

*Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – May 6, 2009*

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Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2009 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall. Present were Mrs. Jo-Ann Bragg, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Nicholas Puleo, Mr. Ron Mariano, Mrs. Elaine Dwyer, Mayor Tom Koch, and Mr. Dave McCarthy, Vice Chairman.

Regular Meeting

Vice Chairman Presiding

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The Superintendent called the roll and all members were present. Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary; Mrs. Tefta Burrelli, Clerk; Messrs. Mullaney, Murphy, Draicchio, Keith Segalla, Ms. Roberts, Powell, Hughes, and Dr. Sylvia Pattavina. Ms. Tracey Christello, Citywide and Mr. Paul Phillips, QEA. Donna Niosi, Quincy High School Student Rep. The Committee observed a moment of silence for Nancy Gillooly, a retired teacher who recently passed away, and a Wollaston School family and school staff that are coping with a tragedy.

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On a motion by Mrs. Dwyer, seconded by Mayor Koch, the Committee approved the regular session minutes for April 1, 2009. The ayes have it.

Reg. Mins. Approved  
4/1/2009

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Superintendent DeCristofaro introduced Mr. Rob Shaw, whom he has appointed Assistant Principal of North Quincy High School. Mr. Shaw thanked everyone and said he was very excited with his new appointment.

Supt's Report  
NQS Asst. Principal

Mr. Santoro introduced "Men & Ladies at Work," the Quincy High School wrestlers that won the 2009 Patriot League Championship. Head Coach, Pat Lane, Assistant Coach, Elliott Columb, and Mr. Jim Rendle, Athletic Director were present. The wrestlers were all introduced and received an Outstanding Achievement Award from the Committee.

Student Recognition

The Presidents Cup, Middle School Robotics was held on May 2 at Broad Meadows Middle School. There were eleven teams and 115 students participating. Teachers, adults, and the high school robotics team all were involved. It was

a big success.

Congratulations went to Beechwood Knoll for the Award of Excellence given to them at the State House during April vacation. This was a State environmental award. Thanks also went to Mr. Tom Natola who worked with his students to achieve this award.

The Principal Induction Celebration went very well. There were 15-20 former Quincy principals that attended. They recognized new principals – Maureen McNeil, Dan Gilbert, and Steve Sylvia.

The Superintendent thanked the Mayor’s Leadership for the *Cleaner Green Quincy*. Parents, principals, teachers at all of the schools participated.

Dr. Karla Baehr, Associate Commissioner of Education, has requested Quincy’s participation in a District Review. They suggested that we collaborate with DESE on a program that addressed differentiated needs of students. DESE hopes to come to Quincy and learn a great deal in order to coordinate future district plans. This is an honor for Quincy.

Congratulations went to the Health Services Team of Nurses led by Jane Kisieluis. They held an evening for parents and students featuring information about the perils of underage drinking and alcohol abuse. They partnered with the Quincy Police and District Attorney Dan Keating’s office. There was a large turn out.

Mr. Keith Segella, Director of Vocational Studies, introduced Ms. Lisa Farnum, of Harvard Pilgrim, a partner and Platinum Supporter of the Quincy Public Schools. They are a platinum supporter. The corporation sends volunteers to our schools every week. Ten employees participate in the program. At Snug Harbor, this past fall, 460 students received back packs filled with school supplies. They paid for 60 Quincy students to attend *Tis the Season....* Ms. Farnum showed a film with Harvard Pilgrim supporters stuffing the backpacks. The Committee presented Ms. Farnum with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Partnership Recognition  
Harvard Pilgrim

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At Open Forum, Mr. Karl Roos, a candidate for School Committee, requested the members vigorously enforce the residency requirements for next year. He said that outside students are going to Quincy schools. He complimented the administration and staff at Wollaston School for the concern they showed over the death of one of their students.

Open Forum

Mr. Matt Lockwood Mullaney, a candidate for School Committee, told the Committee that he was concerned about the quality of education his kids and their classmates may receive. He spoke to the MCAS scores at Bernazzani.

He said that the only elementary school in Quincy that does well is the Merrymount Elementary. He would like to see the Committee focus and deliberate on this issue.

A plan is not in place Ms. Kellie Hussey O'Brien said to the Committee for her 12 yr. old daughter, Kelli. She has dyslexia and is reading at a third grade level. She is in the Reading Academy, but she feels different services are needed. She needs specialized instruction and a plan is not in place.

Ms. Linda Perry, president of the PAC Advisory Council for Special Education addressed the Committee. A Special Ed Subcommittee was established in 1984 to discuss issues. Obtaining special education services is a hard thing. so the School Committee needs to do their job which is to point those parents to the PAC. Approximately 40% of those parents don't know the PAC exists. She asked that Mrs. Bragg and Mr. Mariano attend Special Ed. meetings. Mrs. Perry said they are not going away and they won't be quiet. She stressed that the members follow their own policies and procedures, show more caring and concern and come to the subcommittee meetings.

Ms. Suzanne Early thanked the Committee for their work in helping her daughter, Molly, get into a program that teaches Orin-Gillingham. Molly has been accepted at the Landmark School.

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Mr. Kevin Murphy reported that Maintenance got a lot of work done over school vacation--ceiling tiles, floor tiles, exterior doors at North Quincy High School, installed a project at Broad Meadows Science lab, installed a boiler at Saville Ave. At Merrymount, the PA system had to be rewired.

Bldgs. & Grounds

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Mrs. Dwyer reported that the CTE will be torn down in it's entirety as a contaminated project. The debris will go to Maine to a plant there that accepts asbestos. It will take a month to take down the CTE and the cost is an extra \$1,417,637.04. We have received approval from the DEP to get a special certificate to truck away the contaminated material. They are hoping the building will be down by the middle of next week. Twenty covered trucks per day until June will haul the material away. Although there will be people in protective gear, the material is not dangerous. It is mastic and it isn't airborne. Fire trucks will be there wetting down the material. Gilbane will take every precaution and follow all the correct guidelines. We are still shooting for September 2010 as the opening day. Mayor Koch underscored that there is no need to be concerned with the process as we are following all the guidelines.

QHS Bldg. Comm.  
Mrs. Dwyer reports

Mr. McCarthy added that Gilbane has done a wonderful job keeping the streets clean. The neighbors are very pleased.

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There will be a meeting on the new Central Middle School next week.

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On a motion by Mrs. Dwyer, seconded by Mr. Puleo, the Committee resolved to withdraw from the obligation to enroll non-resident students in the Quincy Public Schools for the 2009-2010 academic year for the following reasons:

School Choice

1. Continued projected enrollment conditions at the elementary and middle schools based on current and projected enrollments
2. Policy of the Quincy School Committee to adhere to class size guidelines.

On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously 7-0.

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At the request of Mrs. Bragg, a presentation was made on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). New fund codes will be established for each ARRA grant. School systems must account for and report separately on how these funds were spent and the results of the expenditures. The US Department of Education has indicated they will require quarterly collections of data, all of which will be posted on the government website. These funds should avert layoffs, create jobs and improve student achievement. The government is looking at establishing data systems that track progress and foster improvement; make improvements in teacher effectiveness, and provide intensive support and effective intervention for the lowest performing schools.

ARRA Update

School systems will have to publicly report how funds are being used. Funds must provide for sustainable improvements and comprehensive financial reports will go to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education quarterly. Funds should be invested in ways that do not result in unsustainable continuing commitments after funding expires.

A Title 1 Team and a Special Education Team created key questions, set spending priorities, created goals and action steps, (the money will arrive in July) to implement and then evaluate. The action steps are Orton-Gillingham teachers to enhance Language Development Programs. There will be three teachers at three schools, Pre kindergarten level teacher of students with autism, and speech and language pathologist.

Title 1 key questions are: what is the current status of the Title 1 Program and what are the prioritized needs. With the ARRA Title 1 funds, how do we

enhance/reform the programs in school and sustain services to increase student achievement. The action steps are to utilize funds to increase Title 1 staff as specialized Math teachers for the implementation of the three tier Math Model. While there are a lot of funds available, nobody is sure how it will be accounted for. They haven't identified how the accounting will be done.

Mrs. Bragg recommended teachers be on the teams -- three Special Ed. teachers, and three Title I teachers, one from each schools. The Superintendent agreed.

The information will go to the School Committee and then it will go through the budget process. Mrs. Roberts will meet separately with the principals.

Mr. Puleo asked what the School Committee's role is in appropriating the money. Mr. Mullaney answered that the money doesn't go into the General fund. We are very limited to what we can do. The money will be entwined with the school budget and come to us as a grant.

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“Three years ago, discussion with the Committee being on setting goals, talking about the future of Quincy Public Schools in relation to the new Quincy High School, a new Central, a renovated Sterling, and looking at different configurations of grades that may fit the school system. The School Committee asked the Superintendent to look at enrollment trends from Pre-k through graduation and come back and share thoughts.

Opportunities and Challenges- An Update

Dr. DeCristofaro  
Addresses Committee

We have a significant opportunity now. Part of the challenges come by way of a new a high school, a new Central middle school and what that offers our students and to make sure all of our students will be able to take advantage of these new buildings.

We looked at performance indicators, student achievement with the MCAS, the AYP, with SATs. We also talked about demographics, ethnicity, limited English proficient, Special Ed Students and took another look at considerations and balancing the system and the strengths and the weaknesses. We took a look at risk factors of our student population in regard to attendance, suspensions, high risk referrals, a real solid look at the at-risk factors of our students within the Quincy Public Schools.

Continuing to look at data and performance indicators, we looked at the final assessments, took another look at our drop-out rate reports, our graduation rates, as well as our graduate follow up study. The last indicator we looked at and we talked about this with School Committee extensively over three years ago, was enrollment because enrollment dropped so much within the public schools

including budget issues. We looked at historical enrollment, we looked at enrollment projections, we looked at open enrollment, and we looked at considerations. We took a look at enrollment since the year 2000 to take a solid look at general enrollment, enrollment at the elementary and middle, in particular we focused at the high school level, because enrollment at the high school level is directly tied to our buildings.

Looking at enrollment considerations, looking at the assignment of students to schools, through our School Committee policy, the first key question that we felt very strongly needed to be answered was in consideration of the enrollment trends, particular at the high school level, do we consider focusing upon our Assignment of Students to Schools policy in regard to open enrollment at the high school level. Did the data that we analyzed warrant a real serious look at the high school level, specifically in regards to open enrollment and as our team reviewed the most current data, related to our high school open enrollment trends, the trend that open enrollment disparity and an imbalance of requests that continues to be of significant concern and importance to our school system.

The enrollment differences between Quincy High School and North Quincy High School lead to problematic, systemic issues of class size, assignment of professional staff, student schedules, limiting opportunities, and appropriate and quality educational space and capacity.

As of April 1, we have over 100 requests for open enrollment to North Quincy High School from the Quincy High School area. The freshman class grows at North Quincy High School. We are taking a look at that with an influx of move-ins to North Quincy High School that are in that district, as well as private and parochial students that are coming in to North Quincy High School from that district. We feel very strongly that 350 students in a class is really where it should be at both high schools. With the information, the disparity and the imbalance, and with the issues of educational organizational tension that it brings in these areas mentioned, and due to the organization impact of these enrollment issues that they place on our system, on our students, on our professional staff, and facilities, it is my intent to place on hold all open enrollment requests to attend North Quincy High School after April 17, 2009. That would include 109 requests that have already been granted. We will start going forward from there.

We also have to consider as we go, siblings. In the policy, siblings have a preference, which we will consider as we go. I believe that this lends a real sense of urgency to take a look at the enrollment at North Quincy High School and make sure that we don't have that school over-enrolled and beyond what we believe is its capacity.

The next key question that we talked about and briefly talked to the members informally, is making sure that we don't lose sight of the fact that we are constructing a brand new state-of-the-art high school and a new middle school.

We believe it offers us a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to maximize the educational opportunities for every student within the Quincy Public Schools.

The ultimate goal of sharing information is to outline the potential educational benefits as well as limitations as we look at different grade level configurations at the high school level. Secondly, it provides a solid opportunity for decision makers and the community to get together and envision a future for Quincy Public Schools that maximizes the use of our facilities and offers all of our students an optimum learning environment.

What is the vision of the Quincy Public Schools as we build and construct a state-of-the-art high school and a state-of-the-art middle school? We would suggest at this time, using your guidance the communities guidance and leadership, to take a look at establishing an ad hoc task team to analyze and discuss future grade configurations. We suggested a timeline and then discuss primarily with Mayor Koch and Vice Chairman McCarthy, taking a look at what the process should be and who should be taking part within the process.

Between now and the fall we suggest looking at a process that we could embark on.”

Mr. Mariano said they have to do this in as broad and all encompassing fashion as humanly possible. What the Superintendent is suggesting is changing a lot of of history in the City of Quincy and a lot of tradition. He asked that the Mayor and Vice Chairman McCarthy and Superintendent put together some recommendations of what this ad hoc committee would look like. He though it important that this be as broad a spectrum including business leaders, community leaders, parents, teachers, to guide them in the next year. This, he said is a major decision--a big step. Mr. Mariano said he didn't know how he felt about this. He anticipates some interesting debate and discussion. He will leave it to the leaders of this body, the superintendent and the Mayor to put that group together and trust that it would represent a great cross section of folks. Mr. Mariano put this in a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bragg. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Motion to put together an Ad Hoc Committee

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On a motion by Mayor Koch, seconded by Mr. Puleo, the Committee approved a trip for Atlantic students to go to New York City on June 10 –June 12, 2009. The ayes have it.

Out of State Travel Atlantic to NY

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Referring to a listing of cross walks by Mr. Draicchio, Mr. Mahoney said that back in September the Committee asked when the crosswalks would be taken care of. She was hoping to see a schedule from Mr. Gillan before the end of the school to get ready for next September. Mayor Koch

Communications

said he spoke to Mr. Gillan. Budgets are strapped, but he is making some monies available. He will be coming up with a schedule for cross walks and some of the main street lines. He will keep the Committee informed. At some future date, he will have Mr. Gillan come up to the full Committee and talk about the intersection issues at North Quincy High School. Mrs. Mahoney said she was talking about North Quincy High and other schools.

Mr. Puleo added that working with Mr. Draicchio, they developed a wish list from each school principal's concerns and that was forwarded to Mr. Gillan.

The Committee received a letter from Joe Shea, City Clerk, about voting places. Mrs. Dwyer said she was disappointed that the polling place haven't changed, although he has dropped Snug Harbor. Mrs. Dwyer feels there are plenty of churches and public buildings that can be used rather than the schools.

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Mr. Ron Mariano asked for a point of personal privilege. He has been involved with the schools for 28 years and to be told that he didn't care came as a shock and surprise. He said that if any one wanted to send him a message, they can call him on his phone. He announced his phone number. He will get back to them. This, he said, is the best way to send him a message.

Mr. Mariano's  
Response

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Mrs. Bragg noted the retirements of Mr. Bill Mulcahy and Ms. Janet Powell. She thanked them very much for their years of service.

Retirements

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Mrs. Mahoney has scheduled a Special Ed Subcommittee meeting for Wednesday May 13 at Broad Meadows at 7:00 p.m.

SPED Subcommittee  
5/13 @ 7:00 pm

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The Committee noted the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's approval of the Quincy Technology Plan.

Tech Plan Approved

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Mrs. Bragg spoke to the Outdoor Weather Policy as well as minutes from the last Policy Subcommittee meeting. Working with Mrs. Roberts and the Citywide Parents she solicited ideas from parents and principals. She changed the title to

Policy Subcommittee  
Report by Mrs. Bragg

the Outdoor Weather Policy. The Committee received a copy. She highlighted areas of interest. This policy was more encompassing than the original motion as it covers all outdoor activities. It's basically to say that the Committee strongly believes in exercise and fresh air but there are many ways to do that. Quincy Public Schools will always lean towards safety for all students. We have a child care weather chart that went out to all principals. We added that not only do they need to know what the temperatures is, they need to check the website for the heat index and wind chill factors and assess the area the children are going out to. It still leaves discretion to the principals, but the policy says these factors must be checked before you do it. Mrs. Bragg made a motion, to approve the Outdoor Weather Policy. Mr. Puleo asked how this would impact football and ski teams? Would it mean that we would have to forfeit those games?

Mrs. Bragg amended the policy to say that "Winter sporting events may continue with appropriate clothing." Mr. Puleo approved the amendment. The ayes have it.

Outdoor Weather Policy Approved

Student health services and requirements were all reworded and updated by Jane Kisiulius to meet the current law and reference is also made to the Health services Procedure Manual.

Mrs. Bragg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mariano to approve all of Section 10 of the Policy Manual. The Advanced Placement Policy - 10.15.1 has been removed from the policy manual and referred it to the Budget Subcommittee. The ayes have it.

Section 10 Approved

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The Committee noted the following retirements:

Retirements

William Mulcahy  
Janet Powell

Sped Dept. Chair  
Sr. Director  
Student Support Services

The Committee noted the following leaves of absence:

Leaves of Absence

Karen Kelliher  
Michaela Greene

Teacher  
Paraprofessional

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On a motion by Mayor Koch, seconded by Mrs. Bragg, the committee went into Executive Session at 9:15 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously 7-0. They did not return to open session.

Executive Session