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School Committee Minutes, 09/13/2005

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2005
7:30 P.M.

Present: Jeff Thielman, Chair
Sue Sheffler, Vice Chair
Suzanne Owayda, Secretary
Sean Garballey

Susan Lovelace
Paul Schlichtman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Chief Financial Officer: Rob Addelson
Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson
Student Representative EJ Harris

Absent: Barbara Cataldo

Call to order: 7:30 PM

Chair, Jeff Thielman announced that the Thompson School was one of twelve schools in Massachusetts to receive the Compass School Award; Mr. Thielman congratulated Thompson School principal, Mike McCabe and the Thompson staff.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Thielman stated that per policy the Committee may take items/issues from public participation under advisement only and may not comment.

.. Topher Heigham APS parent urged the Committee to revisit the issue of redistricting, sooner rather than later – is also in support of the - ACE program

.. Carl Whitaker, APS parent spoke of the importance of the program, the benefits his children received from being part of the ACE program and voiced concern over changing or integrating the program into the regular classroom.

.. Ann Quadgrass - APS parent would like to see students' diverse needs supported in all programs – supports the ACE program.

.. Jane Culbert APS parent echoed the sentiments of the previous speakers in support of the ACE program.

REVIEW OF 2005-06 MEETING CALENDAR

Retreats – Oct. 3rd and Feb. 6th

Mr. Thielman presented a schedule of school committee meetings for the 2005-2006 school year. The calendar identifies the focus of each meeting, the reports due, policy reports required and presentations, discussion and actions expected at each meeting. Mr. Thielman explained that a major amount of time during the year would be devoted to either budget or academics.

Mr. Thielman noted the date change of the October 25th to October 20th and also pointed out that the budget subcommittee will meet on January 3, 2006 to review the proposed FY2007 budget by Supt. Levenson.

STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION

Mr. Levenson stated that the presentation is a continuation from the last meeting. Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson explained that the purpose of the presentation was to present the K-5 writing initiative within the context of the standards-based education

model. Mr. Hutchinson gave a power point presentation reviewing standards based education.

Mary Fischer- Director of Reading K-12 and John Kent – Chair of the Social Studies k-12, described the overview of six traits and the Writing Prompt Initiative and the interdepartmental coordination between social studies and English.
Evelyn DeRosa- kindergarten at Thompson School, Marie Janiak 2nd grade teacher at Stratton School and Jeanne Wall 3rd grade teacher at Bishop School gave a demonstration of student writing samples in their classes using the writing prompts and standards.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ACTION PLAN

Supt. Levenson gave a report on the special education corrective action plan. Mr. Levenson explained that six issues have been identified as primary actions that must be corrected during the 2005-2006 school year.

1. Team Chairpeople - Mr. Levenson explained that by having TEAM chairs at each building it would facilitate more involvement, giving someone in each building the authority to make decisions and are more likely to deliver promises.
2. Pre-referral – a pre-referral process will be put into place in each school to provide support to teachers as they develop alternatives for students experiencing difficulties in the general education setting.
3. 504 Program will be set up in each school; it is a general education initiative that provides students with learning opportunities that extend beyond the typical general education but are not inclusive of special education.
4. Procedures, Systems and Forms – procedures will be instituted beginning in September that will require and allow staff to meet legal timelines for evaluations, IEPs, progress reports, etc.
5. Writing Legal and Sound IEPs – Professional development will be provided to special education staff regarding the correct operations on Sped software and the specifics of writing legally sound IEPs.
6. Monitoring System – Weekly checks will take place regarding evaluations, IEP meetings, signing of IEPs, caseloads, and progress reports.

The Superintendent stated that in addition to the six corrective action steps 2 other initiatives have been established: Improved Customer Service and Avoiding the tipping point.

Break

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

.. Start of school

Supt. Levenson stated that the opening of school went incredibly smooth; Nate visited all 9 schools, visited 90% of the elementary classrooms and 50% of the middle school and high school classes.

.. Personnel Update

Mr. Levenson reported that all elementary classroom teachers and all core academic teachers are hired. Special Education staffing needs are still evolving and a few specialist positions remain unfilled.

.. Peirce Field Update

A meeting will take place on Monday, September 19th at 7:30 pm to inform all user groups on the status of the field and the limitations of use.

.. School Committee room redesign

The Superintendent received a proposal to upgrade the school committee room. The proposal includes:

- To provide a speaker system for the microphones at the main table
- To Provide microphones tied into the speaker system for the discussion table
- To Wire for a laptop and projector system
- To improve the safety of cables on the floor

.. Vote on Dallin Principal compensation (per Policy GCB)

Supt. Levenson announced the hiring of Wallis Raemer as the Dallin School principal. Mr. Levenson reported that Ms. Raemer is highly qualified and requested approval of her compensation package.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to approve compensation as presented by Supt. Levenson for Dallin School Principal, Wallis Raemer

Consent Agenda All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting minutes of:

June 14, June 28, and July 18, 2005.

*Approval of Warrant #06021 in the amount of \$874,909.38,

*Approval #06025 in the amount of \$152,375.30, #06034 in the amount of \$232,299.46

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to approve the items presented on the Consent Agenda.

POLICY & PROCEDURES SUBCOMMITTEE

.. Vote to refer suggested language from Atty. Miller's office to Mr. Skidmore relative to the AHS student handbook.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to refer suggested language from Atty. Miller's office to AHS principal Charles Skidmore

Supt. Levenson stated that he has spoken with Mr. Skidmore who is comfortable with the language.

Mr. Thrope presented the following policies for a first reading:

- 1st readings of amendments to CBD/CBE, GCB, ICA, ID, JEB, JLF, JBA, JJ, JJ-E
- IGA, IGB, IGBH, IHBB, IL, IMA.

Mr. Thielman requested that policies JBA, JJ, JJ-E reflect the same due date for financial reports (June 1st).

Mr. Thrope explained to the Committee that the discussion about and the intent surrounding the language change in Policy IHBB Gifted and Talented Education, was to expand the possibilities for gifted and talented students and the subcommittee agreed that the current language was too limiting. Mr. Thrope stated that at no time did the committee discuss the elimination of the ACE program. Mr. Thrope further stated that the day after the subcommittee meeting he decided too much language was cut and it would be best to send the policy back to the subcommittee. The policy will be sent back to subcommittee for further language changes.

- Mr. Thrope reported on the meetings from August 25th and September 7th Subcommittee meetings

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to ask the administration to review GCF-R and the Martinson procedure and to come up with a new GCF-R consistent with the hiring responsibilities as defined in the Education Reform Act that accurately reflects our procedures and establishes clear and known standards and expectations for the hiring process and responsibilities. Unanimous

Next meeting October 6, 2005 at 5:30 PM.

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Sheffler reported that the subcommittee had its first meeting and reviewed the current year objectives of the subcommittee.

The subcommittee will select a limited number of potentially high impact issue to investigate prior to the formal budget cycle.

Options for revenue enhancement and/or cost containment were discussed: Interdistrict School Choice, EdNets, Extended Time Planning grant, cost of full day kindergarten, International School Choice, and Transportation.

The subcommittee voted to further investigate transportation costs, operating monies for full day kindergarten, and EdNets. The budget subcommittee also voted to investigate and submit background reports on Interdistrict School Choice and International School Choice at their next meeting on October 14th. Ms. Lovelace is the point person for Interdistrict School Choice, Ms. Sheffler for International School Choice and Ms. Owayda for EdNets.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 14th at 8:30 AM.

PERMANENT TOWN BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Thrope reported that the PTBC had a walk through of the Dallin School earlier in the evening. The project is progressing but that it may not open on the timetable as planned.

REPORTS OF OTHER SUBCOMMITTEES (UPCOMING MTGS., ETC.)

- Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 22, 2005 at 5:15 pm
- Community Relations - Next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 26th at 3:30 pm
- Selectmen Liaison - no report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence reviewed by Ms. Owayda. Draft minutes from the meeting of August 11, 2005 will be emailed to members.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Lovelace reminded the Committee that Town Day is Saturday, September 17th.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was:

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose to discuss a legal issue and negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon the return to open session except to adjourn.

Roll Call: Unanimous

EXECUTIVE SESSION 10:50 – 11:10 PM

Motion to ADJOURN by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda

@ 11:10 PM

Submitted by

*Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*