

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – March 4, 2020

Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at the Coddington Building at 6:30 p.m. Superintendent DeCristofaro called the roll and present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Douglas Gutro, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mr. Frank Santoro, and Mr. Anthony Andronico, Vice Chair.

Regular Meeting

Vice-Chair Presiding

Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary; Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk; Mr. Michael Draicchio, Ms. Sara Dufour, Ms. Sarah Ginn, Ms. Noreen Holland, Health Commissioner Ruth Jones, Ms. Julie Krieger, Mr. James Mullaney, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Kenneth Panaro, Ms. Maura Papile, Ms. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Mr. Robert Shaw, Mr. Edward Smith, Mr. Lawrence Taglieri, Ms. Bridget Vaughan; Quincy Education Association President Allison Cox; Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education President Cassandra Beck; and Citywide Parent Council Co-President Courtney Perdios.

Mayor Thomas Koch was absent.

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There was a moment of silence in memory of Ms. Sara DiZinno, a teacher at the Wollaston Elementary School for seventeen years, who passed away recently.

Mr. Andronico read the following statement into the record: *Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, any person may make an audio or video recording of this public meeting or may transmit the meeting through any medium. Attendees are therefore advised that such recordings or transmissions are being made whether perceived or unperceived by those present and are deemed acknowledged and permissible.*

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Mrs. Hubley made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 Regular Meeting. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Regular Meeting
Minutes Approved
2.12.2020

Mrs. Hubley made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 Executive Session. Mrs. Lebo seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Organizational Meeting
Minutes Approved
2.12.2020

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Ms. Jennifer Chen thanked Quincy School Committee members for attending recent Parent Academy events and interacting with parents and community members. The Student Opportunity Act is another opportunity to engage with families across the district, hoping that as many community stakeholders as possible can be involved in the development of the plan.

Open Forum

Mr. Joseph Herosy is looking forward to the Student Opportunity Act presentation and requested clarification that all Chapter 70 funds received under the Student Opportunity Act will be going towards education.

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Quincy High School Science Department Chair Julie Krieger and North Quincy High School Science Department Chair Kenneth Panaro presented the Science Fair winners: *Jose Betancourt, Dylan O'Brien, Olivia Fritz* (QHS 1st Place); *Sarah Alberione* (QHS 2nd Place); *Vicki Rak, Jia Ye Zou* (QHS 3rd Place); *Trista Lee* (NQHS 1st Place); *Song Yu Chen* (NQHS 2nd Place); *Dominique Dang* (NQHS 3rd Place).

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Santoro recognized these students as potentially going to change the world. Mrs. Hubley thanked the presenters, great opportunity to be a judge at the Science Fair. Mr. Andronico thanked the Principals and Department Chairs, the passion for Science is evident from the presentations, very proud of all of the students. Dr. DeCristofaro said our students make us proud every day, the hard work and follow through are great examples of their great work ethic, thanks to the parents who supported the students throughout their education careers.

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After a brief recess, Dr. DeCristofaro introduced City of Quincy Health Commissioner Ruth Jones for an update on the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). Commissioner Jones presented a background on this new strain of coronavirus, of particular concern because there are no human immunities. The novel coronavirus has currently affected 95,000 people worldwide, in contrast to influenza, which affects 32 million people in the US annually. The novel coronavirus is transmitted person to person through droplets when the symptoms are evident. Quincy has not had any cases to date; in Massachusetts, there is one confirmed case and one presumptive case (testing in process). At the local level, families who have returned from mainland China since February 3 are being monitored to assess their health during the 14-day self-isolation period. As of today, Governor Baker emphasized that while the risk to Massachusetts residents is still low, travelers who have returned from Italy, Iran, Japan, and South Korea will be asked to self-isolate for 14-days after being educated at the airports. The normal prevention actions for any virus such as hand washing,

coughing into a tissue or your elbow, and remaining home when sick are effective for the novel coronavirus.

Commissioner Jones has been in close contact with Dr. DeCristofaro and Health Services Coordinator Rita Bailey, collaborating on the letters sent to families and advising on questions related to the self-isolation of families with students. This past Monday, the City of Quincy Department heads met this week in a tabletop to ensure preparation. The Governor also effectively cancelled international travel for high school and college/university students for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Gutro thanked Commissioner Jones, his request for an update was so that parents and community members would be aware of the planning and preparation underway. Mr. Gutro asked whether Quincy Public Schools has overseas trips that will be cancelled and Dr. DeCristofaro confirmed this process is underway.

Commissioner Jones said there is a fine line between doing enough and causing a disruption; it is very important to provide information and reassure citizens and maintain CDC and MDPH recommendations. Throughout the year, the City practices Emergency Dispensing Situations (EDS) in partnership with Emergency Management. At this time, there is no plan to cancel any community events.

Dr. DeCristofaro said that another update was sent to staff and families today. Deputy Superintendent Mulvey has been working with the High School Principals, the teacher chaperones, and the families who planned to travel internationally during the April vacation week. Mr. Mulvey is assisting families as they purchased directly through the two travel agencies, some have insurance or there are options for rescheduling for future dates. The custodians have been sanitizing hard surfaces in classrooms and common areas three times per week, an increase over the last two weeks. The Principals have been working with the few families who were traveling outside the country since the end of January and most have cleared the self-isolation period.

Mr. Gutro asked about the potential for schoolwork being completed at home should the need arise. Dr. DeCristofaro said that Superintendents across the South Shore are grappling with this question and expects to explore it further at a subsequent meeting if necessary.

Mr. Gutro asked if hand sanitizer is available in schools. Commissioner Jones said hand sanitizer is most effective for bacterial infections, but nothing takes the place of hand washing for 20 seconds with soap and water.

Mrs. Lebo thanked Commissioner Jones for her very informative presentation. If it comes to closing schools, the Governor and the Department of Education will make the decision for us. We cannot replicate teaching at a distance.

Mr. Andronico asked for clarification, travelers returning from Italy and South Korea are also being asked to self-isolate, but their names will not be shared with the local Health Departments. Travelers coming from Japan will be asked to monitor their health and self-isolate with symptoms. Commissioner Jones said these directives will change as the situation evolves.

Mr. Bregoli asked the symptoms, temperature above 100.4 and a cough, sore throat, and sudden onset of respiratory distress. Residents who may be ill are asked to call the Health Department first before going to doctor’s office, a hospital, or calling an ambulance.

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Dr. DeCristofaro waived the remained of his report, but noted that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has released the final Graduation and Drop-Out Rates for 2018-2019. The Quincy Public Schools dropout rate is 0.7%, reflective of 18 students. The graduation rate for the class of 2019 is 91.5% with 3.5% of the cohort still in school working towards a fifth year graduation. The five-year graduation rate for the class of 2018 is 94.4%. These statistics are reflective of the supports provided by School Committee.

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Mrs. Lebo made a motion to take the agenda out of order to move to New Business, Item A, School Nutrition Program Update. Mrs. Hubley seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

New Business

School Nutrition Program Update

School Nutrition Director Sara Dufour and Assistant Director Sarah Ginn presented an update on the school meals program. Ms. Dufour reviewed the requirements for reimbursable school lunches, including fruits and vegetables, grains, and portion sizes. There has been some loosening of regulations for whole grains and sodium targets since the 2014 Healthy Kids Act.

Efforts to reduce the department’s carbon footprint include the elimination of Styrofoam products and replacement with compostable trays. Students have requested the elimination of plastic straws and this will happen when the current supply is exhausted. Investigation of options to replace plastic utensils with reusable utensils is underway, but there is a significant cost difference.

A composting pilot will begin at NQHS later this spring with the hope of involving student groups.

Salad bars have been introduced at the high schools and are popular with staff and students. All five middle schools will have salad bars up and running within the next two weeks. Snug Harbor has a permanent salad bar, adapted for younger student palates and dexterity. The Fresh Green Wandering machine will visit six

elementary schools this spring; the other six elementary schools were visited in the fall.

The School Nutrition department received grants to fund the salad bars at Broad Meadows and Point Webster and new ovens for Lincoln Hancock and Parker. With the new middle school salad bars, parfait stations will be launched to complement the School Breakfast program.

Ms. Dufour and Ms. Ginn, supported by their graduate student interns, are continuing to develop new recipes such as grain bowls and burrito bowls for high school students, veggie burgers, sweet potato as a dessert option, quinoa pesto caprese entrees, layered dip with tortillas, parfaits with waffle sticks. Samples of the burrito bowls and brownies made with black beans were shared with School Committee. The Nutrition interns have created special events on nutrition and activity, mindfulness and nutrition, focusing on increasing breakfast participation, and developing the pilot composting program.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Food Services Administrative Review was completed in early February and the department was recognized for administrative work and administration of the satellite elementary programs. Next year, there will be an increase in funding from the Department of Defense from \$62,000 to \$90,000 which will support the salad bar initiatives. Additional schools may qualify for universal free meals, data was submitted and we should hear by the end of the school year.

Mrs. Hubley asked about having sushi as an option on the menu, Ms. Dufour said this is something to look into. Mrs. Hubley asked about the sodium regulations and the taste of ketchup and sauces. Ms. Dufour said that we are maintaining the current levels and is hoping that younger students will grow up with this as the norm. Mrs. Hubley asked about additional salad bars for elementary schools, Ms. Dufour said we have applied for a grant to get 10 more, will update School Committee when she hears next month.

Mr. Gutro asked about the new recipe initiatives at elementary schools. Ms. Dufour said there are adaptations of the recipes for the elementary school, especially the parfaits. Mr. Gutro asked about the reusable utensils idea, Ms. Dufour said that not all schools have dishwashers and the initial and replacement expense would be higher.

Mrs. Lebo said the enthusiasm of the School Nutrition staff is a very positive part of the surround care of our students. Mrs. Lebo noted that Lexington High School has a composting program and she and Ms. Dufour will visit. Sharon High School does not have an active program currently.

Mr. Andronico asked about compostable utensil costs for the whole year, Ms. Dufour said that the annual cost is about \$130,000 vs. \$8,000 annually for plastic. Mr. Andronico said this would be an item for discussion during budget planning.

Dr. DeCristofaro thanked Ms. Dufour and Ms. Ginn, QPS is lucky to have both.

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Superintendent DeCristofaro and Special Education Director Erin Perkins reviewed the background of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA); the additional funding provided under the act is intended for educating low-income students, special education students, and English Learner and for costs associated with providing health insurance to employees and retirees. The SOA requires Superintendents, in consultation with their School Committees, to create three-year improvement plans that specify how the new funding will be spent. The plans must consider input from parents and other relevant community stakeholders, including but not limited to, Special Education and English Language Parent Advisory Committees. The SOA Achievement Gap Plans should intentionally focus on student subgroups; adopt, deepen, or continue specific evidence-based programs to close opportunity and achievement gaps; monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement; and engage families, especially those in the subgroups most in need of support.

New Business

Student Opportunity Act: Special Education Parent Overview

DESE has provided seventeen potential areas for evidence-based programs, grouped into four subcategories: (1) Enhanced Core Instruction (Expanded access to full-day, high-quality Pre-Kindergarten programs; research-based early literacy programs; early college programs focused on students under-represented in higher education; supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum; expanded access to career-technical education) (2) Targeted Student Supports (increased personnel and services to support student needs; inclusion co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners; acceleration academics and/or summer learning to support skill development; dropout prevention and recovery program) (3) Talent Development (diversify the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention; leadership pipeline development programs for schools; increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment; strategies to recruit and retain educators and administrators in hard to staff schools and positions) (4) Conditions for Student Success (community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services; parent-teacher home visiting programs; labor-management partnerships to improve student performance; facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments)

DESE recommends that districts choose to “do a few things well” by committing to a small number of high-impact evidence-based programs to close the opportunity and achievement gaps among student subgroups. Districts could also propose to deepen features of evidence-based programs currently in use. DESE is

interested in concise, thoughtful commitments that will be backed by high-quality implementation. After reviewing the Special Education achievement data and the overlap between Special Education, English Learner, and Economically Disadvantaged students, plus the areas of increased staffing over the last three budget years, eight Special Education considerations were developed. (1) Support the development of the Learning Center; (2) System-wide Professional Development to support teacher instruction of Special Education students (Orton Gillingham, LIPS, RAVE-O); (3) Two additional Language Development classes at the middle school level (1 Math, 1 ELA) with paraprofessional support; (4) Two additional Orton Gillingham Specialists to support the students in the middle school Language Development classes and other eligible Special Education students; (5) Two additional Language Classes at the Elementary School level with paraprofessional support; (6) Two additional Orton Gillingham specialists to support the students in the Elementary Language Classes; (7) One Kindergarten to Grade 2 focused Orton Gillingham specialist; (8) One additional CARES class.

Mr. Santoro asked if there is room for other considerations, would like to see support for students in Grade 9 who are not finding success in high school.

Dr. DeCristofaro said these are considerations for Special Education, and there will be similar discussions for English Learners and Economically Disadvantaged students. Cost estimates will be assigned to each of the proposed programs and then a similar presentation will be made at the March 18 School Committee meeting. Dr. DeCristofaro will meet with each School Committee member to review their priorities between March 19-24. At a Special Meeting on March 25, School Committee will vote on the final plan, which will then be submitted on March 27, 2020.

Mr. Gutro asked for clarification on the funding amount and timeline. Mr. Mullaney said that on July 1, 2020 and continuing for three years, Quincy Public Schools should be receiving an estimate of additional \$30 per student (\$3.6 million). In addition to the meeting with QPAC to Special Education (March 3), meetings with ELPACs and Citywide are planned. Mr. Gutro requested a community meeting be added as well. Mr. Gutro asked if there is an opportunity to amend the plan after a year and this is correct.

Mrs. Lebo noted that this is a draft and has evolved following the QPAC meeting on Tuesday night. Mrs. Lebo said that support for the ACE program about data collection is built into this proposal; for the Learning Center, the students will all be on alternative assessments. Mrs. Lebo suggested that the community-wide outreach needs to include additional Special Education parents as there was a low turnout at last night's meeting. Mrs. Lebo stressed that this is not a criticism as time is short, agreed with Mr. Santoro that Grade 9 supports are needed and also for the high school completers who are not going on to higher education and may be underemployed.

Mr. Gutro suggested that the Instant Alert system be employed to invite parents to a public meeting, it is an important milestone that the City has received this additional funding. Mr. Gutro suggested providing the opportunity for written comments, possibly through the new Website.

Mr. Andronico agreed that the public meeting is important, the input from the few parents able to participate last night was invaluable.

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Mrs. Lebo introduced the proposed revised School Committee Policy 9.11.1 Homework and the associated Homework Guide for discussion. The proposed revised Policy and associated Homework Guide will be posted on the QPS website for public comment and will be eligible for vote at the March 18, 2020.

Old Business
Revised Policy 9.11.1
Homework
(Discussion)

Mr. Gutro asked for Mrs. Lebo to summarize the changes from the previous Policy. Mrs. Lebo said the revised Policy no longer requires a minimum homework requirement at any grade level; maximum amounts per subject are prescribed.

Mr. Andronico thanked Mrs. Lebo and everyone involved with the collaboration over the last year in completing and analyzing the surveys

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Mr. Bregoli reviewed that there is a request before the School Committee to approve the establishment of a new private school in Quincy. The revised Policy reflects the current regulations and the will of the School Committee

Old Business
Revised Policy 11.12.1
Criteria for Approval
of a Private School

Mr. Andronico said the new Policy reflects the guidelines from DESE and also the Policy shared by the Wareham School Committee. The proposed revised Policy will be eligible for vote at the March 18, 2020.

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There was no Additional Business.

Additional Business

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Upcoming School Committee meetings will be held on March 18, 2020 and April 8, 2020, both at the Coddington Building at 6:30 pm.

Communications

Upcoming Subcommittee Meetings will be held on March 25, 2020 (Athletics & Wellness, followed by Joint Teaching & Learning and Special Education Subcommittees). All Subcommittee meetings will begin at 6:00 pm.

Mrs. Lebo noted that a Special Meeting will be added on March 25 for the Ad Hoc Subcommittee created last fall to develop a position description for Superintendent.

Dr. DeCristofaro recently met with Rabbi Benjamin of the Congregation Beth Shalom of the Blue Hills and representatives from the New England chapter of the Anti-Defamation League, along with Representative Tackey Chan as a follow up to the Beechwood Knoll vandalism.

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All School Committee and Subcommittee meeting minutes are posted online at www.quincypublicschools.com/schoolcomm/2019-2020.

Reports of
Subcommittees

Mrs. Lebo and Mr. Bregoli reported on the Joint Teaching & Learning and Policy Subcommittees meeting held on February 26, 2020. A presentation was made on the Mentoring Team and there were discussions on proposed revisions to School Committee Policies 9.11.1 Homework (and the associated Homework Guide) and 11.12.1 and 12.2 Relations with Other Schools and School Districts. The updated Policies were on the March 4 School Committee Meeting agenda for discussion.

Joint Teaching &
Learning and Policy

Mr. Santoro reviewed the Facilities, Transportation & Security Subcommittee meeting held on February 26, 2020. A master list of School Improvement Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and Public Building Department projects was compiled and shared with School Committee to review and prioritize.

Facilities,
Transportation &
Security

As there were no corrections, the minutes of the February 26, 2020 Joint Teaching & Learning and Policy and Facilities, Transportation & Security Subcommittees were accepted as presented.

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Mr. Santoro made a motion for School Committee to move to Executive Session for the purpose of Contract Negotiations at 9:25 pm. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a roll call vote, the ayes have it, 6-0. Mayor Koch was absent.

Executive Session

School Committee will not return to public session at the conclusion of Executive Session.

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School Committee was adjourned at 9:25 pm upon acceptance of the motion to move to Executive Session.

Adjournment

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