



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
READING, MA.
6P
2023 JUN 26 AM 7:41

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

School Committee

Date: 2023-06-08

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: School - Memorial High

Location: School Library

Address: 62 Oakland Road

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Shawn Brandt, Carla Nazzaro, Erin Gaffen, Charles Robinson, Tom Wise and Sarah McLaughlin

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Superintendent Dr. Thomas Milaschewski, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching Dr. Sarah Hardy, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Dr. Jennifer Stys, Director of Finance and Operations Susan Bottan, and Student Jayda Hayes

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Olivia Lejeune on behalf of the chairperson.

Topics of Discussion:

A. **Call to Order** – Mr. Brandt called the meeting to order at 7:05pm reviewing the agenda.

E. New Business

1. Staff Appreciation/Celebration

Dr. Milaschewski thanked everyone for joining this evening to celebrate and recognize those doing incredible work in the community. There were a variety of different awards and milestones that were recognized. The categories include Professional Teacher Status, 10 Years of Service, 20 Years of Service, Retirements, the RPS Distinguished Teaching Award, and the RPS Distinguished Staff Award. When recognizing retirements and those who received an award, a representative spoke on behalf of the recipient sharing some special comments. The full list of staff milestones can be found in the [packet](#).

2. Robockets Team Presentation/Demo

The Robockets Team (number 4761) presented an update on their year. The team discussed what they learned over the course of a season, how the team is funded, preseason events, build season, competitions, community events, post summer, summer work, and things team members go on to do after graduating from high school. At the end of the presentation, the team gave a robot demo first introducing Perry the robot and how it operates. Perry features a double-jointed arm while still being the smallest robot the team has built.

A question was asked about additional course work or programming the team believes could be useful to develop some of the prerequisite skills to compete at a higher level. The team believes shop or metal working classes would be helpful for students to come in with more of an understanding about what they will be doing when working on a robot. AP Computer Science classes are great for getting people into robotics from the start. The pathway courses offered by the high school are beneficial, and it would be great to add some higher-level courses.

The committee took a break at 8:35pm.

Mr. Brandt called the regular session back to order at 8:45pm.

Ms. Nazzaro motioned to move section E3 out of order. All in favor; vote passed 6-0.

E. New Business

3. RMHS Instructional Leadership Team Update

Dr. Milaschewski shared that across the district a focus area this year was to implement instructional leadership teams (ILTs) in each school. This work has been implemented by Mr. Kevin Tracey and Ms. Jessica Callanan at RMHS.

Ms. Callanan presented a brief opening discussing accomplishments and progress over the year. The team was able to provide consistent feedback aligned with the district strategic objectives. As for program development this year, there have been several programming initiatives created as well as an expanding of senior internships and introduction to pathways.

Ms. Callanan and several department heads reported updates to the following departments: English, Fine and Performing Arts, Health and Wellness, History – Social Studies, Math & Business, Science, Special Education, School Counseling, and World Languages.

As for looking ahead to the 2023-2024 school year, the team will be working on the following areas: holding an instructional leadership retreat in which they will discuss planned objectives, further implementation of grants, curriculum review, creation of a school wide professional development plan, program expansion such as ICP and dual enrollment, NEASC alignment with current work, and the school culture.

A question was asked regarding dual enrollment and the expectation that there would be multiple offerings of classes, but now there is only one. It was explained that dual enrollment classes are included in the program of studies, but there is an asterisk denoting the classes that will be offered in 2024-2025. There was a hope for one or two more offerings in the upcoming year, but Middlesex Community College is scaling back a bit. UMASS Lowell is more the direction we are leaning to with partnership as they are expanding their dual enrollment. There are cases where we might have a

pathway offered, but students do not need a particular course yet so it will be added at some point when the need is there for student progression.

4. Math Pathways Update

Ms. Heather Leonard and Ms. Allyson Williams presented on Math Pathways. The overview of the presentation discussed defining the work, steps taken so far, and a preview of upcoming steps. Ms. Leonard read the Mathematics Vision Statement which was built over the last two years and received feedback from all levels and departments. Over the 2021-2022 school year, a lot of work was done such as data collection and planning to set the team up for a productive 2022-2023 school year. After meeting with all secondary math teachers to solicit feedback, the group had a wide range of ideas about the challenges and perspectives of where we are currently and where we need to be. The team identified the purpose for a Pathways Community Committee. Ms. Williams read the Math Pathways Review and Community Math Pathways Committee Statement of Purpose. As for next steps, the team will select committee members, create a timeline that considers all aspects of course planning and budget seasons, and communication to the broader community.

5. RISE Program Review

Dr. Jennifer Stys and Director of Student Services Allison Wright presented an overview of the RISE Program Review. RISE will have a new Director Kerry Wilcox who was able to join the call. RISE started with an initial review last June and the methodology of the evaluation was based on a four-step approach including an initial visit, observations, interviews, and written documentation. The evaluators met with the entire RISE staff to clarify any questions and share commendations. As for recommendations, the evaluators would like to see more around the culture, communication and identity of RISE, hiring of another team chair, transition process from RISE to Kindergarten, improvement of application and screening process for students without disabilities, establishment of behavioral management systems, an updated curriculum aligning with kindergarten, and the reconfiguration of classrooms. With this evaluation, there are recommendations and things to improve upon, but we are ahead of some of these things which is commendable work.

The School Committee returned to the normal order of the agenda.

B. Public Comment – None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes (05-25-2023)
2. RMHS Softball Support Team Donation
3. Young Women's League of Reading Donation
4. RMHS Unity Day Donation
5. Parker Middle School Natures Classroom Field Trip Request
6. MassHire MetroNorth Workforce Board's Student Internship Grants
7. Track and Field Meet Field Trip Request

Mr. Wise noted there was an edit made to May 25th minutes where it notes policy EIE, but it should note policy DIE which Olivia Lejeune has updated and will add to the revised packet. Ms. Nazzaro motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Wise, vote passed 6-0.

Reports

1. Student – No report
2. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services – Dr. Stys reported tomorrow is Special Olympics out on the field starting at 9:30am. Tara Herlihy, who was recognized earlier tonight coordinates this event each year and we are very excited.
3. Assistant Superintendent of Learning & Teaching – Dr. Hardy reported Mary Ann Lynn has been hired as the interim K-8 STEM Coordinator. We are thrilled about this appointment. Mary Ann is well respected across the district. Thank you to Ms. Heather Leonard for all her work moving the program forward.
4. Director of Finance and Operations – Ms. Bottan reported the School Choice lottery took place on June 5th. There were 18 applications that were awarded placement which breaks down to four at the elementary level, six at the middle school level and eight at the high school level. Families will complete registration forms and if students arrive, we expect to generate \$82,500 in state reimbursement. As a reminder, in FY23 we generated \$42,500.
5. Superintendent – Dr. Milaschewski reported on the following personnel items:
 - a. With Principal Tracey's resignation, we have appointed Ms. Jessica Callanan as the one-year interim high school principal. We will launch a full-time search in the fall. Following the one-year interim appointment, Ms. Callanan will return to her current role. We will convert Ms. Callanan's current role to a one-year assistant principal role.
 - b. We reposted the Director of Finance and Operations position as a full-time and interim position. We are working through the process with the screening committee and hope to have an update at the June 22nd meeting.
6. Liaison/Sub-Committee
 - a. Ms. Gaffen – No report
 - b. Mr. Robinson – The Reading Coalition met last week receiving a report from the director. SWEC met as well and have expanded their role.
 - c. Ms. McLaughlin – The Student Services Legal Counsel Subcommittee met today for final interviews and will wrap up those final interviews next week with the expectation of bringing forward a recommendation at the June 22nd meeting.
 - d. Mr. Wise – No report
 - e. Ms. Nazzaro – The Killam Building Committee is completing paperwork which is due Wednesday for the OPM selection and that will allow us to be on the MSBA board meeting on July 10th to justify the selection of Terva.

- f. Mr. Brandt – The town’s Juneteenth Celebration is June 24th from 1-7pm on the common.

E. New Business

6. FY23 3rd Quarter and Projected Year-End Financial Report

Ms. Bottan stated a vote on transfers will take place at the June 22nd meeting. There is a full detailed report in the packet. Ms. Bottan highlighted we are projecting a year-end balance of \$285,000 which has stayed consistent throughout the year. We are seeing a surplus of \$740,000 which will be transferred from the special education budget to out of district placements. We anticipate a transfer of funds from the special education budget to technology for the purchase of enhanced cyber security which is a requirement by the town’s insurance company. Finally, Ms. Bottan touched on the full day Kindergarten account which has funds of \$621,000 to help support universal free full day kindergarten.

7. Review and Vote on Recommendation to Enter into Contracts with Extended Day Enrichment Programs

Dr. Hardy stated this recommendation comes after finding we had a wait list this year for extended day. Last year, we modified staff salaries, but it did not bring us up to the staffing levels needed to support the 531 students enrolled. There is a wait list of about 200 students going into next year. Director of Community Education Chris Nelson thought through alternative ways to expand capacity and eliminate the waitlist. This proposal allows us to do so and improves the opportunities offered to students. We will partner with various vendors who will come in on a rotating basis, allowing us to keep to our student to staff ratios, but bring in students on the wait list. We went through an RFP process, reviewed proposals and recommend these vendors. The additional tuition revenue will cover the cost of enrichments and we have a small amount from a healthy reserve in the extended day revolving account. As for sustainability, we have about two years of reserves in the revolving account to operate before considering a tuition increase.

Ms. Nazzaro motioned to enter into contracts with Extended Day Enrichment Programs. Mr. Wise seconded, vote passed 6-0.

8. Policy Updates - Review and Vote (A) on Amended Policies: GCJ, DGA, DH, DI, DIE, DJ, DJA, DK

The committee discussed whether to move forward with agenda items E8 and E9 or wait until the June 22nd meeting. Mr. Wise noted the one policy that could muster up discussion is policy GCJ – Professional Teacher Status. It could be beneficial to start the conversation and table everything after that.

Mr. Wise introduced Policy GCJ as there were concerns about how it was worded before. The committee had some discussion about the policy and made the decision to approve changes at the next meeting.

9. Review and Vote to Revoke Policy DJG – Vendor Relations (A)

Ms. Nazzaro motioned to table E8 and E9 until the next meeting on June 22nd. Mr. Robinson seconded, vote passed 6-0.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Wise, vote passed 6-0.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEiEj_qwels

Meeting Adjourned 10:53pm.