



QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Committee Minutes
Thursday, February 25, 2021
Educational Support Center

This meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 2 utilizing Zoom Technology.

PRESENT

Chair	Lee Wolanin	Member, Barre
Vice-Chair	Mark Brophy	Member, Barre
	Dr. Richard Allan	Member, Barre
	Deb Chamberlain	Member, Hubbardston
	Dave Deschamps	Member, Barre
	William Hansen	Member, Hubbardston
	Ned Kelly	Member, Hardwick
	Walter Nutter	Member, Oakham
	Marcelino Sarabia	Member, Hardwick
	Peggy Thompson	Member, New Braintree
	Mark Wigler	Member, Hubbardston

ABSENT

Fred Jean-Francois	Member, Oakham
David Marsh	Member, Barre
Emilly Cartier	Member, Hardwick
David Correia	Member, Hubbardston

ALSO PRESENT

Dr. Sheila Muir	Superintendent of Schools
District Administrators/Staff	Cheryl Duval; Kristin Campione; Colleen Mucha; Andrew Walsh; Adam Couturier; Gregory Devine; Jill Peterson; Tricia Worthington; Shelly St. George; Kristin Campione; Janet Hicks; Sue Musnicki; Chris Carlson; Ashley Cranston; Carla Medeiros

Press:

Town Officials/Residents:	Clare Hendra, Oakham FinCom; Kirsten Frazier; Ann Marie St. Germain; Other parents and community members not identifiable on Zoom
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1. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.
2. **NEW BUSINESS**

- Discussion on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School Restrictions – a vote may be required
 There are currently 25 students from the Quabbin district towns who are attending virtual schools in the commonwealth:
 Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield – 23 students
 Tech Connections Academy – 12 students
 According to DESE, this represents 1.17%, based upon the October SIMS data, of our current enrollment. The CMVS statute and the CMVS regulations indicate that the school committee of a sending district may vote to restrict enrollment of its students in a CMVS if the total enrollment of students enrolled in the CMVS from district exceeds one percent of the total enrollment in its district; provided, that no student in a CMVS can be compelled to withdraw because of that vote. Only full-time CMVS students count towards the one percent threshold.
 Discussion ensued in regard to the implications for students who are currently enrolled in a virtual school, and for those who may want to enroll in a virtual school because they wish to learn from home. There is concern that remote options won't be offered for students, and it's likely some may wish to enroll in the virtual schools. This does present a financial burden for the district due to the cost of \$8,666 per student. Unlike school choice, in addition the district pays an administrative fee. Currently paying \$242,511 for 25 students. The cap would not affect students currently enrolled in virtual schools. If the cap was reached, and a student was not able to enroll, the options would be private school, choice out, or attend Quabbin.
 Question arose as to whether the district could develop their own remote program. This is something that is being discussed.
 Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Mr. Kelly that the QRSD School Committee restrict the full time enrollment of future students in Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools by setting a cap of 1% of the district's total enrollment, and authorize Chairman Wolanin to notify DESE by letter of this decision on or before March 8, 2021.
 Motion passed by a roll call vote of 10-0-1: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – yes; Mr. Hansen – no; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – yes; Mr. Nutter – yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.
- Discussion of upcoming Spring 2021 MCAS – a vote may be required
 MCAS is usually administered to grades 3 – 11 in the spring. HS testing has been pushed back a bit. Reduced time will be spent on testing, although at this time we are not sure what that time will be. Annual testing is a federal mandate and part of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Last year in late March, the mandate was waived due to the pandemic. The state felt that the Biden administration would provide an additional waiver, but that has not happened and it doesn't seem likely it will happen. The district is beginning to prepare to administer testing to grades 3 – 11. Current juniors need to take the testing this year because it wasn't done last year. Students testing remotely would have to have Pearson personnel monitor students live remotely.
 Dr. Muir is of the opinion that our teachers know how our students are performing and are assessing student on an ongoing basis. Any data from MCAS would not surprise our educators or give them more information than they have. Tenth grade students will be tested on materials they learned a year ago. Juniors would have to take ELA and math which should have been done last year.
 Grade 12 was given the opportunity to test out due to competency. This should also be available for 2021, 2022 and 2023. Elementary educators are concerned that, even though testing is decreased, teachers will have to spend considerable time teaching students how to take a standardized test. There will be disruptions for the entire school. Staffing is a concern as well as space in the building with social distancing. There is also concern about loss of instructional time for data that may not be helpful
 Scores will not provide sufficient data.
 Students can opt out, and, at this time, do not know how many will make that choice. At the HS level, they are unable to opt out due to the graduation requirement.

A letter from the QRTA Executive Board was read into the minutes (attached).

Motion made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Hansen to vote on Resolution I, MCAS and High Stakes Testing as recommended by MASC.

WHEREAS the MASC Membership and MASC Board of Directors have previously and repeatedly taken the position of opposing high stakes testing including the MCAS;

and WHEREAS the COVID-19 Remote Learning Model has negatively and disproportionately affected students with learning disabilities, students of lower socioeconomic status, ELL students and students who identify as minorities;

and WHEREAS the social and emotional trauma both individually and collectively has yet to be truly realized in the students who have experienced the shutdown of their local school buildings and separations from their peers and supportive adults;

and WHEREAS the students of the Commonwealth have already missed valuable face to face instructional opportunities with their teachers and would benefit from focusing on those important instructional opportunities and social emotional supports;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC rejects the calls for the students of 2022 who missed their tenth grade MCAS testing to be required to make it up during the 2020-2021 school year or ever. We demand those students be held harmless for not taking the MCAS and that their graduation requirements shall be determined by locally controlled voices of the School Committee and School Administration within the remaining graduation requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Additionally, we reiterate our call for a moratorium on all high stakes testing for the 2020-2021 school year so all students can benefit from their time being focused on direct instruction and we urge the legislature to enact a moratorium on high stakes testing of three years.

Motion passed by a roll call vote of 8-2-1: Dr. Allan – no; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – no; Mr. Hansen – no; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – abstain; Mr. Nutter – yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, Dr. Muir informed the committee that she had attended a meeting North Brookfield. North Brookfield undergoing a study as to whether they should remain independent or join a regional district. Dr. Muir will discuss this as an agenda item at a future meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Mr. Kelly to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Bennett
School Committee Secretary