

Medway School Committee
Minutes
Medway, MA
Thursday, February 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

The School Committee of the Medway Public Schools held a meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., in the Presentation Room at Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway, MA. School Committee members in attendance included Ms. Dietrich, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Segarra, Ms. Nassiff and Dr. Fagerson. Also in attendance were Superintendent Armand Pires and Assistant Superintendent Gabrielle Abrams. The meeting was video-taped.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, limited attendance of members of the public will be permitted at this meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Ms. Dietrich called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

There is a need for the school committee to adjourn to executive session in accordance with M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21, exemption 3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, specifically with the Medway Federation of Teachers, Local 3645, AFT-AFL-CIO, Unit A (MFT), if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining of the public body.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the school committee adjourn to executive session, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21, exemption 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, specifically with the Medway Federation of Teachers, Local 3645, AFT-AFL-CIO, Unit A (MFT), if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining of the public body, with the understanding that the school committee will return to public session. Mr. Segarra and Ms. Nassiff will recuse themselves from the executive session. A roll call vote was taken and voting in favor were Dr. Fagerson, Ms. Nassiff, Mr. Segarra, Ms. Sullivan and the Chair, Ms. Dietrich.

The committee returned to open session at 6:10 p.m.

C. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Warrant
- b. Donations:
 - i. Ohioyle Prints for Spirit Wear \$28.75
 - ii. Medway Elementary PTO to Memorial School 4th Grade Tiles \$630.32
- c. Approval of 2021-2022 School Year School Choice Enrollment Capacity

Approval of 2021-2022 School Year Foreign Exchange Capacity
Approval of 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

- d. Minutes
 - i. February 4, 2021

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra, that the school committee approve the consent agenda, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 5-0.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

E. PRESENTATIONS

- a. Charting the Course - District Improvement Update and Budget Overview and Context Presentation
Superintendent Armand Pires and Assistant Superintendent Gabby Abrams presented to the committee, Charting the Course - District Improvement Update and Budget Overview and Context Presentation. Dr. Pires provided an overview and the agenda for the presentation. Dr. Pires stated that this budget is different from previous years due to the global pandemic. The need for academic and social emotional support is greater. Dr. Pires discussed the enrollment projection showing a downward trend, especially the middle school grades. Ms. Abrams stated that the improvement plan aligns with the Strategic Plan. Ms. Abrams discussed the impact of students being out of school since March 13, 2020. Ms. Abrams discussed the iReady tool and the goal of 80% of students at grade level by the end of the year. Mid year measurements show that they are trending in that direction. Goal #2, Social/Emotional Wellness, Ms. Abrams reported on the metrics for success as well as the proposed action steps. The impact on social and emotional wellness as a result of the school closures is addressed, assessed, and monitored to mitigate regression. Some action steps include the wrap around services available and Wellness Wednesdays.
Dr. Pires explained that as we approach March, building a budget for next September is always hard, and adding in the uniqueness of this past year makes it that much more difficult. Dr. Pires explained the two pathways for this budget, which includes level service with reductions. The reductions will not include teachers. Dr. Pires explained the budget priorities which included support of the continued pandemic response and teaching and learning. In support of the pandemic response, all K-5 students are fully in person 5 days per week, grades 6-12 are in a hybrid model with a small percent attending 80% of the week. Dr. Pires gave an overview of the anticipated needs going forward which included continued risk mitigation, staff and student testing and PPE, alternative instructional options and short term personnel amplifications to address targeted needs. Ms. Abrams went on to discuss priority 2, Teaching and Learning which focused on Literacy and Social Emotional Learning. Ms. Abrams discussed other priorities including Math and History.
The committee expressed their appreciation for the hard work that went into this presentation.

b. High School Program of Studies

John Murray, Principal, Medway High School presented the high school program of studies. Dr. Murray discussed the A-B course offering model and how it streamlines the offerings and eliminates singleton offerings. Dr. Murray discussed the changes made to the schedule due to the pandemic. The schedule went to 4 periods per day and longer class periods, this also resulted in smaller classes. Dr. Murray discussed the enrollment trend at the high school seeing a decrease in enrollment over the last few years. Dr. Murray went on to discuss the proposed 2021-2022 including continuing the alternate year course offerings which allows students to plan their courses for 4 years. The second recommendation will adjust mathematics core course content and sequence beginning with the Class of 2025. Dr. Murray discussed the adjustments within mathematics and then went on to discuss some new course offerings for the 2021-2022 school year. Some of those offerings include AP/H Environmental Science which builds on the current Environmental Science course already in place, Graphic Design/Digital Photography I and II and Video Tech 3 which will focus on Newswatch. Ms. Dietrich asked about the schedule for next year, and Dr. Murray responded that it is still a work in progress. Dr. Murray had polled the students, and most were happy with the fewer longer periods. The committee had a few questions for Dr. Murray and thanked him for the presentation.

F. ACTION ITEMS

- a. **For Consideration: Approve the rescheduling of the Class of 2021 Graduation date from June 13, 2021 to June 6, 2021.** On December 3, 2020, the school committee voted to approve the Class of 2021 Graduation date as June 13, 2021, after receiving additional information from DESE, the new date for Graduation will be June 6, 2021.

Dr. Murray stated that he had polled the senior class and 98% had responded that they would prefer an earlier graduation date. Dr. Murray also spoke with neighboring districts and found most going with the earlier date in June.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the school committee approve the rescheduling of the Class of 2021 Graduation date from June 13, 2021 to June 6, 2021, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 5-0.

- b. **For Consideration: Approve the rescheduling of the Early release day from March 10, 2021 to March 24, 2021.**

Dr. Pires stated that the change in the schedule was for a number of reasons including trying to plan a vaccine clinic for community members and staff.

It was moved by Ms Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra, that the school committee approve the rescheduling of the early release day from March 10, 2021 to March 24, 2021, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 5-0.

- c. **For Consideration: Approval of Athletic Fees** – In accordance with school committee policy (15) (JJD), each year the school committee must establish rates for athletic fees for students.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the school committee vote to not increase the Athletic Fees for the 2021-2022 school year, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 5-0.

- d. **For Consideration: Set Reduced Rate for Athletic Fees** – In accordance with School Committee Policy (15) (JJD), each year the school committee must establish reduced rates for athletic fees for students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The Superintendent is recommending a reduction of 80%, which is consistent with free and reduced lunch guidelines and past practice.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the school committee set the reduced rates for athletic fees for students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch at an 80% reduction from the full cost of these programs, for the 2021-2022 school year, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 5-0.

- e. **For Consideration: Set Early Childhood Tuition Rate** – The Superintendent is recommending an increase in the early childhood tuition rate for the 2021-2022 school year.
- The current rate for the half day program is **\$3,750** per year, the recommended rate for the 2021-2022 half day program is **\$3,825**.
 - The current rate for the full day program is **\$7,500** per year, the recommended rate for the 2021-2022 full day program is **\$7,650**.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the school committee set the early childhood program tuition rate for the 2021-2022 school year at \$3,825 per year for the half day program and \$7,650 per year for the full day program, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 5-0.

- f. **For Consideration: Approval of the Memorandum of Agreement by and between the Medway Federation of Teachers, Local 3645, American Federation of Teachers, AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO and the Medway School Committee to establish a 2021 Retirement Incentive Program, and to authorize the School Committee Chair to execute the MOA.**

Dr. Pires provided some context around this vote. If approved the district will offer an early retirement incentive to Unit A employees if they provide a notice to retire by March 31, 2021. A minimum of 8 members will need to sign up for this program.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the school committee approve the Memorandum of Agreement by and between the Medway Federation of Teachers Local 3645, American Federation of Teachers, AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO and the Medway School Committee to establish a 2021 Retirement Incentive Program, and to authorize the School Committee Chair to execute the MOA, as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion passed 4-0-1 with Ms. Nassiff abstaining.

- g. Other- *This time is being reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.*

G. DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

- a. First Reading: Summer Day Care Program Rate Increase
The Summer Day Care program is looking to increase the number of hours for the program as well as the weekly rate. More information will be provided at the next meeting.
- b. Mustang Statue Donation
Ms. Dietrich noted that last month the school committee voted to approve the fundraising for the Rearing Mustang Statue. Over the past few days she has seen Ms. Phipps post on social media pictures of students posing with their mascots in front of their schools. Ms. Phipps also noted in her social media posts that she thought about adding names of donors and their year of graduation to the plaque. Ms. Dietrich stated that this was a “light bulb” moment for her and that this statue is not about any one person or donor, but belongs to the community. Ms. Dietrich asked the committee for their thoughts on the school committee potentially authorizing a modest sum of money, not to exceed \$10,000, to be transferred from the School Choice revolving fund, to help finish the project. Ms. Dietrich suggested that the plaque be updated to include the year it was donated to the high school so it would belong to the community. Mr. Segarra stated that he thought it was an excellent idea, Ms. Nassiff asked if there was a timeline for raising the funds, as they have already raised quite a bit of money. Ms. Nassiff also stated that it is such a tight budget year, she is not sure if she is comfortable with giving money toward this project. Ms. Nassiff said it seems likely they will reach their goal. Dr. Pires noted that there is some level of engineering involved with the project which is not included in the costs. At this time we do not have a cost estimate for that. Dr. Pires agrees it is a tricky year, however, the budget is predicted to be in a surplus, and that could be used for this project. Ms. Sullivan stated that her initial reaction was similar to Mr. Segarra’s response, and also agrees with Ms. Nassiff that we haven’t seen the numbers yet. Maybe we table that until we get through the budget before we make that decision. Without numbers in front of me, it’s hard to say it’s a go. Ms. Dietrich asked if the committee would like her to speak again with Ms. Phipps. The committee did not provide a timeline for fundraising, but had asked for cost estimates and renderings. Ms. Nassiff stated that once the final numbers were available they could revisit it. Ms. Dietrich stated that the other issue was the plaque. There had been some conversations on social media about adding donors’ names to the plaque. Ms. Dietrich stated that we won’t be

adding donors' names to the plaque. This should not be in recognition of any one person or donor. Ms. Dietrich asked the committee for additional thinking about what the plaque should say. Ms. Dietrich stated that she has watched the fundraising efforts and noted that they have been appropriately focused on Medway HS, Medway Pride and Mustang Pride, school spirit not associated with an individual. Ms. Dietrich stated that her personal thinking had changed about what she would put on the plaque. If this is intended to be for the whole high school community, she doesn't know that she would personally associate that with an individual, as opposed to the year that we did it. Ms. Sullivan asked if a plaque was even needed, maybe do away with the plaque? Mr. Segarra said that when he thinks about people visiting the statue, if it's about Medway Pride, it's about them and their hard work and dedication. If you add something from the past on it, it diminishes the here and now of the statue. That's why he feels that contributing gives the community more pride. Ms. Sullivan agreed. Ms. Dietrich noted that everyone has been through so much, in the grand scheme of a \$28M budget, this is not a large expense. This could be a positive, and a sense of coming together. While Ms. Sullivan agreed, she would like to see more numbers. Ms. Dietrich went on to say that if the committee is changing their thinking about the plaque, at the time of the first presentation to school committee, Ms. Phipps and Ms. Kramer were asked if they would move forward without a name attached to the project, and at that time they said no. Ms. Dietrich asked if the committee wanted her to follow up with Ms. Phipps, as the committee has had an evolution in their thinking and see if she would still like to continue with the project. Ms. Nassiff reminded the committee about the naming policy and that the committee has stated that since the beginning of this project. Communicating about the intent so that we're all on the same page and nothing is misrepresented. All of this is based in other policies that we've spent a long time working out. Ms. Sullivan noted that at some point, the committee will have to accept the donation as to date, the committee has authorized the fundraising, and that any plaque would state, "Donated by Friends of Bill Phipps". Ms. Dietrich stated that as the committee has discussed tonight, fundraising can continue. When they brought it forward, they said they wouldn't proceed unless it had Bill Phipps' name attached to it. As this has unfolded, I have had an evolution in my thinking. Unifying centerpiece of the schools. Ms. Sullivan advised that Ms. Dietrich should go back and speak with Ms. Phipps. Ms. Dietrich asked if the committee should take a vote to amend the plaque and then reach out to Ms. Phipps to see if that changes whether they continue with fundraising. Ms. Nassiff asked if alternate wording could be provided. Ms. Dietrich stated that she would not be in favor of that, but would discuss it if other committee members are interested. Ms. Dietrich stated that the naming policy gives full discretion to the School Committee, it is 100% in the purview of the committee what the plaque says. Ms. Dietrich stated that her thinking has changed and is no longer in favor of having any one individual's name on the plaque. Once the committee makes a decision about the plaque, Ms. Phipps will be notified to see if that changes their plans. Ms. Sullivan polled the committee to see how they are feeling and stated that the committee does not need to be unanimous on this. Ms. Dietrich stated that she has thought about it a lot, especially in the context of this year. Could be a unifying moment, and if so, I'm not comfortable attaching any name. To Mr. Segarra's point, it diminishes

community feel if it has a name attached to it. Ms. Sullivan stated that fundraising has been more in that spirit vs. the individual, and she is comfortable with changing a plaque just to read installation date or not even having a plaque. Her thinking has also changed, and the project shouldn't be associated with any individual, more about spirit of community, can be a unifying centerpiece in the high school for the community to appreciate. Dr. Fagerson asked if it could be said in small print "Donated by friends of Bill Phipps"? Dr. Fagerson is thinking they're the ones that got the ball rolling. Ms. Sullivan stated that there's still a name associated with it, and that's the conflict I have. Ms. Dietrich responded that she has seen the fundraising inviting alumni past and present to donate for this symbol of Mustang Pride. People may not have any idea who Bill Phipps is, but they think the project is a good idea, they are making a donation for the project, not a person. So I don't think a plaque with a person's name on it makes sense based on the way the campaign has unfolded. Mr. Segarra stated that he has been a little uneasy about the project, naming things in Medway is always difficult. Lots of amazing people. Ms. Sullivan stated that the Memorial plaque is a way to honor specific individuals who have contributed to this community, Ms. Sullivan feels strongly that the Memorial plaque is the pathway for that recognition vs naming.

Ms. Dietrich entertained a motion to amend any plaque associated with the rearing mustang statue not to include any individual's name, and future language can be discussed when we have a rendering or at a future date. Will not have any individual's name associated with it.

It was moved by Ms. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Segarra that the committee amend the vote taken on January 22, 2021, on the fundraising of the mustang rearing statue to amend that any plaque would not be associated with any given name and any future plaque attached to the statue will be determined at a later date as to what it says on it. Motion passed 4-0-1 with Dr. Fagerson abstaining.

Next step is for Ms. Dietrich to follow up with Ms. Phipps that the school committee has amended plaque language, ask about her interest in continuing with fundraising, and also rendering and cost estimate.

c. COVID-19 Testing Update

Dr. Pires reported that this is the second week of student testing with 55% of the middle and high school students participating. The goal is to reach 70% participation as that helps with the data and the prevalence of the virus within the school community.

d. School Reopening Update and Next Steps

Dr. Pires reported that grades PK-5 are now back to in-person learning, 5 days a week at 6 ft. distance. There is not enough resources/staff to continue that past grade 5. The district is planning for full return for grades 6-12 and part of the planning includes transportation and how much separation is needed. Transportation is one of the barriers to a full return and another is

student testing. Currently student testing is at approximately 55% of grades 6-12, with a goal of 70% participation. There will be a webinar for parents to present the guidance to allow for a full return of students. Dr. Pires reported that the district was approved to use BinaxNow for any positive test results from the state pooled testing for students.

e. Superintendent's Salary Adjustment

Ms. Dietrich reported that leadership had not received increases at the beginning of the school year, this mid-year increase to the superintendent's salary aligns with that of the leadership team. It will take place starting on February 1 and will not be retroactive.

f. Other- *This time is being reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.*

H. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

- Liaison Reports

- Chairperson Update

Ms. Dietrich's update included the School Committee Chair Roundtable that she participates in with many local communities. These will continue on a monthly basis and Ms. Dietrich will update the committee each month following the meetings. Ms. Dietrich reported that the Policy Subcommittee has nearly completed their policy review and they will bring sections of the manual to the committee at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Dietrich noted that Mr. Segarra will be resigning from the committee following tonight's meeting. Ms. Dietrich thanked Mr. Segarra for his hard work and dedication to the district.

- Superintendent Update

Dr. Pires' update included a recent call with Commissioner Riley regarding planning for full-return of grades 6-12 as well as an update for staff and student COVID testing. Dr. Pires also updated the committee on the Budget advisory committee meeting held earlier this evening.

- Assistant Superintendent Update

Ms. Abrams' update included that she is getting clarity on the MCAS waiver. Ms. Abrams noted the Open House held for MaryJane White as she is retiring from Town Clerk.

- Committee Members' Update

Ms. Nassiff provided updates from MFPA and MEPTO as well an update regarding the group from Safer Teachers, Safer Schools, in which she has been working with, will send a letter to Senator Spilka, supporting vaccines for educators.

Dr. Fagerson attended the Athletic Advisory Committee meeting.

I. INFORMATION ITEMS AND COMMUNICATIONS

J. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- High School Program of Studies Vote
- FY22 Budget Presentation
- Middle School Program of Studies
- Middle School Time on Learning
- Public Hearing on FY22
- Announcement of Memorial Plaque
- Vote on FY22 Budget
- Special Education Program Overview
- Graduation Day 2022
- Discussion of Lunch Prices for 2021-2022

K. NEXT MEETINGS

- Public Forum on FY22 Budget, **March 4, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.**, via Webinar
- Regular Meeting, **March 4, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway
- Public Hearing on FY22 Budget, **March 18, 2021, 5:30 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway
- Regular Meeting, **March 18, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway
- Regular Meeting, **April 1, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway
- Regular Meeting, **April 15, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway
- Regular Meeting, **May 6, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway
- Town Meeting, **May 10, 2021, 7:00 p.m.**, 88 Summer Street, Medway High School
- Regular Meeting, **May 20, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**, in the presentation room, Medway Middle School, 45 Holliston Street, Medway

L. ADJOURN

At approximately 9:20 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Segarra, seconded by Ms. Sullivan to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Quinn

Ellen Quinn
Secretary to the School Committee

Approved: March 18, 2021