MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting
Superintendent’s Conference Room - Miscoe Hill Middle School
Monday, January 23, 2017

Committee Present:
Leigh Martin, Philip DeZutter, Dorothy Scally, Diane Duncan, Tanna Jango

Administration Present:
Joseph Maruszczak, Superintendent of Schools
Jay Byer, Business/Finance
Dennis Todd, Director of Student Support Services
Maureen Cohen, Director of Curriculum
John Clemens, Principal, Nipmuc High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Diane Duncan. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Approval of Agenda
MOTION: On a motion of Tanna Jango, seconded by Leigh Martin to approve the agenda.
VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of Open Session Minutes of January 9, 2017
MOTION: On a motion of Leigh Martin, seconded by Tanna Jango to approve the Open Session minutes of January 9, 2017
VOTED: Unanimously approved

III. STUDENT COMMENTS

- 1/23/2017 Report Cards will be issued
- 1/24/2017 Breakfast for parents with the counselors. Focus will be on school attendance for student’s success
- 1/27/2017 Italian Field Trip to Boston
- 1/28/2017 Mr. Nipmuc Competition
- 1/31/2017 STEM Scholar Meeting

IV. COMMUNITY COMMENTS – NA
V. SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Status of District Action Plans
Superintendent Maruszczak reviewed the status of the District Action Plans. Below is a highlight of the presentation:

- **Goal 1: Use of Common Assessments to Improve Teaching & Learning.** At the elementary level, there is increasing concurrence of using common assessments from the fairly extensive bank of *Reading Wonders* and *Go Math* programs. There is also increased use of online assessments from the math program as well as benchmark assessments such as the SRI and SMI. Work on performance-based common assessments continues in earnest for middle and high school teams of teachers, most by common content area. While the work on DDMs (district-determined measures) is still in flux due to a change in the Educator Evaluation Regulations, each educator in the MURSD has a second student learning goal this year, one focused on growth results from the use of common assessments.

- **Goal 2: Development, Review, and Revision of the Curriculum.** Maureen Cohen is leading the work on completing Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the curriculum mapping process using the online tool *Rubicon Atlas*. Significant work was accomplished during the last PD held day on January 13. More planning still needs to occur to create K-12 vertical articulation structures as well as opportunities for teachers to observe their peers. The District Leadership Team is presently working on this.

- **Goal 3: Increasing & Improving Inclusion Opportunities.** Some high quality professional development has been offered to regular and special education teachers and paraprofessionals on effective team teaching practices. Additionally, Dennis Todd has established a formal mentoring program for five teams of inclusion teachers at the elementary level. What lies ahead as a major key action is an analysis of performance data of students in an inclusion setting: how much of a difference has it made? The District Leadership Team will be taking this on very shortly and will share the results.

- **Goal 4: Programming to Meet Social-Emotional Needs of All Students.** Social-emotional learning (SEL) has been a major PD focus for the district this year. The November 8 PD day (shared with other Blackstone Valley districts) had SEL as its sole focus. Topics such as social thinking, executive functioning, ADHD, and school-grade transitions have been explored during our first three PD days. The district is also working to craft more formal structures and time for counseling staff to meet to discuss students to ease the transitions between levels. All of the schools are continuing to include SEL topics in outreach programs (e.g., *Keys to Clough, What's the Buzz Around Memorial, Miscow Parent Coffee Talks*). District staff have also cultivated positive relationships with outside agencies such as *Family Continuity* of Whitinsville and *Riverside Community Care*, both of whom provide wraparound services for our students and their families.

- **Goal 5: Streamlining Communications & Highlighting Best Practices and Achievements.** We have transitioned to a new district website and are still transitioning to a new mass email/calling system that has enhanced functionality. As the district has recently transition to Gmail as its mail server,
we are heavily promoting the use of the many Google Applications for Schools as well as one uniform learning management system, Google Classroom. We are approaching 100% usage by middle and high school teachers. Dave Quinn has been instrumental in providing PD and support to our teachers in this venture. The district is also continuing to highlight best practices through the use of social media as well as events such as the Community iFair to be held on 3/30/2017

FY2017 Budget Update
Jay Byer discussed the budget and stated he is happy how the budget is looking, especially in the snow and ice line item.

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Budget Subcommittee
Budget Subcommittee met and Tanna is the Chair where Phil is serving as secretary. They are looking for a level service budget to maximize efficiency. Also, they are reviewing the budget drivers and revenues.

Golden Apple Subcommittee- Recognition of the first 2016-17 Golden Apple Award
Diane Duncan from the Golden Apple Subcommittee stated the following:

“This is the third time that I get the pleasure of presenting the Golden Apple Award to an outstanding member of our MURSD staff. Before I present, I generally start out by talking a little bit about how much I personally enjoy recognizing the “Good” in our district. I think it is important NOT to take things for granted and to recognize when people give 150% to their jobs or when you see someone go out of their way to make a difference. Saying “thank you” spreads appreciation and positivity, which is not only good for the recipient but it is also good for the giver. I love this award because I think it is good for our district.

Each nomination period, we receive so many nominations which always drives home the fact that our district employs numerous amazing people. This time around we had nearly 40 nominations for our most recent GA award. We have had 170 nominations since the incipience of this award in Dec. 2015. That’s a lot of appreciation, a lot of stories of “good”, or positive impacts, of “Meaningful interactions”. Not to mention that for every nomination we receive, there were probably 2 more nominations that were never written, because even though we all have great intentions to do something, and I include myself in this, sometimes time slips away and we never got the chance to write the nomination that we had intended. I wish we were able to let all nominees know of the impact they are making. As an alternative, I want to encourage all parents, all teachers, students, administration, all of our staff to take a moment and look around you at all the good that is going on in our district. Send an email to your child’s teacher telling about a specific story that has really made a difference. Say thank you for the extra time dedicated to a student or a school sponsored activity. Let the principle know about a teacher who has positively influenced your child’s growth, or love of a subject. Say it, email it or write an old fashioned note of thanks. It truly goes so far!

Tonight, the presentation of this award is an opportunity to acknowledge and applaud the contributions and the difference that one staff member in the MURSD has made for students and parents. We asked parents to provide details of a staff member’s performance and how it displayed exemplars in understanding the needs of students and families, how their performance showed creativity, enthusiasm and
determination, how their role had a positive academic or social impact on students and how they partnered with parents to achieve excellence. This nomination period, one story of impact really stood out for us helping us to know that this individual was not just doing their job, but stretching themselves for the benefit of their students. This person was actually nominated in past periods as well, several times.

As I have done in the past, I will read the comments that the parents wrote about our GA award winner so this person has an opportunity to sit back, listen and really feel the impact and hear the words of grateful parents. Please listen as I read the words of the nominator describing how and why this individual has been so impactful...

“He himself is passionate about his subject matter and displays this to his students. He knows how to challenge his students helping them get the most out of their time with him. He is serious about learning and helps to connect their work to real world experiences.”

“He is creative, not binding students to a specific way of learning. He is flexible and takes the time to pursue intellectual engaging topics that really make students think”

“He truly listens to all of his students, assumes they are all capable of great things. He doesn’t let them coast. My daughter has learned more from this teachers class that any other class she has taken.”

“It certainly would have been easier to teach the pre-assigned math classes for which this teacher already had plans, but this is not the path he took. He researched and found new ways to bring progressive, and innovative classes to Nipmuc students. It is this “out of the box”, “go the extra mile” effort that is the hallmark of his excellence. He wanted his students challenged, engaged and excited.”

“The content comes alive in his classes and students are invited to really engage with discipline-specify forms of inquiry and knowledge building. My student looks forward to this class every single day!”

“Things like communication, adaptability, problem-solving, 21st century skills, etc are an integrated part of what you do in his class, not some extra assignments thrown in to meet some state standard.”

“This past year, this teacher recognized the enthusiasm his class was generating and responded by working with administration to add an Independent Study in Economics to capture that forward momentum.”

“My son has never really been a big fan of math. When my son took this teacher’s Economics class he discovered a component of math that he not only liked, but he suddenly found a subject he loved enough to pursue in college. With the discovery of economics, the all-encompassing major in business suddenly had clear focus. My son went on to continue his studies of economics at college and it was because of this teachers enthusiasm and skill that this area of study was even on his radar.”

All of these words are testimony to this teacher’s passion, flexibility, motivation and caring. From the hearts of this School Committee and the greater parent population of the MURSD, it is with great joy and respect that we present this 3rd Golden Apple Award to Mr. Robert Messick, Teacher of Economics at Nipmuc High School. Thank you for all you do and for being a shining example of greatness. Please come up to accept your award Robert.”
Superintendent Maruszczak stated Rob makes it happen and allows the students to see the real world connection. John Clemens stated the award is well deserving and Rob was the driving force for AP economics which has been very successful and coordinates well with DECA.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

MSBA (MA School Building Authority) Statement of Interest Window
Superintendent Maruszczak and Jay Byer are completing the extensive survey and are hopeful to have it done by February 9th.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Naming of Miscoe Computer Lab
This was tabled due to illness of the presenters.

MURSD Makerspace Pilot
David Quinn and Suzanne Venkataaraman were present to discuss this pilot program. Highlights of the presentation follows:

- Innovation encourages learning and a short video demonstrating Makerspace was shown
- $1000 grant received toward Makerspace at Nipmuc
- Mission / Vision were created: Problem seekers and problem solvers through collaboration
- Research shows an inviting space is needed to be a catalyst to reimaging learning
- Committee visited 7 sites throughout Mass
- Maker Education is a very support community
- Engaging prompts and challenges are crucial to getting students into Makerspace; integrate teachers through curricular projects and flexible time in daily schedules; collaborate effort between librarian, IT, helpdesk and teachers is needed for success; buy list should be small and let students interests drive the purchases
- Resources needed: 3D Printer, computers for digital media, Arduino boards for coding, raspberry pi programmable, sewing machines, sphero robots and community support
- Goal is Nipmuc maker culture and it is in the beginning stages. Space will be made in the Nipmuc library.

Approval of 2017-18 School Year Calendar
This was tabled so the School Committee members could review the calendar

Approval of FY18-FY20 Bus Contract
School Committee was presented with a bus contract with Tellstone, the district’s current bus company. There was only one bid received and Jay feels the contract is reasonable although he would have liked to have seen more competition in the bidding process. Each bus route’s cost increase $20 for each year of the contract. Tellstone is a local company and are familiar with the routes and area.

Approval of FY18-FY20 Bus Contract
MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Dorothy Scally to approve the FY18-FY20 Bus Contract with Tellstone
VOTED: Unanimously approved
IX. CORRESPONDENCE

- Invitation to Annual MARS Legislative Breakfast on Friday, March 17 at 8:30 am at Nashoba Valley Tech in Westford.
- A request to open negotiations letter from the Mendon Upton Paraprofessionals Union.

X. Other Matters Not Anticipated By The Committee Within 48 Hours Of The Posted Meeting

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- MURSD First Pass Budget – February 6

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Leigh Martin, seconded by Tanna Jango to go into executive session and not return to open session per MGL Ch. 30A, §21(a), under exemption #2 to discuss strategy in preparation for a successor contract for the Superintendent of Schools and prepare for Collective Bargaining. The School Committee will not return to open session.

VOTED: Phil DeZutter, yes
       Tanna Jango, yes
       Dorothy Scally, yes
       Leigh Martin, yes
       Diane Duncan, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly A. McElreath