



QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Committee Minutes
Tuesday, April 27, 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

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|------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chair | Lee Wolanin | Member, Barre |
| Vice-Chair | Mark Brophy | Member, Barre |
| | Dr. Richard Allan | Member, Barre |
| | Emily Cartier | Member, Hardwick |
| | Deb Chamberlain | Member, Hubbardston |
| | Dave Deschamps | Member, Barre |
| | Fred Jean-Francois | Member, Oakham – arrived 6:52 |
| | Ned Kelly | Member, Hardwick |
| | David Marsh | Member, Barre |
| | Walter Nutter | Member, Oakham |
| | Marcelino Sarabia | Member, Hardwick - arrived 6:17 |
| | Peggy Thompson | Member, New Braintree |
| | Mark Wigler | Member, Hubbardston |

ABSENT

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| David Correia | Member, Hubbardston |
| William Hansen | Member, Hubbardston |

ALSO PRESENT

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| Dr. Sheila Muir | Superintendent of Schools |
| District Administrators/Staff | Cheryl Duval; Kristin Campione; Colleen Mucha; Andrew Walsh; Adam Couturier; Gregory Devine; Tricia Worthington; Sue Musnicki; Jill Peterson; Shelly St. George; Chris Carlson; Mark Miville; Shannon Harris; Natasha Thomasian; Karen Miller; Clare Barnes; Jane Cremins; Megan Cloutier; Jill Langlois |

Press:

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| Town Officials/Residents: | Clare Hendra, Oakham FinCom; Other parents/community members not identifiable on Zoom |
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1. The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- April 8, 2021 – Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Kelly to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 15, 2021. Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

a) Superintendent of Schools

- Superintendent's Report – Dr. Muir reported on the latest MCAS update. The class of 2022 (Grade 11) will not need to pass MCAS to meet graduation requirements. MCAS will take place in May and June. Grade 3 – 8 will have a remote testing option. Students in grade 9 & 10 will test in person only. The Board of Education is pending approval changes to school and district accountability practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will not hold schools accountable nor issue the results of the MCAS testing. (see attached).
- Dr. Muir also reported on the new close contact guidance issued by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, DESE, and the Governor's Medical Advisory Board. Close contacts are identified as anyone who has been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for 15 minutes or more in a 24 hour period. Quarantine is not required when individuals have been between 3 and 6 feet in the classroom or bus when both students have been wearing masks, however, notification of close contact is required. Quarantine is required when individuals were less than 3 feet apart, less than 6 feet when one or more was not wearing a mask or less than 6 feet while wearing masks.
- Dr. Muir turned the meeting over to Mark Miville, Athletic Director for a spring athletic update. Mr. Miville reported that spring sports began on Monday, April 26th. MS track, baseball and softball will take place for the first time in over a year and will begin at 5:00 p.m. with the hope of helping parents with scheduling. The MS and HS seasons could potentially go until June 26th for the season. EEA has loosened guidelines for wrestling which is now considered level II. The Sports Medicine Committee has approved modifications for wrestling. The state Covid Task Force will meet to approve and then the MIAA Board of Directors will meet for final approval.

b) Director of Administrative Services

- Director's Report – Ms. Duval presented an overview of budget changes to the FY22 budget. (See attached presentation). The changes to the budget are built upon the District's Strategic Objectives. Originally the budget was built on the assumption that the district would continue to deliver education in three modes with all current health and safety protocols in place. It is now expected that the 21/22 school year will be a "traditional" school year in terms of learning modes as well as health and safety protocols. However, the district is aware that student needs will be greater and more diverse than ever before.

We no longer will need to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing in schools; personnel for additional disinfecting of high touch surfaces will no longer be necessary; no need for additional personnel for medical waiting room coverage and there will no longer be a need for teachers in Grades K – 5 devoted solely to remote learning.

We will, however, need to increase our capacity to support students' social/emotional/behavioral/academic needs; increase capacity to support for educators' use of technology resources; increase support for accomplishment of strategic objectives; and increase classroom staffing due to enrollment.

Increasing our capacity to support students' social/emotional, behavioral and academic needs will include the addition of: Board certified Behavior Analyst and Behavior Assistants; Elementary Social Worker; Preschool in each elementary school; intervention programming at the Middle School level; MS/HS Literacy Coach; restore the MS Therapeutic Classroom. In addition, the sixth grade will be kept at the Middle School for one additional year allowing us to avoid adding at least two additional classroom teachers, which would create the opportunity of increased funding to support the additional positions and increased staff to student ratio in elementary special education and intervention programs. A study committee will be put together to make a long term recommendation to the grade 6

program, and to consider potential changes to be made at the MS/HS. This will include an analysis of interscholastic sports. This will be studied more as we examine final K-5 enrollment and preschool enrollment.

In order to increase our capacity to support for educators' use of technology resources, the district will need to add two additional Technology Integration Specialists to work with educators and administrators to increase effective use of technology to support students' learning outcomes. Over time, this will allow us to reduce our dependence on outside consultants such as the Highlander Institute for professional learning related to blended and personalized learning.

To increase support for accomplishment of our Strategic Objectives, the district will need to add a part time Family and Community Engagement Coordinator who will build awareness in the community of the work of our staff and of our students. This would help build pride and effective communication inside and outside of the district buildings. In addition, in keeping grade 6 at the middle school, we will eliminate the need to add additional classroom teaching positions in favor of other needed positions.

Due to enrollment, classroom staffing will have to increase with the addition of a HS Computer Science teacher and an additional elementary classroom teacher. In addition, an additional HS Humanities teacher will be necessary due to enrollment shifts as a result of changes in required courses.

The plan is to use funding to achieve our goals and sustain our increased capacity with the use of the budget and ESSER II & III funding. The district needs to be cognizant of the fact that when stimulus funding is gone, there is a sustainability plan that supports new programming.

ESSER I funds covered PPE and salaries of additional staff. ESSER II funds can be used through June 30, 2023. The plan would be to use this funding next year alone. We are mandated to spend \$10,000 on social/emotional needs. The towns could potentially use up to 25% of this to offset RLMC. Towns did receive funding from the American Recovery Act. Barre received \$1.6 million, Hardwick received \$894,000, Hubbardston \$1.4 million, New Braintree \$300,000 and Oakham \$522,000.

ESSER III funding will be \$700,000 for the next fiscal year. The district has a solid financial plan for five year.

The plan would be to use FY21 unencumbered funds of \$1,000,000 for the FY22 budget. The proposed budget would represent a 1.7% increase over FY21 which includes revenue projections and no new additional state aid. Each town will see a 3.5% increase in state local aid plus their American Recovery Act funding.

Budget transfers and FY22 Budget vote will be requested under Budget Subcommittee

- c) Teacher Advisory Council
- d) Student Advisory Council

4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Administrative Review
 - No report was given
- b) Audit
 - No report was given
- c) Budget
 - FY21 Budget Update – a 2/3 vote will be required
 - Transfer Request A – Motion made by Mr. Wigler and seconded by Mr. Kelly to authorize FY21 Budget Transfer Request to contract negotiations and salary requirements as follows: Transfer \$160,526 from 2110-3200 Instructional Support to 1100-1435 District Administration and Legal in the amount of \$16,225; 3510-35250 Athletics & Student Activities in the amount of \$4,384; 4400/4450 Technology Infrastructure Maintenance & Support in the amount of \$70,610 and Special Education 2110-3200 Instructional Support in the amount of \$69,304. Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – yes; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois –yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.

- Transfer Request B – Motion made by Mr. Wigler and seconded by Mr. Kelly to authorize FY21 Budget Transfer Request to transfer the anticipated, unencumbered budget in these categories to allow the \$1M transfer of Retired Teachers’ Health Insurance from School Choice Revolving Account back to the General Fund Budget, which will increase reserves in the revolving account to be used in budget planning for the next 3 – 4 years, as state and federal COVID-19 related grants end.

Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – yes; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois –yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.

- **FY22 Budget Update – a 2/3 vote will be required**

- Motion made by Mr. Wigler and seconded by Mr. Kelly to approve the FY22 revised budget in the amount of \$35,589,974 which represents a 1.7% increase over the FY21 budget, as outlined by the Director of Administration, and authorize resulting assessment be sent to the district towns.

Data provided by the director included:

- a. Revenue projections use state aid as included in the House Ways & Means budget released on April 15, 2021
- b. District revenue and reserves include the use of E&D in the amount of \$427,000, \$10,000 for a contribution to the district’s OPEBN Trust Fund and \$417,000 to reduce assessment impact.
- c. \$1,000,000 towards the FY22 Retired Teachers’ Health Insurance expense will be paid from the School Choice Revolving Account, thereby reducing the operating budget expenditure.

Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – yes; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois –yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.

- d) Central Office
 - No report was given
- e) Collective Bargaining
 - No report was given
- f) Plant and facilities
 - No report was given
- g) Policy & Review
 - No report was given
- h) Special Education
 - No report was given
- i) Technology
 - No report was given

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- None

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS

- Dr. Allan reported that one of our MS Students, Mia Ducos, served on the panel at the new Center for Racial Justice at UMass Amherst last week.

- Mrs. Chamberlain thanked Dr. Muir & Ms. Duval for the thought and effort put into the budget process.
- Discussion ensued in regard to graduation plans/activities. New guidance is due out tomorrow on graduation requirements. At this time, it will be conducted the same as it was last year with 6 family members or guests in attendance. The event will take place on June 4th.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion of Application for Virtual School Authorization - a vote may be required
Dr. Muir reported that DESE is not permitting 100% remote learning to students next year. The district is currently trying to determine if the district can offer a virtual school to our students. At this time, we have a little under 12% of our students still in virtual/remote learning mode. We were at approximately 22%, and that number went to about 15% in March when we returned to in person. In Massachusetts, there are three ways to create a virtual school – Commonwealth Virtual School; Collaborate with another district; or start your own Single District Virtual School. This option creates a new school, not a new program. This option is also restrictive in regard to school choice students participating, of which 14% of the remote students are school choice. Dr. Muir has spoken to Senator Gobi about this, and she is waiting to hear back.

Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Marsh to authorize the QRSD Administration to file an application for a Single District Virtual School per MA Virtual School Statute MGL Ch. 71 § 94.

Motion passed by a roll call vote of 12-1-0: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – no; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – yes; Mr. Wigger – yes; Mrs. Thompson – yes; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois –yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.

9. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Deschamps to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m.
The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Bennett
School Committee Secretary