

Quincy, MASSACHUSETTS – September 21, 2011

Regular Meeting of the Quincy School Committee

A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, September 21, 2011 at Quincy High School. Present were: Mrs. Jo-Ann Bragg, Mrs. Elaine Dwyer, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mr. Dave McCarthy, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Vice Chair.

Regular

Vice-Chair
Presiding

The Superintendent called the roll and Mayor Koch was absent. Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary; Ms. Laura Owens, Acting Clerk; Messrs. Draicchio, Gilbert, Hennessy, Mullaney, Mulvey, Rendle, Keith Segalla, and Taglieri; Mrs. Roberts, Erler, Fredrickson, Papile, Ms. Todd, and Ms. Allison Cox, President, QEA.

The Committee observed a moment of silence for Ms. Chik Ching Law, who passed away recently. Ms. Law was a Quincy Public Schools employee for over 25 years. First hired as a Bilingual Counselor, Ms. Law was a key staff member in the development of transition plans and bilingual education programs for children who did not speak English as their first language. She was most recently a Guidance Counselor at Quincy High School and an integral part of Central Registration.

Mrs. Bragg made a motion to amend the minutes on page 8, third paragraph, last sentence to add “that this item be removed from Policy Subcommittee.” Also, on page 9, line 6, add “pool” after “Lincoln-Hancock” and 2nd paragraph from bottom, add “backpacks” after “2,700.”

On a motion by Mrs. Bragg, seconded by Mrs. Lebo, the Committee approved the regular session minutes for September 7, 2011 as amended. The ayes have it.

Regular Meeting
Minutes Approved
9/7/2011

The Superintendent recognized Athletic Director Jim Rendle, who introduced Mr. Ernie Arienti, President and Mr. Paul Moody, Vice President of the Quincy

Superintendent’s
Report

Firefighters Association. Mr. Arienti spoke of the Quincy Fire Department's tradition of community involvement, including a book that was written and illustrated by two firefighters and distributed to all of the public and parochial students in Grade 2 in Quincy. The fund is created through a percentage of the union dues and the focus is giving back to the community. Given the recent budget issues that caused freshman sports to be eliminated, the QFA decided to hold a golf tournament in June. They had a great turnout and raised \$6,000 for freshman sports at both high schools (coaches, referees). Both Mr. McCarthy and Dr. DeCristofaro thanked Mr. Arienti and Mr. Moody and everyone involved with organizing the tournament and for all of the events they participate in across the city, including Muscular Dystrophy Association, Leukemia Society, Germantown Neighborhood Center, among others. Mrs. Mahoney cited the Quincy Fire Department for working together with the School department over the years.

Dr. DeCristofaro then introduced a new partnership between the Quincy Public Schools, Community Rowing, Inc., the Parks and Recreation Department, and Thayer Academy, which will allow Quincy High School students to be introduced to rowing. This is a great opportunity for students to have this activity on their college applications and resumes and there is significant interest from both girls and boys about participating. Mrs. Dwyer inquired about fees, the boats, and supervision. Mr. Rendle replied that the fee will be the same as other athletic fees; the boats (shells) belong to Thayer Academy; and there are two new certified coaches (Matt Conso and Alicia Golden), who will be paid a stipend from athletic fees. There is no cost to the Quincy Public Schools to participate in this program. Mrs. Dwyer asked about safety issues in terms of boat traffic and Mr. Rendle stated that the shells would not be in the water when boat traffic is scheduled. Mrs. Lebo asked for clarification about whether the rowers wear life vests. Mr. Rendle replied that all rowers have to pass a rigorous swimming test and there is a trailing boat for safety. Mr. Rendle is planning that students will be out on water Monday, September 26, weather permitting.

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Ms. Jill Gichuhi, President of the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education spoke about the Quincy Public School's summer programs, She stated that the Extended School Year, English Language Learner and academic support student programs are concurrent with Summer Scene and so these students cannot participate. She asked that the Quincy Public Schools investigate staggering Summer Scene to allow for more opportunities for participation.

Open Forum

Mr. Scott Alessandro, a Bernazzani parent, spoke of concerns about lack of Media Specialist, full-time aides in Kindergarten, and Art classes every two weeks and objected to taxpayer's money being directed towards Faxon Field track project.

Mr. Chris Chetwynd spoke about the Faxon Field track issue. He cited concerns including traffic, flooding, and safety concerns as well as difficulty communicating with the administration and City Council. He expressed the opinion that Robert's Rules of Order state that the School Committee cannot rescind July, 2008 vote, but if

they should decide to do so, that they will consider the neighborhood resident’s concerns.

Ms. Linda Perry thanked the School Committee for keeping an open mind about the issues presented before them and reminded the public that the School Committee is elected body and trusted by voters to do the right thing.

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Dr. DeCristofaro resumed his Superintendent’s Report to discuss the Instant Alert System. The system was first implemented in 2007 in the elementary schools, followed by 2008 in middle and high school in an effort to have a consistent communication system across the school system. Currently, Student data is shared with Honeywell in late August and early September, rolling students from grade to grade and into new schools where necessary. Transitional years are more difficult to manage: new Kindergarten students, Grade 5 at Sterling and Point Webster, Grade 6 to Central, Atlantic, Broad Meadows, and Grade 9 at the high schools. Honeywell processes information by the 3rd week of September, but adjustments need to be made if students have moved between schools or left the system completely. IT can help with the transition, but there are instances early on where students may get an incorrect message. Staff is also on instant alert and they update their information, as do parents (about preferences).

Superintendent’s
Report
continues

Ms. Isola clarified her concern that North Quincy High School freshmen parents missing alerts. First impressions are important with transitioning parents and so she asked can this time frame be improved? Mrs. Bragg thanked Honeywell for providing the system, but is concerned about privacy issues and how the information is gathered and shared. Mr. Keith Segalla stated the information is shared with Honeywell electronically; exported from Starbase into an Access database. Honeywell is setting up multiple school systems simultaneously. Mrs. Roberts clarified that information can be rolled over for the majority of students, but there are new registrations the week before school starts. Mr. McCarthy asked whether we can release the data earlier to Honeywell. Mrs. Lebo noted that it is sometimes difficult to get information from students and parents and suggested that during the transition, notifications could be more generic. For example, all ninth graders would know orientation is being held in both high schools. Mrs. Mahoney suggested directing parents to the website for information about individual schools.

Dr. DeCristofaro then spoke to class sizes and noted that there are some high school and middle school classes that need adjusting to be inside the School Committee parameters. The October 1 state numbers will be shared at the October 5th School Committee meeting. In addition, there will be a presentation of MCAS results. Quincy Public Schools have made positive improvement in student achievement and student growth. Three Quincy Public Schools were commended: Snug Harbor (for narrowing the proficiency gap among subgroups), Beechwood Knoll (for high growth), Squantum (for exiting NCLB Accountability Status). Three schools were also commended for

improvement on Accountability Status: Snug Harbor, Sterling Middle School, and Quincy High School.

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Dr. DeCristofaro presented the update on building projects, renovations, and construction in Mr. Murphy’s absence. Work was completed on twelve schools, including resolving the Sterling Middle School drain issue/water leak and repairing the damage it caused. Painting was completed in several building and monitor installations at North Quincy High School. The Food Services offices were moved from Coddington Hall to Point Webster Middle School. Roofing repair is underway on the bus garage.

Building Projects Update

Mrs. Bragg inquired about the flagpoles in front of schools, specifically at Squantum. Are there issues with safety, maintenance? Dr. DeCristofaro replied that Kevin Segalla is evaluating all the schools’ flagpoles and whether they need to be scraped and painted or replaced with fiberglass poles. Mrs. Bragg liked the new roofing repair and restoration report prepared by Walter MacDonald from the Public Building department. She asked about the Bernazzani roof and whether this is the new wing that has the metal roof. Dr. DeCristofaro confirmed that it was.

Ms. Isola mentioned an issue that had been raised about ventilation at the Squantum School in a bathroom area. Dr. DeCristofaro responded that the school nurse’s records are being reviewed for reports of allergies, asthma, headaches in that area of the school.

Mrs. Dwyer reviewed the new detailed roofing project report and complimented the presentation. She clarified that the work is being done outside of school hours and on weekends, so as not to interfere with learning time. Della Chiesa and Bernazzani may or may not be completed until spring, weather must be 50 degrees or higher. Mrs. Dwyer expressed concern about Sterling Middle School and why this was roof repaired if this school is going to be renovated next under SBA funding.

Mrs. Bragg added that Sterling has been third on our list since 1997; SBA makes distinction between general maintenance and improvement and this was probably necessary given how long the school has been waiting for rehabilitation.

Mrs. Dwyer asked Dr. DeCristofaro to find out from the Massachusetts School Building Authority when the next funding will be available. Rather than waiting for Central to be completed in 2013, can we begin a new project halfway through. The notice of intent for Sterling is filed.

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Mrs. Dwyer did not have any issues to report; the building committee is no longer meetings.

Quincy High School

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Mrs. Bragg reported that there has not been a meeting of the Central Middle School Building Committee since the last School Committee meeting. Amended minutes were shared with the School Committee, but these have not been approved. The next meeting is scheduled for October 17th.

New Central Middle School Project

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Mrs. Roberts presented several changes to the School Year 2011-2012 Calendar. For the Elementary Schools, March 20 is full day of school due to the Grade 4 MCAS long-composition test. Due to contractual obligations, the suggestion is that the last day of school, now Friday, June 15th, be an early release day. For Middle Schools, it is suggested that the calendar be changed to move the Tuesday, June 12th early release day to the last day of school, currently Friday, June 15th.

School Calendar 2011-2012

A motion to amend the School Calendar 2011-2012 was made by Mrs. Bragg, seconded by Mr. McMcCarthy. On a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-0. The Mayor was absent.

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Dr. DeCristofaro requested that the next item be taken out of order.

New Business

Mr. Keith Segalla introduced Principals Dan Gilbert, Jim Hennessy, and Larry Taglieri who presented an overview of the *Study Island* software program, now being used in all elementary schools and middle schools for Grades 3 through 8. The purchase of this software was funded in the FY2012 budget for citywide implementation; in previous years, some elementary schools had purchased the software through grants or PTO funding.

Study Island Presentation

Mr. Hennessy started the presentation by reviewing that *Study Island* is an interactive, web-based program, aligned to the Massachusetts State Framework Common Core Standards. *Study Island* is assessment-driven, motivating, and fun. It can be used in classrooms and the computer lab, for individualized instruction and remediation, and for whole group instruction through the use of MOBIs and clickers. Most importantly, it can be used at home, connecting classroom learning to homes and families. Students use their unique username and password at home and this allows parents to share in the children’s learning experience, strengthening the home-school connection. The program is flexible, allowing teachers to choose to open the entire program (Math, English Language Arts, and Science for some grade levels) at once or assign particular topics. Mr. Hennessy reviewed the available modes: testing mode and game mode. In addition, teachers or parents can print worksheets.

Mr. Taglieri spoke of how the program is now being implemented in Middle School for Grades 6-8. *Study Island* allows parents, teachers, and administrators to monitor progress by subject or in summary. These reports make parents aware of their child’s comparative progress in school and across state, areas where standards are being met or

exceeded, and where remediation is needed. Students can self-monitor by meeting their passing goals or utilize the available support for topics that students have not mastered. *Study Island* is an important tool in the arsenal, complimenting the .

Mr. Gilbert reviewed the incredible amount of data available for teachers and administrators; real-time information that allows teachers to adjust instruction as needed. Reports can be customized to monitor cohorts, subgroups, individual students, or topics. The program automatically adjusts to students' needs and remediates as needed; for example, for ELL students, there is a text to talk feature. Weekly campus reports track statistics such as the number of questions completed, the number of blue ribbons earned.

Mr. Keith Segalla concluded the presentation by highlighting the on-line training and professional development opportunities. Upcoming training will be held at multiple locations to get more teachers and school sites involved. Educational Technology is most meaningful when connected with curriculum and the leadership of the principals such as integral to its success.

Mrs. Bragg noted the important points: the software doesn't replace teachers and extends school days; she is glad to see that equity issue has been addressed in that all schools will now have it. Are there issues with platform (Mac, Windows) or versions? Mr. Gilbert responded that since this is a web-based program, the program will work on any computer with Internet access.

Mr. McCarthy thanked Mr. Segalla and the principals for their presentation and growth in this area. He noted that the program is fun for students and at the same time the statistics for total year participation are impressive. He is happy to see school leaders so involved, making presentation, understanding program. Mrs. Dwyer asked how much time is spent in a week on *Study Island*? Mr. Gilbert responded that at Snug Harbor, 30 minutes per week in the computer labs; Mr. Hennessy said that at Wollaston the average is 60 minutes per week, plus learning center in classroom for enrichment (small groups). Mrs. Dwyer asked about whether teachers make home assignments regularly. Mr. Hennessy clarified that the use of *Study Island* is never mandatory, but some children choose to work on it at home. Some schools use in after-school programs. Reports show how much a student is utilizing it and even when a student not utilizing at all. Mrs. Dwyer concluded by asking if the program is available for Grades K through 2. Mr. Gilbert responded that Snug Harbor has Grade 2, which they purchased through other funding and they also have the computer lab open after school and some days in the summer. Mr. Segalla clarified that *Study Island* is available for Grades K through 12.

Mrs. Lebo said this is an incredible tool for differentiating instruction, and asked whether it was mandated use or up to the individual teacher, and also what subjects are available. Mr. Taglieri responded that for middle schools, use is not mandated, but encouraged. The Math, English, Science, and Special Ed teachers have all been trained. Mrs. Lebo asked whether this could be an assessment measure for Educator Evaluations and Mrs. Roberts said yes. Mrs. Lebo concluded with asking about parent orientation and

could we get the Thomas Crane children's librarians to encourage use of the program. Mr. Taglieri agreed that Broad Meadows is exploring ideas on how to introduce to parents since it is new to the school this year and through the PTO meeting is one idea.

Mrs. Isola expressed concern about equity issues about computer availability. Mr. Hennessy responded that through the reporting function, teachers are aware of access issues and can handle this by allowing children to stay after school or creating printouts. What percentage of teachers have been trained and are using program in classroom? Mr. Hennessy said that *Study Island* was funded by the Wollaston PTO for the previous two years, and while there was no formal training, one teacher trained all of the teachers in the building. All teachers have signed up for the formal training now being offered. Mr. Gilbert said that they had a similar experience at Snug Harbor and *Study Island* has been generous and supportive. Mrs. Isola suggested that Open House might be a good time to demonstrate the program.

Mrs. Lebo asked if we have district license and Mrs. Roberts said that we have a two-year license for ELA/Reading and Math for Grades 3-8 and Science for Grades 5 and 8. Mrs. Lebo asked for clarifications on the grades available and also for ELL students. Mrs. Roberts confirmed that grades K-12 and ELL modules are available. The ELL modules purchased for ELL students at QHS previously, and we will consider again for future years. Mrs. Mahoney reiterated that this is a great program and is proud that it is now available equitably. Mrs. Bragg asked that the School Committee keeps the impact of a program like this in mind when funding next year's budget. It reaches a lot of children across the city. Dr. DeCristofaro concluded by thanking the principals for their presentation and their instructional leadership in their buildings.

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Mrs. Roberts then presented an update on the new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. She gave information on the DESE multi-year transition plans and the QPS curriculum goals and plans during this transition. The Common Core Standards define the knowledge and skills that students should have to prepare students to be ready for college and careers. The Common Core Standards with Massachusetts additions were adopted officially in December 2010; final 2011 Massachusetts Frameworks were distributed in June 2011. Forty-five states have now adopted the Common Core Standards; the standards are designed to be focused, concise, coherent, and clear to help students, parents, and teachers to know what's expected of them. Major differences between the current and new frameworks are the emphasis on college and career readiness, intentional coherence between the standards for reading literature and informational text for English Language Arts and includes both content standards and mathematical practice standards for Mathematics.

New Massachusetts
Curriculum Frameworks

The plan to Transition Curriculum and Instruction to the New Frameworks stretches over three years with 2010-2011 as the Initial Planning year, 2011-2012 as Partial Implementation, and 2012-2013 as the year of Near-Full Implementation. DESE will support the transition through Readiness Centers (the closest to Quincy being at Bridgewater State University) workshops, model curriculum, Professional Development,

and extensive online resources. The MCAS tests will also transition over three years with 2014-2015 being the first year of full implementation of the new assessment (tentatively called PARCC). In the intervening years, there will be overlapping standards tested plus selected standards added in each year.

The Quincy Public Schools transition will include setting up working teams for curriculum development and assignment, monitor and evaluate the transition process quarterly, and understand the implications on local and state assessments. Additional standards are being developed for Science, History and Social Studies, English Language Learners, Health, the Arts, and Foreign Languages and framework changes will follow. Quincy Public Schools goals include this past summer’s curriculum alignment project, which looked at how the current curriculum meets the new standards. One step already taken was the purchase and implementation of *Go Math!* at Grades K through 2. Teachers will be involved every step of the way, researching supplemental curriculum and creating common assessments and pacing guides. As more information is available, it will be shared with the School Committee at future meetings.

Mrs. Lebo complimented the plan and the concrete benchmarks and the support that DESE is offering. Ms. Isola underscored how important professional development will be for the implementation. She also noted that the adoption of the Common Core Standards was agreed to in order to preserve Federal funding, but costs districts money to implement. Mrs. Bragg requested clarification about pacing guides. Mrs. Roberts replied that these help teachers figure out the best way to utilize instructional materials in the allotted time. Mrs. Bragg concluded by asking whether all teacher lesson plans will need to be revised. Mrs. Roberts agreed that yes they would and cited the amount of work that will need to go into this.

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Mrs. Lebo complimented the Quincy Teen Mothers program booklet as incredibly informative. Thanks to Janice Walsh for her leadership on this program. Mrs. Bragg echoed her compliments, citing the 33 years the program has been held and the 327 graduates and GED recipients who might otherwise have dropped out of school.

Communication

Mrs. Bragg also reminded the School Committee that there will be Policy Subcommittee Meetings on Monday, September 26th and Thursday, September 29th both in the Superintendent’s Conference Room at 4:15 pm. Four Program Improvement Plans will be reviewed at each meeting.

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Mrs. Dwyer reviewed the recent School Facilities meeting held on Monday, September 19th. At the meeting, the recent litigation was reviewed and it was decided that the Mayor will make a formal presentation to the School Committee at the October 19th meeting. School Committee members suggested additional items to add to the presentation. Mr. McCarthy asked whether a traffic study will be available for the presentation and Mrs. Dwyer will follow up on that question.

Reports of
Subcommittees

School Facilities
Subcommittee

In addition, Mrs. Mahoney requested a complete timeline of track-related events, Mrs. Bragg requested engineering plans, and Mrs. Isola agreed that while past information is relevant, hopes that all will listen to the presentation and make decisions based on the current plan's merits.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dwyer to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2011 School Facilities Subcommittee Meeting minutes. Mrs. Bragg seconded the motion; the ayes have it.

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Mrs. Lebo summarized the minutes of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on New Educator Evaluation Regulations held at 6:00 pm this evening. The purpose of the meeting was to work towards establishing a knowledge base by reviewing current evaluation process and to have an overview of the new regulations. One item of note is that DESE is behind schedule, so no model tool is currently for schools in the first year of implementing these regulations. One positive note is that we have similar language in our current evaluation tools. In the next meeting, the group will explore in more detail the third piece of the evaluation process, the integration the first two parts: student growth and teacher evaluation.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee
on New Educator
Evaluation Regulations

Mrs. Lebo made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2011 Ad Hoc Subcommittee on New Educator Evaluation Regulations. Ms. Isola seconded the motion; the ayes have it.

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The School Committee noted the following appointments:

Appointments

Martha Barbadoro
Jane Bowe
Michelle Maguire
Brian Tandy

Alexander Barry
Susan deVarenes
Jacqueline Principi

Kathryn Begin
Gregory Lannon
Alysa Scordo

Teachers

The School Committee noted the following Civil Service Appointments:

Civil Service
Appointments

Debra Corley

Peace Hui

Eunice Lau

Paraprofessionals

The School Committee noted the following resignations:

Resignations

Kristen Rampino

John Zuccaro

Teachers

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On a motion by Mrs. Dwyer, seconded by Ms. Isola, the Committee adjourned at 9:45 p.m. for the evening. There was no executive session. The ayes have it.

Adjournment