Superintendent Evaluation goals and evidence indicators.

The timeline was presented as follows:

- October 21, 2013: MASC Training for School Committee on Superintendent Evaluation Process
- November, 18, 2013: Superintendent Proposes Goals to School Committee based on Standards and agreed-upon indicators aligned with administrator and teacher rubrics. School Committee discusses and adopts agreed-upon goals and evidence indicators.
- March 10, 2014: Mid-Cycle Review of Superintendent Goals (Year 1 only) Superintendent prepares a progress report on goal attainment.
- By May 5, 2014: Superintendent prepares the End-of-Cycle Report on progress toward each goal and performance against the Standards and indicators.
- By May 12, 2014: Each school committee member individually evaluates the Superintendent using the End-of-Cycle Evaluation Report and submits it to the school committee member designated as the aggregator member. The designated aggregator member summarizes the results and prepares the final end-of-year summative evaluation report.
- By June 2, 2014: The End-of-Year Summative Evaluation is completed.
- June 16, 2014: The End-of-Year Summative Evaluation is presented at the public school committee meeting.
- By July 30, 2014: The School Committee votes on the Superintendent's Summative End-of-Cycle Evaluation Report.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to approve the Superintendent Evaluation timeline.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mr. Livramento, to take item 6A, Quarterly Progress Report was presented by the Center for District and School Accountability/Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, out of order.

Lynda Foisy, Senior Associate Commissioner/DESE addressed the Committee stating that the current Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), which was submitted in August, is a model and "one of the best we've seen".

Pat Williams, Plan Monitor, addressed the Committee with highlights of the plan from March through June. Ms. Williams stated that the district achieved some of its 2013 final outcomes but did not demonstrate accelerated improvement and in many instances student achievement was short of its targets. In summary, the 2012-2013 AIP results are mixed and not indicative of the accelerated improvement that New Bedford students require. (Supporting Document 6A)

In an overview of summer activities in the district Ms. Williams stated that the DESE approved New Bedford's draft of its 2013-2014 AIP. Several reasons for a strong rating are: the district's focus on rigor, the superintendent's focused attention on principals by conducting meetings and submitting a six week action plan to address the school's challenges, and the restructuring of the coaching positions.

Since September, Ms. Williams said with confidence, that the AIP has been communicated and internalized across the district. One objective is clear: together, on the MCAS, they will move 40% of students from Warning/Failing and Needs Improvement to Proficient and Advanced. Ms. Williams noted several items in place that will make this happen: Regular visits by the Superintendent to visit schools, School Improvement Plans have been through a thorough review process, Administrators and teachers have been provided with tools to do what needs to be done and the Parker and Hayden McFadden Schools have additional support to move their schools forward and the high school is moving towards establishing its turnaround plan.

Ms. Williams noted that the hard work is ahead and the district is at a critical point – developing the capacity in staff at all levels to do this work. New Bedford is equipped with strong leadership, aligned plans, tools and staff commitment.

Mayor Mitchell stated that the changes that have to be made by teachers and principals are daunting. He asked what the experiences have been for other districts that have faced the same challenges and how have they been able to work through it

Lynda Foisy answered that there are a limited number of strategies that have seemed to make the most difference in our lowest performing schools but the foundational strategy is the one centered on changing culture and climate along with the following:

- Teachers have to be supported so they can better understand what is expected of them
- Teachers have to believe the students and do it and have the capacity to help them achieve
- Instruction – There should be a tier system of support
- Principal should be the instructional leader, not just the manager and know what rigor in the classroom looks like.
- Using and understanding data.
- People have to think differently about the way teaching is done, not only here but throughout the country.

Due to the absence of Mr. Murphy, Dr. Durkin gave the Business Office Report and noted the following:

- Salary Report – Updates and Changes – recording corrections
- Downward trend in unemployment costs
- Review of needs to continue throughout the school year rather than just at the end of the fiscal year
- School accounts in line
- Food service account is ahead of last year in terms of the number of free and reduced lunch applications
- FY 15 budget preparations underway
- Capital projects are being worked on with the City.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to accept the Business Office Report as presented.

Ms. Bradshaw reviewed the Personnel Report and noted that schedules have been re-worked for custodians and she complimented her HR staff for their hard work and continued MUNIS training they are attending. Ms. Bradshaw also mentioned that the district is working with Bridgewater State University to get a program locally for teachers to continue their education.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Oliveira and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to accept the Personnel Report.

Several Committee members gave reports

Student Representative gave his report.

Public Comment:

No one signed up to speak during Public Comment.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mr. Oliveira, the Committee voted to approve a request to create the position of Chief Academic Officer. This position will be posted and candidates will be interviewed in the near future. Successful candidate will start on July 1, 2014. (Supporting Document 6B)

Dr. Durkin explained that the Chief Academic Officer would be responsible for the following:

- Curriculum and Instruction/Interventions
- Streamline and organize the related work
- Oversee the implementation of the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP)
- Develop safety net strategies
- Literacy and math objectives
- Set rigorous curriculum standards to align to the state standards
- Data teams
- Differentiated needs in ELL and Special Education

Dr. Durkin also stated that this position would realign and replace several current positions.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on motion by Dr. Fletcher and seconded by Mr. Livramento, the Committee voted to approve a request to declare, in accordance with School Department Policy DN-R, a recommended list of surplus property located at New Bedford High School, Parker School, Paul Rodrigues Administration Building and Transportation. (Supporting Document 6C).

Ms. Pollock questioned why the transportation vehicles were going to be declared surplus. Dr. Durkin stated that Mr. Murphy would have the specific information. Dr. Durkin suggested that this item be deferred until the next meeting.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mr. Oliveira the Committee voted to approve the Sub Committee schedule for 2014. (Supporting Document 6D)

A policy change and a new adoption were brought forth by the Policy Sub Committee. Dr. Durkin stated that under the amended policy, students entering Kindergarten in SY 15/16 must be five years old *before* September 1. The adopted policy regarding Home Education Programs, also known as *Home Schooling*, is to make district practice a policy with specific guidelines.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on motion by Mr. Oliveira and seconded by Dr. Fletcher the Committee voted to waive the second reading and approve the following:

- Amend File: JEB-R: Entrance
- Adopt File: IHBG: Home Education Programs

At 7:58 P.M., on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mr. Oliveira, the Committee voted to go into Executive Session without returning to Open Session, for the purpose of discussions in regard to the following:

- Collective Bargaining Sessions
Level III Grievances: New Bedford Educators Association, Inc.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mayor Mitchell – Yes	Dr. Fletcher – Yes
Ms. Pollock – Yes	Mr. Livramento - Yes
Mr. Nobrega – Yes	Dr. Finnerty – Yes
Mr. Oliveira - Yes	

7 – Yeas	0 – Nays	0 – Absent
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Respectfully Submitted by,

Lisa P. Dunaway

Reviewed by,

Pia Durkin, Ph.D.
Superintendent,
Secretary/School Committee

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