

**HOPKINTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, September 4, 2014**  
**Regular Meeting 7:00 PM**  
**Middle School Library**  
**MINUTES**

Acting School Committee Chair Ellen Scordino opened the regular meeting at 7:00 PM with the following present:

Members:

Mr. Jonathan Graziano, Chair (absent)  
Ms. Ellen Scordino, Vice Chair  
Ms. Jean Bertschmann, Member  
Ms. Kelly Knight, Member  
Ms. Lori Nickerson, Member

Also Present:

Dr. Cathy MacLeod, Superintendent  
Mr. Robert Berlo, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Ralph Dumas, Director of Finance

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

**II. Public Comments:** None at this meeting

**III. Reports to the School Committee**

**A. Superintendent's Update**

- Dr. MacLeod updated the Committee on the opening of school, the new teacher orientation, and status of pending bus waiting lists and requests for bus changes. All students will ride the busses for the first two days of school, and the expectation is that wait listed students will have bus placements by 9/9/14 and that daycare change requests will be completed by 9/12/14 – one week ahead of schedule. Dr. MacLeod updated the Committee that, after significant effort by Mr. Dumas, parents will shortly be able to access their students lunch accounts online.
- Strategic Plan Report  
Dr. MacLeod provided a presentation on the format of the Strategic Plan and explained she is seeking School Committee feedback prior to the Public Forum scheduled for next Wednesday.

**B. School Committee Chair Report**

- Disclosure Forms to be Filed – Ms. Scordino reminded the Committee of their individual obligation to prepare and file a disclosure form with the town clerk.

**C. Accountability Report: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development**  
Robert Berlo presented information about student performance. The results are based on a variety of assessments.

Mr. Berlo reviewed the new state accountability ratings for school districts. Districts are designated a level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 with the higher the number the more change in improvement is expected. The lowest level school in the district determines the level of the district; HSD remains a level 2 district with four schools identified as level 2. The details of the ratings have not been released to date. Mr. Berlo explained that the Department of Education requires 2, 3, 4, and 5 level schools to perform a needs based analysis on conditions for school effectiveness. Strategic Plan Initiatives are based on this framework. Dr. MacLeod stated that in the Hopkinton School District the lack of student growth is focused in the high needs group. The School Improvement Plans will address those challenges. Mr. Berlo reviewed the next steps going forward: 1) Ongoing monitoring of student progress; 2) In-depth analysis of state and local assessment results; and 3) Increased focus on improving instructional practices in all buildings, especially targeted instructional strategies for struggling learners. Ms. Bertschmann suggested highlighting the Strategic Plan Action Steps that address the area of student growth.

Mr. Berlo explained that the Hopkinton School District is not included in the U.S. News and World Report ranking of schools because of the criteria used for those rankings. Hopkinton does not meet the criteria for the percentage of students at poverty level and the associated percentage of student growth. Mr. Berlo noted that Hopkinton has a high achieving student population and thus it is quite a challenge to meet the designated growth percentile.

- D. School Improvements Plans: Center School Principal Lauren Dubeau, Elmwood School Principal David Ljungberg, Hopkins School Principal Timothy Kearnan, Director of Elementary Curriculum Merideth Ekwall and Middle School Principal Alan Keller were welcomed to the table. Dr. MacLeod explained the importance of one School Improvement Plan for Center, Elmwood, Hopkins and Middle Schools. As students transition to a different school building every 2 years, it is crucial that there is consistency between those schools. Dr. MacLeod reported that the goals in the Hopkinton Elementary Schools Improvement Plan are: 1) Consistent Curriculum implementation, 2) Research-Based Practices in Instruction, and 3) Respectful Learning Environments.

Dr. MacLeod reviewed the goals for the HMS: 1) Timely, informed intervention (remediation and enrichment) to improve student performance and growth, 2) Improving preparedness and transitions of students and parents, and 3) Health and wellbeing.

The three overarching goals of the Hopkinton High School were also reviewed by Dr. MacLeod. Goal 1 addresses Instruction, goal 2 targets Data Collection, and goal 3 deals with Stress Management.

- E. Compass Project Management Report (OPM) Jeff D'Amico: Mr. Dumas introduced Compass Project Management President Tim Bonfatti and the Project Manager Jeff D'Amico. Mr. Bonfatti reviewed the timeline for the project:
- Sept – Oct. 2014 – Designer Selection process
  - Sept – Nov. 2014 - existing condition assessment will be finalized. Options for the project being assessed are: Renovating Center School; construction of a new school on the Center School property; expansion at the Elmwood School site; and property that may be available for the town to acquire.
  - Nov 2014 – Feb 2015 – Evaluate these alternatives
  - March – April 2015 – Present preferred alternative to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)
  - May 2015 – MSBA Board approves the preferred alternative
  - May – Aug. 2015 - Schematic design is drawn up and a strong cost estimate presented
  - Sept 2015 – MSBA approval of design and funding
  - Oct/Nov 2015 – Town meeting to approve project
  - Nov. 2016 – Start of construction

Mr. Bonfatti explained that Compass will develop a website through which members of the community will be able to access all the information about the project. Ms. Bertschmann stressed the importance of outgoing, proactive communication with the Hopkinton community and suggested highlighting points within the timeline when the public can give their input. Updates about the project are extremely important. Following the selection of the architect, opportunities for community input will be laid out in collaboration with the Elementary School Building Committee (ESBC).

Mr. D'Amico explained that a Request for Services for Designer Services was sent out and a very successful walk-thru was held yesterday with interested firms. Proposals are due next Friday, September 12, 2014, will be vetted and a short list of interested firms will be presented at the MSBA meeting on October 7, 2014. Interviews will take place on October 21, 2014.

#### **IV. New Business**

- A. School Committee Policy: Anti-Bullying *JICFB* (taken out of order, after V. B.): Dr. MacLeod reviewed the changes included in this draft. The policy will be posted following tonight's review and notification of the posting will be sent out to parents. The second reading of the policy will take place at a future School Committee meeting.

- B. Vote the RFS for the Building Project: Mr. Dumas explained that the Massachusetts School Building Authority's requirement that the School Committee approve the Request For Services (RFS) was unknown until after the RFS was submitted. A statement authorizing the Elementary School Building Committee to send out the RFS was submitted to the MSBA. The MSBA still requires an official vote by the School Committee.

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to approve the RFS for the building project.

Ms. Bertschmann expressed some discomfort with approving the RFS retroactively. Discussion took place about the timing of School Committee approval for the RFS for Design Services. The OPM may have recommendations about communications between the ESBC and the School Committee.

Vote: Favor: 4                  Oppose: 0                  Abstain: 0                  Absent: 1 (Graziano)

- C. Capital Article Warrant Payment: BLW Engineers \$12,361.84: Mr. Dumas reported that the Capital Project Warrant consists of 2 invoices from BLW Engineers for electrical engineering services related to the installation of an emergency generator at the Hopkins School appropriated in Article 19 of the May 2013 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Dumas and Dr. MacLeod recommend the School Committee approve these invoices for payment.

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Bertschmann, the School Committee voted to approve the Capital Project Warrant on tonight's consent agenda for a total of \$12,361.84 consisting of invoice #14114-1 and invoice #14114-2.

Vote: Favor: 4                  Oppose: 0                  Abstain: 0                  Absent: 1 (Graziano)

## V. Old Business

- A. Middle School Program of Studies (taken out of order, III. E): Middle School Principal Alan Keller reported that as a result of a late staff resignation, the "Design and Modeling" unit for Grade 6 has been changed to "Energy and the Environment" for the current school year. Mr. Keller explained that offering this unit to grade 6 students is moving the 2015-2016 Project Lead the Way closer to the goal of offering this unit in Grade 6, "Design and Modeling" in Grade 7 and "Automation and Robotics" in grade 8.

The grade 6 course "Progressive Leadership" has been modified to include the use of Google tools and the title of the class has been changed to "Collaborative Leadership".

Dr. MacLeod noted that this change to Project Lead the Way is not a reduction to that program, but is moving a part of the program up a year. Also, Dr. MacLeod stated that the "Collaborative Leadership" course is a good example of project based learning.

Mr. Keller explained the differences between "Collaborative Leadership" in grade 6 and "Progressive Leadership" in grades 7 and 8. Mr. Keller stated that an email will be sent out to parents informing them of this change.

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to approve the revision as presented in the agenda materials to the Program of Studies for the Hopkinton Middle School.

Vote: Favor: 4                  Oppose: 0                  Abstain: 0                  Absent: 1 (Graziano)

Mr. Keller explained that after review of the daily Hiller Block, the recommendation to move to a team based schedule for Response To Intervention was reached. Blocks of time for RTI are still included in the schedule on specific days. Enrichment and remediation can both be addressed in this schedule change.

- B. Nature's Classroom Update: Middle School Principal Alan Keller reported on the difficulty of securing sixth grade staff members to chaperone the trip to Nature's Classroom. Two obstacles identified by the HMS staff were the distance to the site and the accommodations. Mr. Keller reported that an alternate location closer to

Hopkinton was visited and addresses the issues identified by the staff. Nature's Classroom was informed that Hopkinton would like to use that site; however scheduling prohibits the use of that site this year. Mr. Keller is proposing that Nature's Classroom staff, along with parents, be allowed to chaperone in the cabins if there is not enough HMS staff available for every cabin. Several HMS staff will participate in the trip. The total cost per student is \$350 which includes the costs of Nature's Classroom staff as chaperones.

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to approve the change to the Request for Field Trip presented at the February 6, 2014 School Committee meeting to utilize Nature's Classroom teachers along with parent chaperones in cabins where HMS staff is not in attendance.

Vote: Favor: 4                      Oppose: 0                      Abstain: 0                      Absent: 1 (Graziano)

- C. Integrated Preschool Family Handbook (taken out of order, after IV. C.) 3:06: Dr. MacLeod reviewed the proposed changes to the Handbook.

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Ms. Nickerson the School Committee voted to approve the Integrated Preschool Family Handbook as revised by adding Ms. Merideth Ekwall to the Administration page as discussed at this meeting.

Vote: Favor: 4                      Oppose: 0                      Abstain: 0                      Absent: 1 (Graziano)

**VI. Public Comment:** None at this meeting

**VII. Items by Consensus:**

Ms. Scordino requested that items A. (transfer of budgets) and B. (warrants) be voted on separately.

- C. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve \$2,017.65 from Center School's "Spirit Wear" sales be placed in the Center School Gift Account as indicated in the agenda materials.
- D. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve \$7,625.00 from the "The Sky's the Limit" fundraiser be placed in the Middle School Gift Account as indicated in the agenda materials.

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to approve \$2,017.65 from the Center School's "Spirit Wear" sales be placed in the Center School Gift Account and \$7,625.00 from the "The Sky's the Limit" fundraiser be placed in the Middle School Gift Account as indicated in the agenda materials.

Vote: Favor: 4                      Oppose: 0                      Abstain: 0                      Absent: 1 (Graziano)

- B. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the warrants; the total value of the 2 expanses warrants on tonight's consent agenda is \$730,084.70.

Ms. Scordino expressed difficulty reconciling the importance of budget decisions on the part of the School Committee and the manner in which the details of the warrants are communicated. Dr. MacLeod stated that a School Committee meeting has been posted for Monday, September 8, 2014 to discuss financial policies. The ramification of a delayed vote on tonight's warrant is unclear. Dr. MacLeod recommended holding a vote tonight and then discussing a change in the process of handling the warrants during Monday's meeting. By general consensus, the School Committee supported Dr. MacLeod's recommendation.

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to approve the warrants in the amount of \$730,084.70.

Vote: Favor: 4                      Oppose: 0                      Abstain: 0                      Absent: 1 (Graziano)

- A. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the transfer of budgets as indicated in the agenda materials.

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Scordino, the School Committee to approve the transfer of budgets as indicated in the agenda materials.

Dr. MacLeod explained the reason for a transfer of budgets this early in the year. To accommodate the needs of a new student in the district, the Hopkinton Education Foundation requested that funds from one fundraising account be moved to another to cover the costs of this unanticipated expense.

Vote: Favor: 4                  Oppose: 0                  Abstain: 0                  Absent: 1 (Graziano)

### **VIII. Adjournment**

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Favor: 4                  Oppose: 0                  Abstain: 0                  Absent: 1 (Graziano)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jonathan Graziano, Chair  
Ellen Scordino, Vice Chair