MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee Meeting
Professional Development Center – Nipmuc Regional High School
Monday, September 12, 2016

Committee Present:
Leigh Martin, Dorothy Scally, Diane Duncan, Pam Angenent, Phil DeZutter, 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
David Quin, Director of Technology Integration
John Clements, Principal, Nipmuc High School
Ann Meyer, Principal, Miscoe Hill School

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Diane Duncan. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Approval of Agenda
MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Pam Angenent, to approve the agenda with an amendment to add an executive session at the end of the agenda
VOTED: Unanimously approved

Approval of Open Session Minutes of August 8, 2016
MOTION: On a motion of Tanna Jango seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the Open Session minutes of August 8, 2016
VOTED: Unanimously approved

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS – Not Applicable

IV. SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Introduction of new Director of Technology Integration, David Quinn
Superintendent Maruszczak introduced David Quinn to the School Committee as the new Director of Technology Integration. David has been working with the district since August 1. His experience include presenting to teachers how to use different tools and applications including Google Apps for Education, Weebly and Evernote. Superintendent Maruszczak feels David is a good fit for the district at the right time.

Initial Enrollment of the 2016-17 School Year
The initial enrollment of the district is 2,279 which breaks down as 428 in Clough, 440 in Memorial, 785 in Miscoe, 596 in Nipmuc and 30 out of district. This is 43 (1.9%) less students than last year however it was projected to be 60 less students. The official enrollment will be determined as of October 1.
“Next Generation MCAS” Assessment – Spring 2017
Superintendent Maruszczak shared with the School Committee a press release from DESE noting Measure Progress of NH has been awarded the contract to construct and develop the new MCAS assessment. This is the same company that has been distributing MCAS for the last 15 years. The intent of the new MCAS is designed for the assessment to be given on a computer. Grades 4 and 8 will be taking the assessment on a computer in Spring 2017 and all other grades by Spring 2019. It was noted our 4th grade would be taking the assessment in the computer labs of the schools and it would be scheduled accordingly.

V. ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS

Recognition of Nipmuc Regional HS as Newsweek Top Public High Schools in America
John Clements was happy to inform the School Committee Nipmuc High School was recognized by Newsweek as a top 500 High School in the Country. It was one of 18 from Massachusetts and 3 from Central Massachusetts. John expressed thank you and congratulations to all of the staff members for their outstanding work. He stated the great work is not being done to be put on the list but it is nice to receive the recognition!

Professional Development Activities/Focus – August 30
Maureen Cohen updated the School Committee on the first professional development day. She thanked the members of the PD committee for their assistance. The focus was on student social-emotional learning and well-being. Keynote Speaker Dr. Rick Lavoie was well received by the staff. His 2 hour presentation was about understanding different motivations and different learning skills. Also there were 44 Ed Camp sessions. The next PD will be on November 8 at Uxbridge High School with other Blackstone Valley school districts.

FY 2016 Financial Closeout
Jay Byer presented the end of FY2016 financials. Totals revenues were $35,046,692; Total expenses were $34,602,921 thus leaving an uncommitted balance of $443,771. These figures when added to undesignated fund as of FY16 and accounting for the appropriations for the budget, will leave an estimated E&D balance of $1,283,130 as of the end FY16. The final amount require State approval.

Jay also updated the summer of 2016 projects:
- Replacement of all light fixtures to LEDs – project to saving 25% of kWh
- Solar Carports at Miscoe should be operational in November
- Commissioning of Solar Array in Dighton
- Future construction of second Solar Array will mean 95% of all electricity for MURSD will be provided from renewable solar energy and once all are operational will have an estimated savings of $100,000 - $140,000 annually for 20 years.
- All four buildings have upgraded wired and wireless infrastructure. Cost of $375,000 with e-Rate reimbursement of approximately 40%

It was noted parents at open house at Miscoe appreciated the solar carports. Also the district will be looking at software for the students to understand how much energy is being produced. Overall less than 6 parking spots were affected with the construction.

Recertification of MURSD FY2017 Budget
Upon motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Dorothy Scally to change the order of the Agenda and address recertification of the MURSD FY2017 Budget.

Voted: Unanimously approved

Jay presented new budget figures to the School Committee. The new figures do not affect the assessment to each town. The changes are due to health insurance increases and 5 additional out of district students.

Approval Budget Re-Certification

Motion #1  On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Leigh Martin to set the operational budget for the Mendon-Upton Regional School District for the 2016-2017 fiscal year at $34,386,277, that consists of general operations within the levy limit of $32,605,270, and debt service outside the levy limit of $1,781,007.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Motion #2 On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Leigh Martin to appropriate $13,006,501 from State Aid that consists of the following:

1. Chapter 70 Fund $12,253,186
2. Regional Transportation Reimbursement $831,934
3. Charter School Net Charge (offsetting) ($78,619)

VOTED: Unanimously approved

Motion #3 On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Tanna Jango to appropriate $545,000 from the following School District Accounts:

1. Excess & Deficiency (E&D) $250,000
2. Vision Sped Tuition $75,000
3. Transfer In from Revolving Accounts $190,000
4. Medicaid Reimbursement $25,000

VOTED: Unanimously approved

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Negotiations Subcommittee
Subcommittee met to review plans for Teachers and Superintendent contracts which are due next year. More will be discussed during the Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

K12 Insight Survey Results & Analysis
Superintendent Maruszczak presented a PowerPoint to the School Committee outlining the results of the K12 Insight Survey. Overall the district climate is positive, however, this valuable data needs to be used to improve customer service. During the presentation, Superintendent Maruszczak highlighted the results of the “highest and lowest ranking indicators”. A summary of the recurring themes include the following:

- Overall strong satisfaction with the schools, leadership, and efforts to communicate with families.
- The sense the schools are safe for kids, discipline is enforced fairly, and that bullying is not tolerated.
- There is general consensus from parents, staff, and students that standards/expectations are high, however, parents need further clarity on what the standards/expectations may be. The same communication/clarity is needed with regard to technology expectations.
• Communication is good; however, inconsistent from classroom to classroom. Parents are looking for greater consistency and quality of feedback on their student’s work. Students are also looking for additional quality feedback.
• Parents want additional time through parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child’s progress.
• There is a “perception gap” between middle school staff and students with regard to the notion of how challenging their work is (students thinking it is less challenging than their teachers do). This is an area that needs further exploration through additional student surveys, focus groups, and planning.

Future plan is to follow up with this survey and conduct another one in the Spring. Also, a newsletter will be produced highlighting the results and what the district is doing in responses.

Approval of District Action Plans for 2016-17
Superintendent Maruszczak presented the District Strategic Action Plans for 2016-17. This is the 4th year out of a 5 year plan. It included the following 5 Strategic Initiatives:

1. **Design and use common assessment at all levels**; Goal is by June 2017, all educators will formalize the use of common assessments including the collaborative development of common assessments, the calibration of scoring of common assessments and the use of common assessment data to improve teaching and learning. (7 Key Actions and 7 Benchmarks outlined)

2. **Align K-12 Curriculum and instructional materials to the Common Core State Standards using a common, clear template**; Goal is by July 2017, the Mendon-Upton Regional School District will formalize the development, review and revision of the curriculum to support teaching and learning. (6 Key Actions and 7 Benchmarks outlined)

3. **Support the inclusion model of special education delivery at all levels**; Goal is by June 2017, MURSD will increase and improve the quality of full inclusion opportunities for all students, grades K-12 (6 Key Actions and 9 Benchmarks outlined)

4. **Realign Programs and structures so they provide coherent instruction aligned with applicable standards while meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of students**; Goal is by June 2017, MURSD will raise the awareness of all stakeholders of student needs for social emotional learning (SEL), assess its programming/resources, and plan for research-based SEL programming (9 Key Actions and 8 Benchmarks outlined)

5. **Coordinate the district’s electronic communications so they are integrated and user-friendly. Provide timely and useful information about the district’s performance to all stakeholders**; Goal is MURSD will streamline communications to keep parents informed in an efficient, timely manner. The district will market itself by regularly highlighting best practices and achievements to all stakeholders (9 Key Actions and 5 Benchmarks outlined)

Approval of District Action Plans for 2016-17
MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the District Action Plans for 2016-17
VOTED: Unanimously approved

It was noted next Fall a new strategic committee will be formed to begin the process of developing a new plan.

Resolution against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools
Ballot question #2 on the November Election is to lift the cap on charter schools. All profession school organizations are strongly opposed to lifting the cap. If this question was to pass on the ballot, it could affect MURSD funding. Charter schools have unequal accountability than public schools. Superintendent Maruszczak expressed his opinion that it is bad to conduct education policy as a ballot questions.

Approval of Resolution against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools

MOTION: On a motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Dorothy Scally, to approve the resolution against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools. Resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students regardless of income, ability, need or English language proficiency are foundational to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, all of our students deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child, providing enrichment and addressing social and emotional needs in addition to core academic subjects; and

WHEREAS, local accountability for our public schools is necessary to ensure that schools are responsive to the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Mendon-Upton Regional School District is losing $78,619 to Commonwealth charter schools and public school districts across the state are losing more than $450 million this year (FY2017) alone — a loss of funds that is undermining the ability of districts to provide all students with the educational services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, Commonwealth charter schools are often approved over the objections of a majority of community residents and their elected officials and are not accountable to local elected officials once they are approved; and

WHEREAS, Commonwealth charter schools often fail to serve the same proportion of special needs students, low-income students and English language learners as the districts from which they receive students and often use high suspension rates to drive out students they don’t want to serve; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth charter school system is creating separate and unequal opportunities for success; and

WHEREAS, lifting the cap on charter schools would greatly worsen the problems listed above and lead to a costly and divisive two-track school system;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Mendon-Upton Regional School Committee opposes lifting the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

VOTED: Unanimously approved

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE
Thank you letter from the Upton Men’s Club for use of facility for fireworks.

Letter from John Fernandes regarding the final FY2017 State Budget. Superintendent Maruszczak will send a letter back thanking the Representative for his advocacy for public K-12 education.

IX. Other Matters Not Anticipated By The Committee Within 48 Hours Of The Posted Meeting – None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Approval of School Improvement Plans for 2016-17 – September 26

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: On motion of Phil DeZutter, seconded by Leigh Martin 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

VOTED: Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly A. McElreath