



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
School Committee Minutes  
Thursday, October 14, 2021  
Educational Support Center**

**PRESENT**

Chair	Mark Brophy	Member, Barre
Vice-Chair	Lee Wolanin	Member, Barre
	Dr. Richard Allan	Member, Barre – arrived 6:42
	Emilly Cartier	Member, Hardwick
	Debra Chamberlain	Member, Hubbardston
	Joanne Cormier	Member, Hubbardston
	David Deschamps	Member, Barre
	Fred Jean-Francois	Member, Oakham – arrived 7:09
	Ned Kelly	Member, Hardwick
	Walter Nutter	Member, Oakham
	Peggy Thompson	Member, New Braintree
	Mark Wigler	Member, Hubbardston – arrived 7:34

**ABSENT**

David Marsh	Member, Barre
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**ALSO PRESENT**

Dr. Sheila Muir	Superintendent of Schools
Cheryl Duval	Director of Administrative Services
District Administrators/Staff	Kristin Campione; Christopher Carlson; Gregory Devine; Anne Doble; Janet Hicks; Colleen Mucha; Joe Wyman; Jill Peterson; Shelly St. George; Andrew Walsh; Tricia Worthington; Kevin Clark; Keri Gould; Shannon Harris; Jill Langlois; Cassie Stagias; Jennifer Graves; Natasha Thomasian; Mary Amidio
Town Officials/Residents	Nekr Jenkins, Quaboag Drug; Maegan B., Quaboag Drug; Lisa Fuller; Maribel Larange; Stefanie Hicks; Jacob Thistle; Jason & Rachael Bergman; Marissa O'Connor; Doug Cormier; Gina Metterville; Jessica Evers; Grace Madsen; Ryan Chauvin; James Wickes; Dennis Letendre; other members not identifiable on Zoom

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. Mr. Brophy announced that Mr. Sarabia has resigned from the School Committee. Mr. Brophy thanked Mr. Sarabia for his many years of service.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - September 16, 2021 – Motion made by Mr. Deschamps and seconded by Mr. Wolanin to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2021. Motion passed by a roll call vote of 9-0-0.

### **3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

#### **a) Superintendent of Schools**

- Superintendent's Report – Dr. Muir reported that the district is scheduling flu clinics. A season flu clinic will be held on Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup> with the help of Fred Lamas from Barre Family Pharmacy. A Pfizer Covid-19 vaccination clinic is taking place on October 29<sup>th</sup> for boosters and initial vaccines. The COVID-19 testing program has been a challenge to get up and running with the state. The nurses are currently doing test & stay as well as symptomatic testing. The district has elected to receive assistance from the National Guard for approximately one month until the company assigned to us is ready to take over.  
Rural Schools Commission hearing took place last week. Numerous stakeholders gave testimony in regard to the challenges faced in a rural district. The goal is to have a report done for the end of the calendar year to be ready for budget planning.  
Dr. Muir also reported that typically at the October meeting, we reallocate weighted votes. We are currently waiting on information from all town clerks and are waiting on one town to respond. Membership of the committee is based upon the federal census data and weighted vote is based upon town census figures. Those adjustments will be moved to the November meeting.

#### **b) Director of Administrative Services**

- Director's Report –Ms. Duval reported that the auditors are currently working on the final reports, but are awaiting information from Worcester Regional. They normally present the audit at the October meeting but will be moving that to the November meeting.
- Presentation of Warrants
  - AP warrants 11A, 11B, 11FP, 11FQ, 12A were approved by the warrant subcommittee

#### **c) Teacher Advisory Council – No report was given**

#### **d) Student Advisory Council**

- Elementary: Ms. Cassie Stagias, grade 3 teacher at Oakham Center School, introduced Charley Chauvin and Lizzy Laramée who introduced Flip Grid to the Committee. Lizzy and Charley presented their video flipgrids with an explanation of how they came up with the subject of the video as well as what it entails to make a flipgrid.
- Secondary: Gwen Dias, Grade 6 reported that she has written a book which will be used in classes. This book is just about finished and will be sent to the publisher with the help of Ms. Madden. Gwen also talked about her transition to grade 6 at the Middle/High School, and how easy it has been. Mia Ducos, Grade 8, spoke in regard to the seminar on racism that she was a panelist for at UMass last year. This seminar addressed how students of color go through so many of the same things that adults of color go through. Mia stated that this was a great experience and she was happy she had the opportunity to attend. Mia also talked about her transition to grade 8. She stated that the year has gotten off to a great start. Mia also spoke to the fact that students need to “be nicer” to one another.

### **4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **a) Administrative Review**

- No report was given

#### **b) Audit**

- Audit report is usually given in October, however, due to figures that are still due to the Auditor from Worcester Regional, the report will be presented in November.

#### **c) Budget**

- Request for FY22 Budget Transfer – Motion made by Mr. Wolanin and seconded by Mr. Kelly to transfer \$14,033 from Undesignated and Regular Education to Special Education.  
Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.  
Brief discussion ensued in regard to the ESSER III funding which went up slightly. Will be going out four years with grants with the major focus on programs dealing with learning loss.

#### **d) Central Office**

- No report was given
- e) Collective Bargaining
- No report was given
- f) Plant and facilities
- There has not been a meeting since the last School Committee meeting. Currently trying to organize school tours across the district.
  - Update on Hubbardston Roof Project – the roof is on target to be finished for 10/25.
  - Status of NBGS projects – Guardian Industries did not attend the final tour of repairs. Mr. Chenevert and CMRPC viewed to be sure the funding could be released. A final module for the fire alarm is needed and will be in on Friday. The state inspector is coming next Thursday morning. Once complete, a new certificate will be issued and the job will be completed.

Dr. Muir and Ms. Mucha met with Mrs. Worthington and the teachers of NBGS. They discussed all the particulars that need to happen in order to transition PK – 1 students back to NBGS. A timeline has been developed for staff, facilities and students to ready the building for the students return.

Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup> will be the first day for students. The transition plan back will include preparing the students by building excitement about moving, letting them know what to expect, and easing any fears and anxiety they have. Bus transportation and the breakfast/lunch schedule needs to be finalized with the bus company and food service. Plant and facilities will clean classrooms and move existing furniture. Sneak peek photos and videos will be taken with a virtual parent informational session scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup>. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, the LPN/Office support person will begin training with the NBGS/OCS Office Manager and the nurse. From October 25<sup>th</sup> on, furniture, technology, etc. will be moved to NBGS and functionality of technology will be assessed. Teachers have agreed to come in on their Veteran’s Day holiday to complete setting up their classrooms and working on bulletin boards, as well as creating a welcome video to share with families and students. There will be no school for grades PK -1 on Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup> in order for teachers to complete their final classroom touch ups. Students will be welcomed back to NBGS on Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.

A new transportation plan was also discussed for Oakham and New Braintree. This plan would include students in grade K & 1 having a school day that is consistent in length with all other K & 1 students in the district. However, parent pick up for families with students in both schools would need to take place at both schools rather than just at OCS. Option could be that their older child boards the bus and travels to New Braintree and for pick up with younger sibling.

Many parents wished to speak to the transition and it was agreed that comments would be taken during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

g) Policy & Review

- Procurement Card Purchasing – Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Kelly to accept the Policy on use of Procurement Cards.  
Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote
- Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Kelly to amend Policy DJ with addition of “or with procurement cards” in last line of Paragraph 4  
Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote
- At the first Policy & Review/Reform meeting of the year, Joe Wyman, Assistant Director of Teaching, Learning & Support (Secondary) was introduced. Mr. Wyman has been working on Innovation Pathways and the Perkins Grant as well as getting to know the staff and curriculum. Currently working on a policy on how and when to adopt new curriculum that will be aligned with the standards.  
Therese Salvadore was introduced as the QRSD Communication Specialist. Ms. Salvadore also teaches design course in the Innovation Pathways Program and is Academic Coordinator for the Innovation

Pathways Program. Ms. Salvadore gave a brief description of the branding and visual content she is working on for the district. She is also working on a monthly insertion to the Barre Gazette.

h) Special Education

- Subcommittee met prior to tonight's meeting. Pre-K classes were discussed. Enrollment in PK has increased from 80 students to 127 students. There are still a few spots available, so there was discussion about advertising for those.

New positions within the Student Services Department were discussed, as well as areas with staffing shortages, such as paraprofessionals. The Therapeutic Program has been separated into two groups – grades 6 – 8 and grades 9 – 12. The Transitional Program for ages 18 – 22 currently has 7 students.

i) Technology

- No report was given

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- None

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Concerns were raised by many parents about the change for children and the social emotional impact on moving them back over to New Braintree. Many parents from the OCS/NBGS community spoke about their concerns that moving students from a school where they are settled and comfortable to a new school would be impactful on them. Concerns were also raised that we are still in a pandemic and splitting the school community would be an issue with COVID. New Braintree parents brought up the fact that the schools have been split for many years, decided by a vote from both towns, and safety is not necessarily a factor with the police department across the street. Request made that documentation be presented that all asbestos is taken care of at OCS.

A letter was read into the record by Mr. Brophy that he received from Mary Amadio, Office Manager at OCS/NBGS and Oakham resident in support of keeping all the students at OCS.

Many parents also expressed concern for the teachers who have to move and set up their classrooms again. In addition, concerns were raised by parents about having an LPN versus an RN in the building. Parents also raised concerns about the length of the transportation route.

It was explained to parents that, as a district, we have to adhere to the Regional Agreement.

**7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS**

- Mr. Wolanin explained to the audience the process the Committee went through a few years ago and what was involved in the process to close New Braintree Grade School. He went on to explain that, as a district, we have an agreement, and have to abide by it.
- Mr. Brophy stated that he understands that this is a very emotional subject for families and students. He also stated that the Superintendent has been put in charge of overseeing the school district, and that gives her the authority to oversee and make recommendations that are best for students. Mr. Brophy stated he is not a fan of moving students, but the district has a contract they need to abide by.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

- Presentation of PNAS student survey data – Nehr Jenkins, Quaboag Hills Substance Abuse Alliance Ms. Jenkins presented the results of the QRSD Prevention Needs Assessment Survey 2021. Students in grades 8, 10 & 12 were surveyed in March of 2021 with 235 responses. The amount of students who do not use substances has increased since 2017 which is wonderful news for the district. Vape use has decreased drastically for students in grade 12.

The QRSD, in collaboration with Q-DRUG, has been awarded a 5-year Drug Free Communities Grant in the amount \$125,000 per year for 5 years. The data provided will be used to implement this grant by promoting the positive norm, encouraging hope, informing and shaping school and community prevention strategies, educating parents, school staff, students, community leaders and public officials

and advocating for effective public health and prevention policies. Only four other communities in the state have been awarded this grant, and this will offer many supports for our students. Dr. Muir commended Ms. Jenkins for her work involved in helping to obtain this grant.

**9. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION – None**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Deschamps to adjourn the meeting at 10:43 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Bennett  
School Committee Secretary