

MINUTES

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: 5 West Street, School Committee Room

November 17, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Absent

George Scobie

Jessie Harrington

Gail Holloway

Dottie Kauffman

Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield

Beth Chamberland

Cecelia Wirzbicki

Karen Ballway

Colin Meyers

Alex Morrow

Andrew Smith - parent of Claire Smith AMS

Claire Smith - AMS student

Alex & Erika Briesasher - son Tobin at AMS

Jacqueline Bixby - son Nathaniel at AMS

Nathaniel Bixby - AMS student

Katie Peschiera - parent

Debrah Dorval - parent

Mara Heller - parent

Eddie Doku - parent

April Campbell - parent

Maryellen Frenell - grandmother of AMS student

Gillian Kies - parent

Jacob Kies - AMS student

Chris Vinan - parent

Marybeth Lensele - parent

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Scobie called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Colin Meyers, middle school band teacher, spoke in support of expanding the Strings program to the Middle School and hiring an additional teacher.

Alex Morrow, SWIS Music teacher, spoke in support of expanding the Strings program and hiring an additional teacher.

Andrew Smith, parent of Claire Smith AMS, spoke in support of expanding the Strings program.

Claire Smith, AMS student, stated she has had great success and enjoyed her time in the Strings program and is hopeful it will continue. She was sad when she was not able to continue.

Erika Briesasher, parent of Tobin, a student at AMS, stated her son wanted to continue Strings in MS, but it is not offered. He has switched to chorus but is hopeful the program will expand and it will be offered.

Jacqueline Bixby, parent of MS and SWIS students, in support of the expansion of the Strings program.

Nathaniel Bixby AMS student, stated he participated in Stings at SWIS, was sad he could not continue at the MS. He is hopeful the program will expand.

Katie Peschiera, parent of 4 students in the district, stated she is in full support of the Strings program expanding as her children have participated and would like to continue.

Debrah Dorval, parent of 2 MS students. In support of the Strings program expanding.

Eddie Doku, parent of a MS student that was very happy to be part of the Strings program and is in full support of the expansion.

April Campbell, parent of students in the district, in full support of the Strings program expansion. Spoke of how the arts promote confidence.

Gillian Kies, parent, spoke of the emotional well being of students in fine arts. She is in full support of the expansion.

Jacob Kies, AMS student, participated in Strings program, disappointed he was not able to continue. He hopes that it can be expanded.

Chris Vinan, parent of 2 children, in support of the expansion.

Marybeth Lensel, parent of a student at SWIS, in support of the expansion.

Dr. Handfield thanked the parents and students for their comments & support. With the preparation of the FY 23 budget, he will look at the possibility of hiring an additional teacher.

George Scobie thanked the parents and students, and as a musician himself, he understands the importance of programs like this. He also stated that the board has supported the arts and sports equally. Mr. Scobie asked Dr. Handfield if there had been a formal conversation regarding the expansion of the Strings program, Dr. Handfield stated that no, there has not been a formal conversation. Mr. Scobie stated to the citizens that it is customary, especially at this time of year during budget preparation, that the conversation start there.

Meghan McCrillis thanked all who spoke and stated she would like more information regarding the expansion of the program. She stated it is her belief music is beneficial to all.

All members of the committee thanked the citizens for their participation and stated the committee will continue to support all students.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:

Dr. Handfield praised the efforts of 3 staff members and informed the committee of the funds they have acquired.

In response to an application by Sarah Lemovitz, the Auburn Integrated Preschool has been chosen to participate in America's Tooth Fairy Program. Each year, Mrs. Lemovitz teaches all children a dental health lesson and utilizes grant funds to purchase materials. This year, Americastoothfairy.org will be sending us 144 complimentary toothbrushes and teaching items. Preschool students will learn about dental health in February for National Dental Health Month.

Christine Robbins, STEM teacher at Auburn Middle School was awarded 3 grants this school year- A Mass Agricultural Grant focused on pickling and canning in the classroom, ASM Materials Foundations Grant for a 'Wacky Shoes Project' and Implement Engineering Grant called "What's your technology project". The grants provide a total of \$1,200 to benefit the students at Auburn Middle School.

Karin Sjogren, nurse at Auburn Middle School, received an \$800 grant from the David Brodeur Foundation to create and outfit a calming space for kids to relax and process their emotions.

Minutes - 10/20/21

Motion made to approve 10/20/21 school committee meeting minutes, Dottie Kauffman made motion to accept, seconded by Gail Holloway, unanimously approved.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT: Ally McGill joined us through Zoom

Ally stated Trimester 1 ends on December 1st, students are working hard to finalize grades. Fall sports have come to a close. AGVS & ABVS made it to the playoffs. Football ended their season with their last home game Thursday 11/11. They will play an Away Game vs. Leicester on Thanksgiving 11/25. Field Hockey, Golf, & Cross Country season have ended. The Class of 2023 is hosting a community leaf rake 11/20 & 11/21. STUCO is hosting a teacher appreciation breakfast.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

COVID Update

Information

Dr. Handfield provided an update on COVID cases and other pertinent details since our last meeting. Starting to see an increase in cases, Test and Stay is going very well and helping to keep students in school.

State Mask Extension

Information

Commissioner Riley announced the state's mask extension will continue through January 15, 2022. Based on data the state is evaluating, that could be extended again or school districts could be given local control authority regarding masking policies. Stay tuned.

NEW BUSINESS:

Cyber Safety, Cyber Bullying Prevention, Protecting Your Digital FootPrint - ZOOM Presentation by the Worcester District Attorney's Office

Dr. Handfield informed the committee that he was pleased to report that District Attorney Earley's office has delivered / will be delivering programs on cyber safety, cyber bullying, and protecting your digital footprint to SWIS, AMS, and AHS via Zoom. This is part of our continued work with trying to help our students be safe in these venues, especially in light of COVID and

the different dysregulated behaviors we are seeing in schools as students are spending more and more time online.

Budget Update

Dr. Handfield stated the leadership team has started reviewing the FY '23 budget. We will continue to meet about that in preparation for our budget meeting in mid-December. The budget forecast is not great, still in the COVID bubble.

TEACHING AND LEARNING REPORT:

Dr. Chamberland stated she will once again be sharing a monthly newsletter with staff called "[Words from West](#)". The purpose of this newsletter is to share professional development offerings related to special education and English language learners to assist staff in gathering the professional development points they regularly need for recertification. The newsletter will also share best practices to support the social emotional needs of students and the application of strategies from Universal Design for Learning.

Current Vaccination Reporting

Auburn Public School Vaccination Rates		
	STAFF	STUDENTS
Auburn Integrated Preschool	100%	n/a
Bryn Mawr School	83%	n/a
Pakachoag Elementary School	94%	n/a
Swanson Road Intermediate School	84%	n/a
Auburn Middle School	88%	32%
Auburn High School	80%	56%

** 191 students, ages 5-11 have expressed interest in participating in a COVID 19 vaccination clinic being organized in collaboration with the Auburn Board of Health.

Test and Stay

Information

Dr. Chamberland stated that since October 13th, our Test and Stay program has conducted 825 BiNaxNOW tests resulting in close to 1000 negative tests and 3 positive tests. This programming has allowed us to keep students and staff in school and we have had many families express their appreciation for the programming.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:

FY22 Grant Awards as of November 4, 2021**Action**

Mrs. Wirzbicki presented a list of Grants received for the FY22 school year. The Town requires approval of all grants received by the School Department for the current school year.

Recommended Motion: ... to approve the listing of FY22 Grants as awarded to the Auburn School Department as of November 4, 2021 for the FY22 school year.

Gail Holloway made a motion to approve the motion, Meghan McCrillis seconded, unanimously approved.

Year to Date Budget Report as of November 4, 2021**Information**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report for perusal.

Budget Transfers as of November 4, 2021**Action**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided budget transfers between the same series, as well as transfers between different series requiring approval.

Recommended Motion:

To approve the Budget Transfers between the series as presented by the Business Manager.

Jessie Harrington made a motion to approve, Gail Holloway seconded, unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:58 p.m. the meeting was adjourned. Mr. Scobie made a motion to adjourn for the evening; Dottie Kauffman & Gail Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Williams

Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

APS Vaccination Rates

Grant Awards

Year to Date Budget Report

Budget Transfers