

MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

ZOOM: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72927635094?pwd=MStJUlhaR2FFOHZoaFBxZGRtVnBEQT09>

JULY 8, 2020, 2:00 p.m.

In attendance:

George Scobie
Jessie Harrington
Gail Holloway
Dottie Kauffman
Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield
Beth Chamberland
Cecelia Wirzbicki

CALL TO ORDER:

At 2:03 p.m., Mr. Scobie called the meeting to order.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS: None

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:

Dr. Handfield shared that the Auburn community tragically lost rising sixth grader Gracie Bulger on Monday, June 29th. He noted that Gracie was a bright and vibrant young lady, who always had the warmest smile on her face. She leaves behind her parents, Thomas and Athena Bulger; her loving siblings, Quinn T. and Zoey A. Bulger; her Nana and Papa, Ken and Lisa Valerio of Auburn and her Grammy, Jean Bulger of Rutland; a village of aunts and uncles including, Kenny Valerio of Auburn, Cherilyn Bulger and Corinne Bulger, both of Sunderland; a cousin, Logan Crovello of Rutland; and several extended family members and many friends. She was predeceased by her grandfather, Terry Bulger who died in 2014. Dr. Handfield noted that Gracie's family wished to thank the Auburn Public Schools for giving Gracie every opportunity and loving and caring for her as if she was their own. Dr. Handfield asked that the meeting pause to honor Gracie and send comforting thoughts to her family.

MINUTES:

6/23/2020 for Approval

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 23rd meeting; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Roll Call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Upcoming School Committee Meetings in July and August

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, July 22nd at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Thereafter, meetings will be scheduled weekly on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. until further notice.

Welcome

Dr. Handfield one last time publicly thanked Dr. Brunelle for her 12 years of service as Superintendent, and 5 years as Principal of Bryn Mawr. He stated she was a leader, mentor, colleague, and friend to him, as well as many within the Auburn Community, and she will be missed.

Transition

Dr. Handfield reported that is has been a smooth transition for him into West Street. He thanked the Committee and the community for the warm welcome. Under the current circumstances presented by COVID, he noted that he had sent out two introductory videos to the teachers and staff, as well as the Auburn community. He will also be attending the New Superintendents Induction Program (NSIP) provided by MASS throughout the year and the Paul J. Andrews Summer Executive Institute also organized by MASS each year for the 277 superintendents throughout the state. Both programs begin this month and are being held virtually.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

MASC Resolutions

Dr. Handfield, at Dr. Brunelle's request, provided the Committee with a copy of the letters sent on their behalf regarding MASC resolutions seeking additional financial support to assist us in educating our students during these most unusual times.

Return to School Team (RTS)

Dr. Handfield reported that the RTS team held meeting number three on Monday, June 29th. The purpose of this meeting had been to review the Commissioner's initial RTS guidance for the fall and to review for a final time the surveys that were sent to families and staff on July 3rd. He noted that Dr. Chamberland would discuss the surveys in more depth during her report.

Dr. Handfield provided an overview of the work of the RTS for everyone, noting that they had been asked by DESE to complete three plans for the fall: (a) Full return with precautions, (b) a hybrid approach with precautions, and (c) a remote plan where students are at home. The Commissioner has asked right now that we complete a "pressure test" regarding how many students we can fit in our classrooms with 3ft and 6ft of social distancing. He noted that they are working on that right now. He noted that the Commissioner desires as many students back into school on a full time or part time basis as possible. This information will go into a written plan every school district must file with DESE in August that addresses how we will deliver each of the aforementioned options.

Dr. Handfield reported that transportation guidance, more guidance on PE/Athletics/Music, and other co-curricular activities, will be coming in the next week or two. He noted that because of the July 15th deadline for filing federal and state taxes this year, the District may not see final numbers until the first or second week in August. Lastly, he reminded everyone that this is a fluid situation changing literally every day. Daily reports on COVID are being monitored and even though we may start in one fashion in the fall, we could be quickly asked to pivot to one of our other plans. He stated that, unfortunately, this is not as concrete as any of us would like, but it is the best information we have at the moment. He noted that he would continue to apprise both the Committee members and the community as developments occur.

TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:

Student Opportunity Act

Dr. Chamberland reported that with the passage of the [Student Opportunity Act \(SOA\)](#) (Chapter 132 of the Acts of 2019), Auburn qualified for \$ 419,096 to be utilized to support subgroups that have underperformed in the past. Commissioner Riley noted the progress our state has made over the past decade in overall student achievement but noted that persistent opportunity and achievement gaps remain for our students of color, low-income students, English learners, and students with disabilities. Closing these gaps is our collective work for the next decade, and the SOA will fuel our efforts to ensure all students achieve at high levels and are prepared for success after high school.

She noted that the process for submitting the required plan to DESE included several steps and, as a district, we need to analyze current student performance data along with best practices and the professional development needs of our staff. This process led us to focus these funds and our energies on our students with special needs. Additionally, feedback from families and staff was utilized to formulate the structure of this plan. Dr. Chamberland included a copy of the plan in the meeting packet and sought the Committee's approval of the plan allowing the District to submit the plan to DESE.

Mrs. Kaufmann made a motion to submit Auburn's Student Opportunity Act plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Roll Call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes

Summer School

Dr. Chamberland reported that summer school began, face to face, for 8 of our special needs students at AMS on July 8th. She noted that Mrs. Reidy, the Director of Pupil Services, had done an enormous amount of planning and collaboration with the Auburn Board of Health to ensure the safety of both students and staff. This programming came to be based on the strong recommendation of the DESE as well as the needs of our students. She noted an additional 50 students are being supported remotely. Title One Summer School will be held remotely and will begin on July 13th with approximately 150 students receiving support. She noted that Mrs. Reidy had worked diligently to make sure this was done in compliance with all the regulations.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:

Omnibus Information

The Business Manager provided Omnibus Transfer #6, dated June 30, 2020 for the Committee's information. There were no questions.

CARES Act Update

Mrs. Wirzbicki reported that the Town of Auburn was awarded funding through the CARES Act to help offset costs related to the COVID19 Pandemic and that the money received by the Municipality was available to support the School Department as well. She reported that there were two rounds announced in order to submit eligible expenses for reimbursement. The first round was for any expenses incurred from March to May 26, 2020. The School Department submitted an itemized listing of expenses incurred in relation to COVID in the amount of \$48,727.38 and the School Lunch Program was able to submit an itemized listing of expenses in the amount of \$19,132.91. These two amounts were submitted with the

Town's expenses as part of the first round and Mrs. Wirzbicki stated that she was happy to report that as of June 30th both the School Department and the School Lunch Program were reimbursed for these expenses. She noted there will be another round to submit additional expenses through December 30, 2020, but the due date for submission has not yet been announced. She noted that both the School Department and School Lunch program will continue to track expenses and work with the Town and their consultant to claim for eligible reimbursements moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to discuss, at 2:37 p.m. Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to adjourn; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Roll Call vote: Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes

Respectfully submitted,



Ailaine Zautner
Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

- Minutes from 6/23/2020
- MASC Resolutions Letters
- Student Opportunity Act Plan
- Omnibus Transfers #6