

**FRAMINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Nevins Conference Room**  
**Town Hall – 150 Concord Street**  
**December 17, 2014**

**PRESENT**

Beverly Hugo, Chair\*  
Heather Connolly, Clerk\*  
Michelle Brosnahan  
Andy Limeri  
Jim Stockless  
Donald C. Taggart III

**ALSO PRESENT**

Sarah McKeon, FTA Co-President  
Mike Koziara, FTA Co-President  
Lisa Zanella, Membership  
Linda Renault, Negotiations Unit A  
Lori Brockway, Grievance  
Stacy Young, Negotiations Unit T  
Amy Graff, Professional Development  
Rosemary Jebari, Bylaws  
Karen Dauer, Building Rep. Chair  
Tricia Simeone, Administrative Assistant

**ABSENT**

Dr. Eric Silverman

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**ACTION**

At 7:00 p.m., Mr. Limeri convened the School Committee in open session with four members present. Chair Hugo and Ms. Connolly subsequently arrived. Dr. Silverman was absent.

**Discussion with the Framingham Teachers' Association**

Mr. Koziara and Ms. McKeon thanked the Committee for meeting face-to-face, prior to the start of Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). They came to represent members of the Framingham Teachers' Association (FTA), to address several issues and concerns. Ms. McKeon informed the School Committee (SC) that things have come to a head in recent weeks. The finalization of Dr. Scott's contract, with the bonuses he will receive, hit members hard. The system feels inadequate, stressed, and that they do not have support or are appreciated.

Mr. Limeri explained this was an open meeting; minutes would be taken and made available to the public. Speaking on behalf of the Committee, he welcomed everyone and thanked the FTA for inviting the Committee to hear their concerns. The FTA appreciated the meeting and hopes to do this more often. It is noted in the contract that they agree to meet no fewer than 6 times per year, but they would prefer monthly meetings to discuss their concerns.

Ms. Hugo and Ms. Connolly arrived at 7:08 p.m.

After the recent IBB training session, the FTA surveyed members for feedback regarding Central Office and the SC. They were asked to rate each question in terms of yes, no, or no strong feelings either way. Approximately 40% of Unit A responded to the survey. The following questions did not distinguish between current Committee members versus previous members.

- Do you have trust in Central Office?: 16% yes, 68% no, 15% unsure
- Does Central Office understand my role?: 26% yes, 65% no, 7% unsure
- Do you have trust in the School Committee?: 18% yes, 60% no, 22% unsure

- 46 • Does the School Committee understand my day-to-day role?: 17% yes, 73% no, 10%  
47 unsure
- 48 • Does the School Committee value the work I do?: 27% yes, 51% no, 22% unsure  
49

50 In the comments section of the survey, the following concerns were noted: the SC and  
51 Superintendent are not visible in the schools, administrators offload work onto others, there is  
52 a disconnect with teachers and a lack of communication, Central Office is out of touch and  
53 focuses on acronyms, the teachers need a curriculum they can follow. The FTA hopes IBB can  
54 bring about change faster and better the relationship/communication. This was the first time a  
55 survey was sent out that was specific to Central Office but it was not known if responses were  
56 received from all schools, as it was confidential. Mr. Limeri said it is important to hear and  
57 address their concerns. He asked that the survey be given several times a year to know if  
58 feedback is changing for the better or worse.  
59

60 At convocation, the teachers were told there were no new initiatives for the current school year  
61 and to “work smarter, not harder”. Teachers wondered how there were no new initiatives  
62 when the following items were introduced: Engage NY, change to the inclusion model, Readers  
63 Workshop, report cards, Aesop, itsLearning, TeachPoint, Q Global, TS Gold, Edwin, PARCC,  
64 Mastery Manager, increase to collaboration and decrease to direct instruction, Google Docs,  
65 IXL, Lexia, Raz Kids, and (X2). There is concern that training is not a streamlined district-wide  
66 professional development (PD). The teachers cannot be proficient in something they have not  
67 been trained to use or do.  
68

69 The curriculum team has been working for three years on a chart of items that need to be  
70 revised but little has been accomplished. As the curriculum develops, the FTA would like one  
71 year of PD prior to implementation. They questioned why they were unable to make required  
72 changes to the Race to the Top program, yet the Town received funding to adopt the Common  
73 Core and a new evaluation system. The problem is not with meeting national and international  
74 standards, but in addressing the achievement gap. With last minute changes, they do not see  
75 things happening to make the situation better; they are getting more to do.  
76

77 Teachers were not informed of Engage NY until the day prior to implementation and were given  
78 one instructional binder for each grade level at each school. Materials and resources were not  
79 included. It is a big change for the students but it is harder to switch between Engage NY and  
80 Think Math. Think Math is not aligned with the Common Core and the teachers do not want  
81 PARCC. Ms. Hugo noted that the SC was informed the schools were following the Common  
82 Core for the past two years. The FTA stated that not all schools were and they are working on  
83 fixing deficits with programs. A disconnect between what is and is not being done is an area of  
84 concern, as the Common Core is not fully implemented. Mr. Limeri acknowledged that the  
85 Common Core is a large program that will take time to implement and asked if there was a  
86 priority change. The FTA said it was unrealistic for all schools to transition to the Common Core  
87 in one year and it created shifts in how they operate and a need for additional PD.  
88

89 In regards to MAP testing, teachers are unable to fully answer parents’ questions, as they do  
90 not understand the process or scoring. Some student testing is disruptive to the entire school  
91 when the library and computer labs are shut down. The FTA said things are not consistent  
92 throughout the district and they need to know what they will be keeping or dropping. Ms.

93 Hugo said there is a statewide audit in the hopes of developing a model and to reduce the  
94 amount of testing. She asked if there is a way to reconstruct the professional development  
95 time. The FTA said there is no time to take summer workshops but an incentive is to be paid  
96 their hourly rate. It was discovered, after the fact, that the Readers Workshop was not paid.  
97 Since the lottery had a bad effect in previous years, a grievance has been filed and is still  
98 pending. They believe that an unpaid PD should be a course, a salary credit or cancelled.  
99

100 The FTA has several concerns with the PARCC exam since they have not seen the test and are  
101 unsure how to prepare for it. Students with IEP's will not be able to use bracket organizers and  
102 other supports will be taken away. With all the testing, teachers lose time for teaching.  
103 Professional development has no guidelines as to what it is. They have been working on a plan  
104 for the past 3 years but still do not have one. While there are many great ideas, it is not a  
105 cohesive effort. They think PD schedules should be strictly enforced, as teachers cannot teach  
106 if they do not know what they are doing. Some are willing to stay late, but others give up.  
107 Collaboration is a way to bring teachers together and provide better instruction.  
108

109 It was noted that several assessments are very time consuming. The online ethics training does  
110 not allow for questions and some individuals do not complete it as they fear repercussions if  
111 they make a mistake. The assessment use to be done during staff meetings and allowed for  
112 questions. Ms. Hugo noted this is a legislative issue. The FTA recognized the need for it, and  
113 said that a lessened assessment load is good but is not the only issue. There is a belief that the  
114 online student assessments that discuss personal/private behaviors (i.e. bathroom habits)  
115 should not be done online but face-to-face. Parents were given the option to opt out but the  
116 teachers were never informed who did out as the permission slips were sent to Central Office.  
117

118 The FTA questioned the spending of money and wondered if the schools have what they need  
119 to make students succeed. There is a need for additional after school programs to help with  
120 the achievement gap. They want to know why teachers' aids cannot be hired but the District is  
121 about to spend \$125K on an Assistant Superintendent when recent turnover included poor  
122 performance severance packages. The turnover affects their PD's and the level of  
123 communication. The FTA said it is upsetting hear information through the Patch and not the  
124 system itself. Another area of concern is the new report cards that take twice as long to  
125 complete. They feel that there are many disconnects with little follow through. There is a  
126 belief that some staff members who are staying are a part of the problem, but the FTA noted  
127 that some staff do a great job and are supportive. The names of these individuals have been  
128 brought to the attention of the Superintendent.  
129

130 The lack of guidelines for the evening parent teacher conferences is also a concern. It creates  
131 an ethical situation where someone can work for three hours while another works for 5  
132 minutes, yet both employees receive a comp day. It is an inconsistent practice when  
133 information from school Principals differs from Dr. Scott. Having no direction creates a  
134 problem with next year's calendar, as they do not know when/if they are doing them. They  
135 propose that teachers be paid their hourly rate versus receiving a comp day, as this will not  
136 require the use of a substitute. While many people do attend the conferences, the specific  
137 school and its economic background play a role in the turn out rate.  
138

139 With an increased need for ESL aids, they are up to 30 students per class with no English  
140 speaking skills. Last year 95 students tested for Access and over 140 students tested this year.  
141 Many of these students arrive in the middle of the year with limited education, homelessness,  
142 or other significant traumas. The Title III tutor is paid 19 hours per week but often stays all day  
143 to assist students. One Portuguese and one Spanish speaking aid would be helpful but the  
144 budget shortfall prevents the hiring of aids. They feel the district is in chaos because if the kids'  
145 succeed off their teaching and the school improves a level, it is Dr. Scott who receives a stipend  
146 when the teachers do all the work. They see positions filled in Central Office but they cannot  
147 hire aids or additional ESL teachers. If they are to maintain the ESL level then a concentrated  
148 effort needs to be done to put people in place.

149  
150 It was noted that the kindergarten bi-lingual program is being cut at Brophy. Space is guiding  
151 decisions and the kids are paying the price for a lack of foresight and planning. Parents are not  
152 willing to transfer their children due to the two-way program at Barbieri. It is possible the  
153 program will be cut in the first grade and teachers feel their concerns are falling on deaf ears as  
154 the kindergarteners are losing out. They believe people need to be more creative with the ESL  
155 programming, especially since some classes are only offered as college prep. Most children  
156 cannot attend Keefe Tech as they have a limited ESL program. The FTA feels we are not  
157 servicing the community well. However, they have discussed collaboration with Keefe Tech and  
158 Mass Bay Community College (MBCC) for students to take programs. Ms. Hugo noted that she  
159 recently toured MBCC for the potential of providing programs there. At the upcoming SC  
160 meeting on January 20, an administrator from MBCC will come to discuss dual enrollment. For  
161 \$100 they would like to offer High School students a full 10-day summer program for college  
162 credit and A+ Certification. ESL and SPED can see hope on the horizon. Framingham State has  
163 offered to help with tutors and extra services.

164  
165 There are also concerns for physical education (PE). The Middle School Department Head  
166 position has been open for almost 10 years but the job description does not clearly define the  
167 role. PE classes often share the gym, or students opt out to participate in band/chorus. With  
168 limited funds, they do the best they can. They feel the administrators do not realize these  
169 challenges, see the curriculum or know how flexible they are. They have no advocate to be  
170 their voice but try to be creative. PE teachers encourage the Tuesday/Thursday intermural by  
171 instilling excitement to be active. Mr. Taggart asked how many gym day's students get per  
172 week and the FTA said 2 but most students choose to go to band on the second day. There are  
173 limits with the program and it is inequitable in regards to the rate of inactivity and obesity. The  
174 budget ranges from year to year and they need someone dedicated to PE at the Middle School.

175  
176 Stories in the Patch state how well things are going but in reality it is not what is happening or  
177 what people experience. On any given day, someone is crying. There are many concerns with  
178 Dr. Scott's contract and his time spent out of the district. The FTA does not understand how  
179 the recent trip to China helps the current students pass tests. Mr. Stockless, who attended the  
180 trip to China, said it is trips like these that bring teachers, such as Daisy Huo, to Framingham at  
181 little to no cost to the District. They might be able to bring in 1-2 teacher aids next year. The  
182 FTA said they want to know what is happening now. Ms. Hugo mentioned she is forming a  
183 Community and Public Relations Task Force and will announce the members at the January 6  
184 meeting. The FTA asked for clarification if the task force is in response to Facebook blogs and  
185 Ms. Hugo said not 100%. She noted a parent recently reached out to her about the High School

186 report cards stating school will start at 6 a.m. and she immediately called Dr. Scott and they  
187 dealt with it. She said if the SC does not hear issues or concerns they cannot help. The FTA  
188 mentioned a monthly newsletter use to go out and that the current emails are all fluff. Mr.  
189 Taggart stated that we have forgotten how to talk to people. We can pick up the phone, set up  
190 a meeting, or drop a note if we have an issue. Ms. Renault said it is useful to sit down and talk  
191 because you feel validated and do not hear things second hand. Ms. Hugo said she has had  
192 children go through our system and she hears the frustration around the state and teachers are  
193 the target. With limited resources, they have fought for years to update the formula for the  
194 budget review. They had a \$40M shortfall and have only received \$11M back.

195  
196 The FTA believes that money is being spent the wrong way. They need to invest in ways for the  
197 parents to be more involved and educated. There are no after school buses for the ESL kids on  
198 the South side and this prevents them having access to activities. Mr. Limeri asked for  
199 clarification on what was meant by parent education and if it meant teaching parents English.  
200 The FTA said they need parenting programs for emotional handling skills. They recently had 12  
201 parents came to learn technology, such as phones and computers. They need more nights like  
202 this as IExcel has skewed data due to parents using the program to teach themselves, in an  
203 effort to help their children. They see a large amount of AP/Honors parents but only 10% of the  
204 ESL parents. Ms. Hugo noted that if they want the Committee to be visible in the schools, to  
205 invite them and the FTA stated Central Office never comes. Ms. Brosnahan said she emailed  
206 the PTO and Principals that if people want to talk, to give her information to anyone who asks.  
207 She cannot personally visit due to her full time job but is always available by phone or email.

208  
209 Mr. Limeri clarified the general themes of the evening: too much at once in regard to initiatives,  
210 lack of training and visibility, poor planning, work being pushed down from Central Office, not  
211 enforcing Contracts, SC not in touch, questionable use of money being spent, and too much  
212 turnover. The FTA said the money is there but it is not being used. Ms. Hugo explained salaries  
213 require a SC vote to be moved within the salaries category. Mr. Limeri added that they vote the  
214 bottom line at the Town and the SC allocates the money to prevent the Superintendent from  
215 moving money around or abusing his power. The budget is currently allocated in the best way  
216 to support the children. Ms. Hugo stated the Finance Subcommittee meets the second Tuesday  
217 of every month and invited members to attend for a better understanding of where the money  
218 is and how much is remaining for the year. In February, Ms. Hugo and Mr. Stockless will be  
219 heading to Washington DC to advocate for change. Mr. Limeri also noted that the budget is  
220 spent with little flexibility as only \$3.5M of a \$90M budget is spent on supplies, with the  
221 remaining tied up in salaries. Mr. Stockless said they have no control of the out of district  
222 budget. In regards to the Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Hugo mentioned that the  
223 Superintendent will bring forth a candidate and the SC can only say yes or no. If they say no  
224 there needs to be a valid reason as to why this person will not work. The FTA stated it is not  
225 the person it is the position. Ms. Hugo said this person will handle Title IX, communication and  
226 supervise the elementary schools. The FTA questioned several roles in Central Office and Mr.  
227 Limeri referred them to the Organizational Chart to see the function of a position and what it  
228 oversees.

229  
230 Ms. McKeon said that as leaders of the district, the SC and Superintendent need to be vocal and  
231 support the teachers. Mr. Limeri noted that the Superintendent is in favor of the Common Core  
232 and PARCC, and the philosophical differences need to be discussed. The FTA said most are not

233 in favor of PARCC. Ms. Brosnahan asked if they could provide a sample of the PARCC exam and  
234 Ms. Hugo stated they could get samples after December 29. The FTA noted that PARCC is timed  
235 and students have 75 minutes to take the exam, with the average student only requiring 50  
236 minutes. Ms. Hugo said we will be 1 year ahead in terms of having the practice and it does not  
237 count against the school until next year. The FTA questioned if the scores affect the teachers'  
238 reviews and the Committee said they would look into it but believed it did not. Ms. Hugo said  
239 that during state breakout sessions, they heard from several Superintendents that the students  
240 love the exam. While MCAS covers 100% of the MA critical framework, the new Common Core  
241 only covers 85% of the curriculum. The Common Core should have been in place the last two  
242 years but was not. Ms. Hugo said she hears the FTA loud and clear. The FTA said they are  
243 barely keeping a lid on members and Mr. Limeri said that people can email him directly.  
244

245 Ms. Hugo mentioned the upcoming IBB meeting on January 15. They will bring calendars to set  
246 up another meeting but not much will occur prior to January 1. She thanked everyone for  
247 attending.  
248

249 The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn.  
250

251 **MOTION: Moved by Mr. Limeri and seconded by Mr. Taggart that the School**  
252 **Committee adjourn the meeting. Discussion: None. Vote: Ms. Brosnahan, Ms.**  
253 **Connolly, Ms. Hugo, Mr. Limeri, Mr. Stockless and Mr. Taggart voting in favor; 6-0-0.**  
254

255 The meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.  
256

257 Meeting Documents

258 None  
259

260 *These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee at the meeting of January*  
261 *6, 2015.*  
262

263 *A copy of the minutes was forwarded to the Office of the Town Clerk on January 9, 2015.*