Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by G.L. c. 30A, c §18-25)

DEPT./BOARD: School Committee
DATE: May 28, 2019
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: School Committee Room, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA

AGENDA*

1. Approval of Minutes 5/13/19 and 5/14/19

2. Public Participation

3. Information/Reports
   a). Student Representative
   b). Subcommittee Reports
   c). Ways/Means

4. Instruction/Technology (7:15 – 8:00 estimated time)
   a). LABBB Programming – Executive Director Patric Barbieri

5. Communication (8:00 – 8:15 estimated time)
   a). BHS Senior Events & Graduation

6. Old Business
   a). Administration of Medication to Students – Second Reading
   b). MSMS Proposed New 2019-20 Student Schedule – Second Reading

7. New Business (8:15 – 9:00 estimated time)
   a). Out-of-Country Student & Staff Travel - Approval
   b). Continuous Improvement for the School District & School Committee – Discussion

8. Public Participation

9. Executive Session
   a). Approval of Executive Minutes of 3/26/19 and 4/23/19
   b). Contract Negotiations

10. Adjournment

*Agenda subject to change
Chair Martha Simon called this meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Room, Administration Offices, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, Massachusetts. Present: Mr. Thomas F. Murphy, Jr. (7:10 pm arrival), Mr. Stephen Nelson, Mrs. Christine Monaco and Mrs. Kristin Russo. Superintendent Eric Conti, Asst. Superintendent Patrick Larkin, and Director of Operations Bob Cunha also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve minutes of 5/13/19; motion carried 3-0-1. Ms. Simon abstained. Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Russo to amend the minutes of 4/23/19; motion carried 4-0-0. Moved by Mrs. Russo and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve the minutes of 5/14/19; motion carried 3-0-2. Ms. Simon and Mr. Nelson abstained.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Francis Wyman parents Megan Worsham, Kerry Callie, and Maureen Trowbridge reiterated their concern about grade 3 class sizes as only 5 classrooms are being planned for grade 3 instead of 6 classrooms, and they became aware two weeks ago and requested an update. Dr. Conti explained he is looking at class sizes across the elementary schools, agreed with the parents points, however, class sizes are 18-22 by practice not by the teacher contract and that given the budget parameters the district may not be able to add teachers. He is looking at the possibility of adding an instructional assistant at the grade 3 level. He further explained that Fox Hill is in the same position, and if a teacher is added at Francis Wyman another teacher would need to be added at Fox Hill too. Mr. Nelson stated that in the past, the School Committee has requested town meeting to approve hiring a new teacher in September if student numbers are much higher than expected. Mrs. Russo commented that going forward, it's important to have parents advocating for additional staff; particularly at the late fall guideline meeting, and thanked the parents for coming.

BEA President Diana Marcus and ELL teacher Deborah Wall informed the Committee of a DESE teacher advisory cabinet meeting recently held in Burlington, in the School Committee room. Ms. Wall is a member of this cabinet and would like to continue again next year. Dr. Conti thanked Ms. Wall for her extra time noting that it's important for Burlington teachers to be part of this committee.

INFORMATION/REPORTS

Student Representative
Subcommittee Reports

Not in attendance.

Ways/Means

None.

Executive Director Patric Barbieri provided a comprehensive overview of the LABBB Collaborative programs including: background, focus, mission, program expansion, and curriculum. Currently there are 320 students, all programs are housed in a public school, and provide academics, vocational, and social trainings to students. Beginning on July 1 they will offer an adult program in Lexington. Dr. Conti noted that Burlington schools and LABBB are collaborating on professional development social/emotional trainings. In response to Mr. Murphy, Mr. Barbieri replied that if parents are interested in the new over 22 adult program, they should contact him directly.

INSTRUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

LABBB

In response to the question regarding LABBB transportation, Mr. Barbieri explained that currently they transport 500 students to both in-district and out-of-district schools. It is his understanding that Burlington would like LABBB to provide Burlington's special education transportation next year.

School Committee member commented: thank you for what you do for students and their families and commended LABBB for creating new programs for the over 22 population.

MSMS Proposed New 2019-20
Student Schedule

This agenda item was also reviewed extensively at the May 14 meeting and Principal Purchase and Asst. Principal Murphy were again in attendance. Dr. Conti explained that conversations and meetings have taken place since the 5/14 meeting, no one wants to keep the old middle school schedule and the proposed schedule offers a lot of programming with a 6 day rotation. He further commented that people may fear that with the new schedule things...
that are not working won’t be adjusted, however it will be reviewed regularly and needed adjustments will be made. Some individual course subjects are more impacted than others but a decision needs to be made to move forward, to build students’ schedules, and he supports the recommended schedule.

Some School Committee comments: Mr. Murphy stated he’d listened to parents & administrators and after looking at it for two weeks he supports the schedule as proposed; administration tried to come up with a solution that satisfies the challenges but tweaks may be needed in the future. Mrs. Monaco observed that it’s a big step in the right direction, is not comfortable that it’s the best finished product, is concerned with the frequency of world language, five shorter blocks would be better, and is particularly concerned about special education students missing specials due to pull outs for services. She requested that an agenda item be scheduled for the second meeting in October to allow for SEPAC parents and anyone else who would like to comment on the implementation of the new schedule. She further suggested that a SEPAC agenda item be scheduled every few months. Mr. Nelson agreed with Mr. Murphy and Mrs. Monaco as well as shared their concerns but will keep an open mind and review the schedule in October. Mrs. Russo commented that she’s advocated for a new middle school schedule for years, appreciates the work done by administrators, it was completed in a professional manner, and agrees with the October follow up agenda item. Mr. Murphy expressed concern that scheduling comments for October may not be enough time to get schedule operating smoothly; was not fair to administrators and maybe it should be scheduled for after the first semester. Chair Simon also expressed concern with the early timing of October for input. Mrs. Monaco responded that she’d only support the proposed schedule if an agenda item is scheduled for the second meeting in October. Chair Simon commented that the Committee has heard concerns from parents, received emails, and it’s important to approve a new schedule. Dr. Conti stated that the approval vote will allow the fall schedule to be built for students, an early student impact with statistical data could be given in October including student pullouts, but it would not be a final review of the schedule, and if more world language were to be offered another area in the curriculum would need to be reduced.

SEPAC member Beth Colburn commented that SEPAC had met with administrators last week, they reviewed in detail how the schedule would work, relevant parent concerns still exist, and the opportunity to speak in October about what’s working and what’s not is a good plan. She further noted that special education laws are there to protect students and asked the school to keep in mind the IDEA and FAPE laws.

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Russo to approve the MSMS new student schedule as submitted in the previous meeting’s packet; motion carried 5-0-0.

COMMUNICATION

Principal Purchase and Assistant Principal Murphy explained the upcoming Cow Pie Bingo fundraiser event at the middle school on June 15 sponsored by the PTO and student council.

The Superintendent reviewed a list¹ of upcoming school events.

OLD BUSINESS

Administration of Medication – Second Reading

A first reading was held for this revised policy at the May 14 meeting. Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve the Administering Medicine to Students policy JLCD as presented in this evening’s materials; motion carried 5-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Out-of-State Student & Staff Travel - Approval

Dr. Conti stated that the BHS out-of-country travel request to France had been withdrawn by Principal Sullivan.

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve out-of-country travel for BHS students and staff to Germany and Prague on April 11-19, 2020. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Moved by Mr. Nelson and seconded by Mrs. Monaco to approve out-of-state travel for Dr. Conti to Arkansas on June 10; motion carried 5-0-0.

Continuous Improvement for the School District & School Committee - Discussion

Chair Simon began this agenda item explaining that the school district and school committee are looking for ways to continually improve, stated that the Mass. Assoc. of School Committees offers options to school districts, and she would like to look at their options for

¹ June School Events
Burlington. Dr. Conti explained that MASC field representative Dorothy Presser would be able to help the School Committee and central office complete a policy review to update School Committee and student policies.

A very lengthy discussion followed with some of the comments by School Committee members: too expensive, not enough money in the budget, every policy would need to be reworked to fit Burlington schools, the Committee has spent a lot of time & money in the past on policies, it’s not a simple process, not in favor of open ended discussion, would want a targeted area for a short school committee meeting presentation, suggested reviewing policies that are a certain age (i.e. over 10-20 years old), possibility of looking at long range planning and large goals of school department rather than policies, the School Committee has responsibility for policies and the budget for our community; Dr. Conti has the responsibilities of academics/curriculum for students. MASC conducts Superintendent searches, administrative retreats, and sells policies. The school district doesn’t have any funds available for those areas with such a tight FY20 budget. The Committee needs to decide as a whole on what the School Committee would like to do. It’s a massive, cumbersome years long project to look at all school policies and is necessary to review every policy. It was also suggested that each School Committee member could individually review a section of policies for possible updates, changes, or deletions to be presented to the full Committee. The Committee also questioned the need for a facilitator from MASC.

Chair Simon suggested that Dorothy Presser make a 20 minute presentation, it’s jumping to conclusions on how much time and money it would take, has concerns about current policies (citing financial policies adopted last year), which could be reviewed and would like to hear what MASC has to offer. The Committee would like to have a list of MASC services prior to any presentation, requested a defined scope of any presentation, as well as a time limit so that the presentation is tailored to what the Committee as a whole would like to do. Dr. Conti suggested that a list of MASC services be provided at the June 11 meeting and that Ms. Presser make a brief presentation at the June 25 meeting; the Committee agreed with this recommendation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Simon announced that the Committee had a need for executive session to discuss: approval of minutes and contract negotiations. The School Committee will only return to public session for the purpose of adjournment. Moved by Mrs. Monaco and seconded by Mr. Nelson at 9:30 p.m. to enter executive session. Mrs. Monaco, aye; Mrs. Russo, aye; Mr. Nelson, aye; Mr. Murphy, aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mrs. Russo at 10:00 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Gilbert
Recording Secretary

Date submitted: 6/25/19
Date approved: 6/25/19