

**MINUTES**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Location: School Committee Room**  
**November 10, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

**In attendance:**

George Scobie  
Jessie Harrington  
Gail Holloway  
Dottie Kauffman  
Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield  
Beth Chamberland  
Cecelia Wirzbicki

**CALL TO ORDER:**

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Scobie called the meeting to order and asked if anyone else was taping the meeting; there being none, he asked that everyone join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** None

**SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:** None

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES INTRODUCTION / REPORT**

**Aaron Zheng and Jasmyn Gates:** Zoom connection did not work/allow access to the students.

**MINUTES: 10/27/2020 for Approval**

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve the minutes; Mrs. Holloway seconded and the motion was approved 4-0 with Mrs. Kauffman abstaining.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**COVID Update**

Dr. Handfield reported that we continue to deal with COVID positive cases as they present in the schools. Case counts are averaging slightly less than 1 per week since September and we are watching those numbers carefully as numbers rise across the state. He shared a graphic from the state dashboard in the members' packets which demonstrated new cases are even across all age groups reminding us COVID does not discriminate. He noted that we appreciated the Governor's actions as detailed in Executive Order 53 to keep awareness of COVID front and center in the minds of

students, families and citizens in the Commonwealth as we move into the winter season.

### **COVID Reporting**

Dr. Handfield noted that as stated in an email to the school community two weeks ago, he addressed concerns regarding the potential social-emotional impact on staff, students, and families when a community notification goes out regarding a Positive Covid case. After thinking about our process of notification, he has decided to continue to notify the entire school community of COVID Positive cases once brought to our attention. He feels it is the right thing to do. However, we are reviewing the details placed in notifications to ensure we are protecting the privacy of COVID Positive community members to the extent that we can.

### **October Air Quality Report**

Dr. Handfield noted that, as the Committee is aware, we have been measuring air quality in all of our buildings. In September, we had a third party contractor take baseline readings without buildings being occupied. In October, we had the same contractor back to take readings with buildings occupied. Dr. Handfield provided an update for the members, noting that the air quality in our buildings continues to be acceptable and within ranges deemed safe. A report is due by November 12th and will be shared at the next meeting.

We are continuing our on-going maintenance plans for all HVAC units in all buildings as was discussed during previous meetings and we are still awaiting receipt of our Atmos Air units.

### **Budget Presentations (12/9/20)**

Dr. Handfield took a moment to thank members of Town Meeting, Town Boards, and Town Administration for their support of the School Department's warrant articles that successfully passed on October 27th. Further, he noted that we also had a reconsideration of the FY '21 school budget. He noted, again, that if anyone was interested in a cliff notes version of the School Department's FY'21 budget, they are welcome to visit our website where they will find a quick presentation posted there.

Dr. Handfield shared that budget presentations have been scheduled for December 9th, with each group presenting their executive summaries focusing on their anticipated accomplishments this year and next year. There are no requests for new personnel in FY'22. Likewise, there will be no dramatic increases in supply lines for FY '22. With a lean budget year projected our sights are set on maintaining our FY'21 staffing levels. In consideration of doing this in one evening, Dr. Handfield asked that we begin our meeting on 12/9/20 at 6:00 p.m. The Committee members concurred.

### **Therapy Dog joins AMS**

Dr. Handfield shared that with an approved policy in place (as of February 2020); the use of therapy dogs in the Auburn Public Schools is allowed. He was happy to report that Mrs. Kim Sicurella, and her dog Ella, completed their training a couple of weeks ago. We are pleased to introduce Ella to the school community and excited to see the impact she has on members of the middle school community in need of social-emotional support.

### **Donation from R.H. White**

Dr. Handfield shared that R.H. White graciously donated boxes of school supplies for our students and it was his recommendation that the Committee accept them with gratitude, noting that we appreciate their generosity during this difficult time.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to accept the boxes of school supplies from R.H. White with gratitude; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Superintendent's Entry Plan**

Dr. Handfield notified the members that although he is not new to the District, he is new to the position of Superintendent and therefore in this new position has to have an entry plan. Included in the packet was an explanation of his intended actions as he evaluates the School District, makes some assessments and potential recommendations to move the District forward based on data. There are three parts to Dr. Handfield's entry plan and here he specifically speaks to Phase I and lays out his plans for Phase II and Phase III over the course of the school year.

This Phase I outlines what actions Dr. Handfield will be taking as Superintendent to assemble qualitative and quantitative information over the next 3-5 months and will help him in creating Phase II of the Entry Plan. Phase II will consist of a written report of his findings and will be reviewed with the school community during March/April 2021. This report will then be compared with the District's existing Strategic Plan to assess what changes, if any, will be suggested. Phase III of the EP will be a report of any noteworthy findings and recommended revisions to the District's current Strategic Plan and it is expected that Phase III will be shared with the school community in June 2021.

He outlined the stakeholders he will be meeting with in Phase I and be asking the following three questions of:

1. What do you feel the APS does well?
2. What areas of the APS might need improvement? And,
3. What do you feel could advance the successes of teachers and students in the APS?

## **TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:**

### **ZippSlip & Attendance**

Dr. Chamberland shared that she was pleased to report that ZippSlip completion by both staff and families is excellent. Schools have few students to follow up with each day and the data is accessed each morning by school administration and nurses to ensure we are closely monitoring the health of our staff and students. Dr. Chamberland shared that, in concert with the monitoring of ZippSlip, we monitor daily attendance data to ensure students are accessing instruction whenever possible. Each school continues to work to create a system that allows a student who may need to stay home due to illness or testing requirements, to still access daily learning from the classroom. In many cases this is being done through synchronous learning opportunities.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Dr. Chamberland shared that teachers and students are settling in to the new schedule and the new modality for teaching and learning. On October 27th, parent/teacher conferences were held at all levels and feedback was positive. Families appreciated the connection and the opportunity to discuss their child with the teacher. November 3rd was our first scheduled professional development day. Each school created opportunities for teachers to share best practices with one another. Teachers utilized the majority of the day for planning and preparation both independently and with their grade level or department team members.

Dr. Chamberland noted that in the upcoming weeks, all elementary students will complete some initial assessments to more specifically determine learning needs. At Swanson Road, iReady will be used to assess student needs and strengths in phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. At the primary level, teachers will use DIBELS testing as they have done in the past while adding a component that also measures reading comprehension. At AMS and AHS, assessments are taking place in a targeted but formative manner, to better support students in real time. Dr. Chamberland stated that it is a whole new world, however, it is feeling a little more normal as time goes on.

## **BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:**

### **Year to Date Budget Report as of November 5, 2020**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report.

### **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. Mrs. Wirzbicki noted that she and Dr. Handfield meet regularly and are taking a very conservative approach.

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

**Adjournment:**

At 7:20 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to adjourn for the evening; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Ailaine Zautner

Recording Secretary

**Referenced Documents:**

Minutes from 10/27/2020

COVID Graphic

COVID Positive Cases Email 10-26-2020

Thank you letter to RH White

Introduction and Explanation of Superintendent's Entry Plan

COVID Symptom Data

Year to Date Budget Report

Budget Transfers