

**MINUTES**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Location: 5 West Street, School Committee Room**

**August 23, 2023 6:00 p.m.**

**In Attendance:**

**Absent**

**Zoom**

Jessie Harrington

Meghan McCrillis

Brooke Wrenn

Samantha Rapahel

Stef Parker

Beth Chamberland, Superintendent

Cecelia Wirzbicki

Dan Delongchamp

Greg Desto

Susan Lopez

Jennifer Stanick

Brooke Beverly

Karen Ballway - AEA Vice President

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Jessie Harrington called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

Meghan McCrillis read out loud the Auburn Public School Vision & Commitment.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** None

**SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:**

Beth Chamberland: I would like to thank all of the Community Members who participated in Read Around the Town this summer. This program, organized by Julie Benoit, Reading Specialist at Pakachoag and Dawn Fenuccio, Reading Specialist at Bryn Mawr encouraged our students to visit a variety of town locations(see the flier in your packet), hear a story and to meet someone new. I would like to recognize those community members who participated. These include Fire Chief Coleman, SRO Office Jon O'Brien, Town Librarian, Dr. Collins, Principal Jenn Stanick from Pakachoag, Principal Brooke Beverly from Bryn Mawr School and I also had a small group of students come here to Central Office. Thank you to Julie and Dawn for organizing this amazing offering for families.

**Minutes:** 6/21/23

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to accept the minutes from June 21, 2023.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to accept the minutes from June 21, 2023. Samantha Raphael seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:** None**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:****Unfinished Business:****School Committee Meeting Dates:**

Beth Chamberland: In preparation for the 2024-2025 budget process, I am recommending that we add a School Committee meeting to November 29, 2023, eliminate the meeting on December 6, 2023, add a meeting on December 13, 2023 and eliminate the meeting on December 20, 2023. This will contribute to a more effective budget timeline and eliminate the need for a meeting right before the school break.

Jessie Harrington made a motion to eliminate December 6, 2023 and December 20, 2023 from the School Committee Meeting schedule and add meetings on November 29, 2023 and December 13, 2023.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to eliminate December 6, 2023 and December 20, 2023 from the School Committee Meeting schedule and add meetings on November 29, 2023 and December 13, 2023. Samantha Raphael seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

## **New Business**

### **Student Attendance**

Beth Chamberland: Last year, DESE changed the acceptable attendance rate from 95% to 90%. In essence, this allows students to have up to 18 absences over the course of a school year, up from 9 previously. The Auburn Public Schools believes that student attendance is a key indicator of student success. We proposed that the Auburn Public Schools allow 15 absences over the course of one school year. Additionally, we have developed a communication cycle, check points (mid trimester and end of trimester) for any students who may exceed the 15 days over the course of a school year. This includes reviewing attendance records, contacting parents, getting guidance counselors involved, and having principals meeting with families. We will work with students and families to support them to ensure students are attending school.

Samantha Raphael: DESE is saying students can miss up to 10% of the school year and we are saying 8.3%. We are being a bit more rigid which is smart.

Beth Chamberland: I think the support we are building is going to be very helpful.

Jessie Harrington: And this would be reflected in the handbooks?

Beth Chamberland: Yes.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to revise the number of absences from 9 to 15 and to incorporate this requirement into the system for tracking absenteeism, notifying families and working with families to improve student attendance.

Samantha Raphael made a motion to revise the number of absences from 9 to 15 and to incorporate this requirement into the system for tracking absenteeism, notifying families and working with families to improve student attendance. Brooke Wrenn second the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **School Improvement Plans**

Beth Chamberland: Included in your packet you will find the School Improvement Plans for Bryn Mawr Elementary School, Pakachoag Elementary School, Swanson Road Intermediate School, Auburn Middle School and Auburn High School. As you will see, each of the plans aligns to the APS Strategic Plan. The plans are intended for implementation during the 2023-2024 school year. The principals are here and they are happy to answer any questions if you have them.

Brooke Wrenn thanked the principals for their hard work on the plans.

Jessie Harrington agreed with Brooke, takes a lot of work and preparation. They look good and excited for the upcoming year. Special shoutout to Mr. Desto for his examples. One question for Mr. Delongchamp regarding the ambassador program: will it begin in 2025?

Dan Delongchamp: The program is going on, you are talking about the shadowing program that will start in 2025.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to accept the 2023-2024 School Improvement plans for each school as presented.

Brooke Wrenn made a motion to accept the 2023-2024 School Improvement plans for each school as presented. Stef Parker seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Handbook Updates**

Beth Chamberland: Included in your packet you will find the Handbook updates for Bryn Mawr Elementary School, Pakachoag Elementary School, Swanson Road Intermediate School, Auburn Middle School, Auburn High School and The Auburn Integrated Preschool. As requested by the School Committee last spring, principals are providing a more comprehensive explanation of any significant handbook changes showing the differences from the last iteration. There will be some adjustments based on the attendance vote just taken. As well as some updates related to discipline.

Samantha Rapahel: I have a question for Mrs. Stanick and Ms. Beverly, on page 15 under attendance, it says attendance letters will be sent home to alert parents of absences. Will that go home to every family or just the families with excessive absences?

Jennife Stanick: Per the new attendance policy, it would only be the families that reach that number.

Jessie Harrington: Excellent improvements, the wording is great. Regarding the clothing policy, do you have clothing to provide to students if needed?

Jennifer Stanick: Yes, typically the nurse has clothes to offer. We do encourage families to have a change of clothing if needed.

Meghan McCrillis: Regarding K-5 I am concerned with getting rid of step up day within the handbook. Many parents I have spoken with really like the idea of step-up day, seeing the classroom and meeting the teacher. I understand the difficulty of step-up day from a teacher and an administrative level, but I was hoping we could use this year to gather more data regarding what parents and teachers like as well as potential union issues. And go forward from there potentially meeting during those first 2 PD days.

Brooke Beverly: That is a similar plan to what we have right now. But I agree getting input from all stakeholders is important.

Jennifer Stanick: This Particular year in June the children did not, it was more of a shift in thought as students think they will be in that particular room with that particular teacher. So we had them meet the entire grade level because there are changes that have to happen. So we removed the step-up word and went with transition to improve the process.

Meghan McCrillis: I think that is a great idea. I just want to make sure there is a plan to ensure this is happening in grades K-5. That all children have the opportunity to meet their teacher before we take that terminology out.

Samnatha Raphael: I think step-up day is unique to Auburn and we should stick with it.

Beth Chamberland: Would it be a reasonable middle of the ground if it was a Step-up day/Transitional Planning so we incorporate both this year and we survey families.

Stef Parker asked what was done this year and what it was called.

Brooke Beverly said it was getting to know the next grade level.

Jenn Stanick said it is a change from what people are used to so we changed the name because it is getting to know the grade, not the specific room or teacher.

Beth Chamberland: The way we did it in theory is good, but not always a calming experience for the students. We are committed to supporting kids through transitions.

Jessie Harrington: Maybe we need to change the timing of it as suggested to after the summer.

Jennifer Stanick: We also invite just the parents of incoming kindergarten and new registrations, without the students, to join us either on-line or in-person to give them information regarding the transition. Step-up day at the end of the year can be very hurried and anxiety provoking. There will always be students and families that will need a little more and we will always make sure that happens.

Meghan McCrillis: So are we not planning on telling the kids who their teacher will be next year before the last day of school?

Beth Chamberland: That was a conversation we had this year, there are some changes that happen over the summer, but we are not talking about getting rid of that.

Jessie Harrington: From a school committee standpoint, we need to trust them and let them figure out what is going to work. We are not getting rid of the transitions. The name & timing might change.

Meghan McCrillis: I am totally fine with that as long as we can ensure by the first day of school every elementary student will meet their teacher at some point.

Samnatha Raphael: As elected officials I think it's really important that we ask the parents and stakeholders their opinion.

Brooke Wrenn: I agree there needs to be some sort of transition and plan but I also see your point that when May/June comes changes happen. There are a lot of factors.

Meghan McCrillis: Can we add that into the motion to accept the handbooks as written but with the understanding that there will be surveys to determine the transition day outcome?

Beth Chamberland: How about we revisit this after we conduct the surveys. Let's table this and look at it again at the end of October. We should accept this as is with the understanding the data related to transitioning K-5 will be revisited in October/November.

Jessie Harrington: Dr. Lopez I have a question regarding drop off and the walker problem. Is there something you could put in the handbook that is concrete?

Susan Lopez: There is specific language as to how pick up and drop off will occur. I can look into adding some more specific language about what not to do.

Beth Chamberland: There was a separate communication regarding this issue.

Jessie Harrington: It wouldn't hurt to have it in the handbook as a rule.

Samantha Raphael: I have a question for middle school and high school. First, I loved the behavior Matrix. Regarding Disrespect, Aggressive/Non-Aggressive, Inappropriate language, it cuts off at short term out of school suspension. Is there a line where if a student threatens to kill, mame or harm a teacher, should we maybe consider long-term suspension?

Greg Desto: There is a section further down regarding threats, and this is handled with a long term suspension depending on the offense.

Samantha Raphael: Thank you I didn't see that and I wanted to make sure the staff felt safe.

Jessie Harrington: Mr. Desto, there was nothing specific regarding the cell phone policy.

Greg Desto: It was a hot button issue for the cell phone policy. A message went out today, cell phones need to be turned off and put away, not to be seen during the day. This really isn't a change from last year.

Brooke Wrenn: Is that the same policy for the high school?

Dan Delongchamp: Pretty much the same, we have phone caddies in the classrooms and designated times to use the phones.

Jessie Harrington: Cell phone videoing, are we enforcing that this is criminal?

Dan Delongchamp: Yes, we take it very seriously and enforce it. Videotaping should not be taking place during the school day.

Brook Wrenn: How do we track AI and writing reports?

Dan Delongchamp: Our teachers pay very close attention to this and become very familiar with the students' writing.

Greg Desto: I would like to take a moment to publicly thank Jessica Pitsillides, Matt Carlson and Melissa LaBeaume for coming up with the Matrix idea. It will be presented to the students but not posted in the building.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to accept the 2023-2024 Student Handbook updates for each school as presented with the understanding that survey data will be revisited in October/November to inform the 2024 transition planning for 2024 K through 5.

Samantha Raphael made a motion to accept the 2023-2024 Student Handbook updates for each school as presented with the understanding that survey data will be revisited in October/November to inform the 2024 transition planning for 2024 K through 5. Stef Parker seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Kindergarten Screening**

Beth Chamberland: Prior to the COVID 19 Pandemic, Kindergarten screening for students entering the Auburn Public Schools took place in the spring at both Pakachoag and Bryn Mawr and allowed families and students to come to the school for screening, a tour and information about the upcoming school year. It also allowed the kindergarten teachers to spend time with the incoming students. To do this, our current kindergarten students did not attend school on that day. It is the request of the administrators and teachers that we return to this process and ask for the School Committee's approval to not have our current kindergarten students not attend school on April 26, 2024 to allow screening to take place.

Jessie Harriington entertained a motion to identify Friday, April 26, 2024 as kindergarten screening day for kindergarten students who will join us in the 2024-2025 school year. Our current kindergarten students will not attend school on that day.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to identify Friday, April 26, 2024 as kindergarten screening day for kindergarten students who will join us in the 2024-2025 school year.

Our current kindergarten students will not attend school on that day. Samantha Raphael seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Multi-Hazard Plans**

Beth Chamberland: I am pleased to report that as per Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000, Section 363 (full text is included below for your review) Chief Coleman, Chief Lemon and I along with the member of the District Safety Team, have reviewed each school's Multi-Hazard Plan and the District Multi-Hazard Plan have each signed off in support. I offer sincere thanks to both Chiefs as well as to the District and School Based Safety Teams for their ongoing efforts to keep our students and staff safe. I am thankful for the relationship we have with the two chiefs and administrators in the town. Joe Fahey and the fire department toured the buildings today. Joe also had training with the secretaries regarding fishing calls.

I did send out communication to families that we have a second School Resource Officer to join Officer O'Brien. Officer McCarthy will join us this fall.

I have to give a shoutout to Officer Lombardi who has always stepped up and stepped in to help us out when the SRO was out of the district. We appreciate all his help over the years.

### **Superintendent's 2023-2024 Goals**

Beth Chamberland: Included in your packet you will find the Superintendent's goals for the 2023-2024 school year. The goals were initially presented to the School Committee in the Spring of 2023 to gather input. The goals reflect the feedback received from the School Committee and align with the Strategic Plan.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to accept the Superintendent's Goals for the 2023-2024 school year as presented.

Samantha Raphael made a motion to accept the Superintendent's Goals for the 2023-2024 school year as presented. Brooke Wrenn seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Substitute Pay Rates**

Beth Chamberland: Below you will find proposed updated rates for substitutes for the Auburn Public Schools. As you know, we updated these rates last year however, adjustments to rates in neighboring districts precipitated the need for another update. The changes are not substantial but ensure that we are competitive with neighboring districts and allow substitutes for IAs and ABAs to be above the minimum wage. Alan Keller did a fabulous job recruiting substitute teachers.



There was discussion regarding a day to day sub versus a day to day certified substitute. It was suggested to not differentiate. And it was agreed upon.

Jessie Harrington made a motion to approve the updated rates for substitute teachers, IAs and ABAs for the 2023-2024 school year.

Brooke Wrenn made a motion to approve the updated rates for substitute teachers, IAs and ABAs for the 2023-2024 school year. Meghan McCrillis seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Appointment of Board Member to SWCEC**

Beth Chamberland: As per the by-laws of the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative, the School Committee from each member town must appoint a representative to serve on the SWCEC Board of Directors. It is my recommendation that I continue in this role as the Superintendent of School represents most districts.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to appoint Beth Chamberland, Superintendent of Schools, as the Auburn Public Schools' representative on the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative Board.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to appoint Beth Chamberland, Superintendent of Schools, as the Auburn Public Schools' representative on the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative Board. Stef Parker seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Appointment of Board Member to AVC**

Beth Chamberland: As per the by-laws of the Assabet Valley Collaborative, the School Committee from each member town must appoint a representative to serve on the AVC Board. It is my recommendation that I continue in this role as the Superintendent of Schools represents most districts.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to appoint Beth Chamberland, Superintendent of Schools, as the Auburn Public Schools' representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board.

Samantha Raphael made a motion to appoint Beth Chamberland, Superintendent of Schools, as the Auburn Public Schools' representative on the Assabet Valley Collaborative Board. Brooke Wrenn seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **Textbooks to be Discarded**

Beth Chamberland: Included in your packet is a list of out of date textbooks from Pakachoag Elementary School, Bryn Mawr Elementary School and Swanson Road Intermediate School. We are seeking your permission to deem as surplus so that they may be discarded. This is a result of the recent purchase of an updated ELA program for all students in grades k-5.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to approve deeming the list of textbooks provided as surplus so they may be discarded or donated.

Samantha Raphael made a motion to approve deeming the list of textbooks provided as surplus so they may be discarded or donated. Brooke Wrenn seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **School Committee Working Meeting**

Beth Chamberland: In an effort to be well equipped for the coming school year, the Superintendent is proposing a working meeting for the School Committee members to create norms for collaboration, discuss the handling of concerns from stakeholders and review the responsibilities of a school committee member. This would be arranged at a mutually agreed upon date and time. This meeting would be publicly posted as required by Open Meeting Laws.

There was discussion regarding how often and if it would be recorded. There would be 1 to 2 a year for a few hours and the public would be welcome.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to arrange, at a mutually convenient time for all members, a working meeting for the School Committee members.

Brook Wrenn made a motion to arrange, at a mutually convenient time for all members, a working meeting for the School Committee members. Stef Parker seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

### **2023-2024 Opening Days**

Beth Chamberland: In your packet you will find a general schedule for the two opening days for staff taking place on August 28th and 29th. We have designed the days to accommodate time for safety/medical review for all staff, time for staff to come together as building based and a district team, to begin the development and work of School Improvement Teams at all levels and time for completion of a variety of mandated training modules. This year, we are partnering with ArxED to provide engaging short videos for staff to review topics that include 51 A Mandated Reporting, Sexual

Harassment Prevention Training, Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment, Civil Rights Training, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements if Restraint is Used, Special Education Requirements, Student Records and Confidentiality, Suicide Awareness and Prevention, Food Allergies, Anaphalaxis, & Blood Borne Pathogens. In addition, all staff will be given a copy of our updated Staff Handbook to review. ArxED will also track staff and their progress in completing the review of this information. Later in the year, all staff will participate ENOUGH!-Preventing Sexual Abuse In My School: "Enough!" is the most comprehensive training course available in the U.S. developed exclusively to meet the specific needs of public and private schools, and to address the challenges they face in preventing child sexual abuse and educator sexual misconduct. The one-hour, online course with available closed captions provides learners with an engaging and interactive experience.

### **Welcome Brochure and Strategic Plan**

Beth Chamberland: As part of the Strategic Plan, we are moving to create Welcome Packets for all new families. The first step was to update a brochure created by Dr. Brunelle over 6 years ago. The School Committee is welcome to provide feedback regarding the content of the brochure and items that should be included in the Welcome Packet. Also included in your packet is a one page summary sheet of the Strategic Plan that will be posted throughout our school buildings and central office.

### **APS Business Manager**

Beth Chamberland: As of June 30, 2024, Cecelia Wirzbicki, the Business Manager for the Auburn Public Schools will be retiring after serving the school district for over 10 years. In her time as Business Manager, Cecelia has shown herself to be thoughtful, hard working, dedicated, and diligent. We appreciate all she has done for the district and all she will continue to do throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

Cecilia Wirzbicki thanked all the members and said it has been a pleasure serving the district. The members thanked her for all her hard work and said she would be greatly missed.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING REPORT:**

Beth Chamberland: Summer affords us the opportunity for greater concentration and focus than we get during the school year and our Summer Curriculum Process once again has yielded some great products. We had over 40 individuals/groups of educators working on projects that addressed a wide range of needs and topics:

- Build inclusive practices into classrooms;
- Support student social emotional learning by infusing into art classroom;
- Establish new Wonders textbook and materials: align with science and social studies, integrate UDL, deepen writing experiences and expectations, develop scope and sequence
- Create and enhance materials through co-planning among special educators and classroom teachers;
- Design units and lessons with purposeful goals aimed at increasing student ownership so that, through feedback, they can monitor progress toward mastery;
- Increase resources for math intervention;
- Develop special education resources for new teachers;
- Analyze data for themes and patterns in student and staff feedback on Vision of a Graduate;
- Select titles for Books and Beyond class that promote Social Emotional Learning;
- Add primary and secondary sources to World History curriculum;
- Align Science and Technology report card standards;
- Create resource to help students better understand and appreciate differences;
- Enhance vertical and horizontal alignment of science units at the elementary level;
- Improve school climate through establishing greater consistency on norms and expectations for students and the responses from adults

## **BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:**

### **Year to Date Budget Report**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a year to date budget report for the FY24 School year dated August 11th 2023 for your review.

### **FY23 Omnibus Budget Transfers/FY24 Budget Transfer**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided Omnibus Transfer #1, # 2, # 3, # 4 and # 5 for information as agreed last May, with all being done for the purpose of Closing out Fiscal Year 2023. Since we are at the start of Fiscal Year 2024, and all staff salaries have not been updated in the MUNIS accounting system as yet, she will provide a FY24 Budget Transfer at our next scheduled meeting.

### **FY23 Closeout Documents:**

Mrs. Wirzbicki enclosed three separate memos, dated July 24, 2023 for information. These memos were sent to the Town Accountant, CFO, Karen Harnois, regarding the closing out of the FY23 budget and various Town Meeting approved Articles needing to be carried over for use in the new fiscal year.

### **FY25 French River Oil Bid Results**

Mrs. Wirzbicki: Auburn participated in the French River Collaborative Bid for Oil for the upcoming 2024-2025 School Year, with the assistance of Competitive Energy. There were two companies, namely, Peterson Oil and Dennis K. Burke, responding to the Bid, which was opened on June 15, 2023. After discussion amongst group members present, it was

unanimously decided to move forward as a group with the ULSHO as opposed to the ULSHO 10 oil and award it to Dennis K. Burke, who was the lowest and most responsive bidder for a price of \$2.6490 per gallon. Each District will need to accept the bid and sign a contract with Dennis K. Burke to provide oil for the one year period, July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to *accept the FY25 French River Collaborative Oil Bid and award the contract to Dennis K. Burke for Heating Oil for Bryn Mawr School and the Central Administration Building at a rate of 2.6490 cents per gallon for the 2024-2025 school year.*

*Samantha Raphael made a motion to accept the FY25 French River Collaborative Oil Bid and award the contract to Dennis K. Burke for Heating Oil for Bryn Mawr School and the Central Administration Building at a rate of 2.6490 cents per gallon for the 2024-2025 school year. Brooke Wrenn seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.*

#### **FY24 Revolving, Gift and Student Activities Account Update**

Mrs. Wirzbicki: As is customary each year, I have provided you with the School Department Revolving, Gift and Student Activities accounts updated as of August 11, 2023 for your acceptance and approval for the FY24 School year.

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to approve the FY24 Fiscal Year the list of Revolving, Gifts and Student Activities Accounts as presented by the Business Manager.

Meghan McCrillis made a motion to approve the FY24 Fiscal Year the list of Revolving, Gifts and Student Activities Accounts as presented by the Business Manager. Samantha Raphael seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

#### **School Department Warrant Articles for Fall Special Town Meeting**

Mrs. Wirzbicki: This fall's special town meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at Auburn High School. I will be putting together warrant articles for the next meeting which will require your approval.

#### **Executive Session:** None

Jessie Harrington entertained a motion to adjourn for the evening.

Megan McCrillis made the motion to adjourn. Samantha Raphael seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

**Roll Call Vote**  
***Adjournment***

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Williams

Recording Secretary

**Referenced Documents:**

**APS Summer Read Around the Town 2023 Schedule**

**Minutes form 6-21-23**

**School Committee Meeting Dates for 2023-2024**

**2023-2024 Student Handbook Updates**

**Superintendent Performance Goals 2023-2024**

**Proposed Substitute Rates for 23-24**

**Surplus ELA Materials**

**Opening Days Schedule**

**Welcome Brochure and Strategic Plan**

**Year to Date Budget Report Dated 8-11-23**

**FY23 Omnibus Transfers**

**FY23 Closeout Documents**

**FY25 French River Oil Bid Results**

**FY24 Revolving, Gift and Student Activities Account Update**