

MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Location: School Committee Room
January 20, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance

George Scobie

Jessie Harrington

Gail Holloway Joined via Zoom

Dottie Kauffman Joined via Zoom

Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield

Beth Chamberland

Cecelia Wirzbicki Joined via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER:

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:

Dr. Handfield took a minute to note that, politics aside, we saw history made today with Kamala Harris being sworn in as the first female vice president of the United States. It was a moment, he said, that he shared with his daughter that they will never forget. It was a day where we will always remember where we were and what we were doing.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES INTRODUCTION / REPORT

Aaron Zheng and Jasmyn Gates

Neither student was able to be in attendance.

MINUTES: 1/6/2021 for Approval

Mrs. Harrington made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 6th meeting; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

COVID Update

Dr. Handfield noted that faculty, staff and students reported back to school in person on Monday, January 11th. He visited every building on Tuesday, January 12th, and suffice it to say that the majority of faculty, staff and students he spent time with were happy to be back in school. As previously reported the AtmosAir units are now in all classrooms and operating

without issue. Mr. Fahey and his team will continue to maintain records of air quality in our buildings and classrooms as has been the case since September.

Dr. Handfield also noted that similar to what we saw the Monday after Thanksgiving, the Monday after New Year's (the week we were remote) we reported 33 cases between the period of December 22 - January 4. Between January 5 - 8 there were 13 additional cases, January 11-15 there were 20 cases, and for this week as of today, January 20, 2021 there are 6 cases.

Dr. Handfield noted that we are headed in the right direction. A Telegram article noted about a 2 ½ % downturn in cases.

He was asked what the status was regarding teacher vaccinations and he noted that the Department of Public Health is currently lobbying to move districts up the ladder. If DESE wants schools to stay open, we need the vaccine! They cannot talk out of both sides of their mouth. The Auburn Board of Health is in full support and sees the urgency of this in order to keep schools open.

The Chair thanked the Auburn leadership, Dr. Handfield and Dr Chamberland, for keeping us all safe through contact tracing and being completely transparent. It was comforting. He also noted that some children have not been in school now for nearly a year so thank you, thank you, thank you for getting our students in schools.

Dr. Chamberland noted that there had been a nursing presentation for the preschool staff, the invitation to attend being offered to the Central Office staff, this morning. We are all rowing in the same direction.

Dr. Handfield noted that the School Nurses have made 1600 entries tracking COVID. It is mind-numbing but a total team effort.

Request for BOH Input

Dr. Handfield reported that, as requested last week by Mrs. Kauffman, Dr. Chamberland did have a conversation with Darlene Coyle, the town's Director of Health and Inspectional Services, about offering comments and insight from a community health perspective regarding Town Manager Jacobson's statement regarding the elevated level of COVID Positive citizens in Auburn, and any potential concerns regarding the safe operation of our schools. Director Coyle stated she did not feel comfortable offering statements for the Board of Health as she is not their spokesperson. The School Committee is the governing board regarding whether or not schools

open or close or choose to allow co-curricular activities to move ahead or the usage of facilities (to name a few). Director Coyle consults with the schools to ensure we are doing things as safely as possible, given the guidance we continue to receive from MASS DPH and DESE. Based on this information, Dr. Handfield stated that he would leave it to the Committee to discuss how to move forward.

It was noted that once teachers are scheduled to receive the vaccine that it would make sense to not give it to entire school on the same day but rather stagger the shot, especially as the second vaccine is reportedly worse than first, but nothing terrible. However, it may mean a staff member is out for a day to deal with the symptoms.

AVC Annual Report and Financial Statements

For information purposes, Dr. Handfield presented the Assabet Valley Collaborative's FY 2020 Annual Report and approved Financial Statements. These two documents do not need a vote to approve from the members, but as a member district it is required that they are shared with the Committee and accepted by them.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to accept AVC's FY 20 Annual Report and Approved Financial Statements. Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

FY '22 Draft Budget

Dr. Handfield stated that as discussed at the January 6th meeting, our draft budget for FY'22 in the amount of \$27,988,540.45 was sent forth to the Town Administration. As previously stated, this represents a 2.89% increase over the approved amount at Fall Town Meeting last October and a 0.99% increase over the approved amount at Spring Town Meeting last June. With the release of the most recent stimulus monies from Washington, funds will be coming to school districts soon. When there is a clearer picture of what that looks like Dr. Handfield will bring it forward to the Committee for discussion.

NEW BUSINESS:

COVID Pool Testing Initiative

Dr. Handfield shared that as was announced last week by Governor Baker, the state is expanding its pool testing initiative. There are many considerations for individual districts to contemplate before deciding whether or not to engage in this initiative. Districts were asked to indicate preliminary interest by January 18th. We have placed APS on this list, but our considerations include: cost (the first six weeks are free, but then it is on us at a significant cost of \$5 per test or \$10,000 a week), logistics (not certain current school personnel could handle this

task), practicality (time lost out of the school day to participate), protocols (if a student in a pool of 20 comes up positive, the whole cohort is out until tested again), and benefit (school districts doing this do not have the ZippSlip or contact tracing that APS does. Also would this encourage "drug and drop?" and it is all in or all out.

TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:

Dr. Chamberland shared some professional development opportunities that are being made available for staff based on the information received from the recent staff surveys:

Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth

We have initiated membership in the Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth, Inc. to provide our staff with high quality professional development. Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth, Inc. is a non-profit 501.c (3) organization that provides training, fosters collaboration, and develops programming to increase the health and safety of students. MPY is committed to bringing cutting-edge information and high quality trainings to our constituents and endeavors to provide solution-oriented, community-based, multi-disciplinary approaches to reducing and ideally eliminating risky behaviors for youth. Professional Development covers a wide range of topics including conversations about race, substance abuse, executive functioning, cultural proficiency, trauma, mindfulness, anxiety and many others. We are excited to offer this to our staff.

Professional Development

In an effort to support both the continued growth of our staff along with providing them with the resources needed for recertification, we will also be offering staff options for professional development in the areas of Universal Design for Learning(UDL) and supporting English Language Learners in the classroom. These will be primarily self paced to provide staff with flexibility. Support staff will be provided with training related to technology use in the classroom.

High School Senior Internship in Education Project

The Department's Connecting Activities initiative and the Commonwealth Corporation's YouthWorks program have developed the High School Senior Internship Education Project, an educator internship project for spring 2021 that is open to high school seniors in good academic standing in **all districts**. Districts will be able to place high school seniors in paid education internships within their district. The internships can include tutoring, supervising students at lunch or recess, and supporting classroom teachers. Funding for this project is provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We have 9 seniors from Auburn High School who are potential candidates for this program and we await notification on how many will be funded. The goals of this project are:

- To offer high school seniors the opportunity to complete a paid work-based learning education internship working in grades K-8.
- To accelerate the growth of the teacher pipeline in MA with a particular focus on increasing racial/ethnic diversity.
- To improve educational outcomes for underserved students, particular younger learners, due to the pandemic.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:

Year to Date Budget Report as of January 15, 2020

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report as of January 15, 2021.

Budget Transfers

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided budget transfers between the same series for the Committee's information as well as transfers between different series requiring a vote of approval from them.

Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the transfers between the series as presented. Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

POLICIES:

Dr. Handfield shared that there were three policies for the Committee's review and approval:

BB, School Committee Legal Status for review and to be added/1st Reading

BDA, School Committee Organizational Meeting for review and to be added/1st Reading

IHBF, Homebound Instruction, with Tracking Changes for review and update/1st Reading

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve the above-mentioned policies, all on first reading; Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Adjournment:

At 7:29 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, Dr. McCrillis made a motion to adjourn for the evening; Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Allaine Zautner

Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

Minutes; Update on Flu Vaccine for Students; ACV Financials and Annual Report; Pooled Testing Initiative for K-12 Schools, 1-12-21 PPT; Year to Date Budget Report; Transfers; Policies: BB, BDA and IHBF