



Framingham Public Schools

Robert A. Tremblay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Adam Freudberg, Chair • Tiffanie Maskell, Vice Chair • Priscila Sousa, Clerk
Jessica Barnhill • Karen Dempsey • Geoffrey Epstein
Beverly Hugo • William LaBarge • Scott Wadland
Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE: OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: January 29, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Memorial Building-Blumer Room
150 Concord Street, Framingham

MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Adam Freudberg

PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Karen Dempsey
Geoffrey Epstein
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Priscila Sousa
Scott Wadland
Mayor Yvonne Spicer

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Nicholas Small, Student Advisory Committee Chair
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance & Operations
Joel Seeley, Owner's Project Manager
David Miles, Co-Chair School Building Committee
Jonathan Levi, Architect, Fuller Building Project
Christian Riordan, Consigli Construction
Laura Spear, Director of Special Education
Ildefonso Arrellano, Assistant Director of Special Education

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He noted that this meeting was being broadcast live on local cable, as well as for later playback, and on Facebook Live.

Public Comment

Dhana Bianco said that she is a Durham bus driver and is speaking about the unsafe driving practices due to the lack of support of the schools and the City with the behaviors of some of the students on busses. She said this has been spoken about by teachers and bus drivers ad nauseum with no clear plan to fix it. She gave examples of behaviors that she said are showing how the City is minimizing the behaviors on the school busses. She said that if students are not being held accountable for their actions, or the parents not held accountable for their child's actions, then the school department should be held accountable for their inaction. She asked for follow up.

Nicole Atchison said that the Stapleton PTO Board would like to thank Dr. Tremblay and senior leadership for the amicable meeting held this week. She said that they are feeling more optimistic about future plans, but remain concerned about the behaviors of today and tomorrow.

Robert Conroy said that he is a parent at Stapleton that has been affected by the environment. He said to keep in mind, when hearing the update tonight on data on classroom evacuations, to remember what this means for elementary age kids; it is hard for kids to compartmentalize and to continue learning, and the data is also only on events that are so bad that the classroom had to be evacuated. He said there have been significant injuries leading to students being sent to the nurse; 38 student injuries in 36 school days. He said it is easy to distance oneself from the data, but you need to remember that this is happening to children as young as five years old. He said the data does not tell the full story as it doesn't include bullying that is not caught by adults or disruptions that are not evacuated.

Zev Rieser said that he is a former Stapleton parent, and talked about his child's experience at Stapleton, which ultimately ended up in them leaving the Framingham Public Schools. He said that it was due to a lack of action from administration after parents and teachers have been asking for help, including at meetings and at the forum. He said that teachers have been needing support and no tangible changes have been made. He said that additional supports have not been brought to the school, but additional students have been enrolled when the school is already at a critical mass. He said that inaccurate data is being put out, and incidents are still happening.

Rebecca Reiner said that she is reading a letter from a parent in order to protect the student's identity. The letter shared their experience about reaching out to the central administration and the School Committee about two incidents that occurred in a bathroom to the child by an older student. The letter said that the parent made specific requests that a written safety plan be put in place, and a more effective plan to monitor hallways and bathrooms, and is disappointed it took three incidents to make it happen. The letter states that the data report did not capture behaviors such as these incidents, nor the emotional effects of any incidents. The letter said that the school is supposed to respond promptly and compassionately when problems are reported by students and parents.

Anne Sullivan asked for information regarding the identification requirement that will be implemented, such as: who came up with this new security policy, what the reasoning is, if there was a problem beforehand with the check in system, what data shows that this identification plan has improved security in other schools, what the district is allowed to do with this identification and data that is entered into the system. She said she thinks this will cause more fear and confusion in the immigrant community, and could cause parents to not trust school administration as it could send a message that they cannot easily see their children. She submitted a copy of her comment to the Superintendent.

FTA President Chris Mulrone said that students won a huge victory when the Student Opportunity Act was signed, and it is critically important that this money is spent on resources for children. She said that the FTA and Fund our Future have been advocates for this. She said that the FTA has been working with district leaders on what their needs are, and are also planning on having a public forum to get feedback from the public. She also invited the public to email her with any feedback at ftassoc@gmail.com.

Glenda Cohen said that she is an ESL teacher at the high school and here to speak about the visitor management policy. She said she appreciates recent efforts to make everyone safe, but wonders about the effect on immigrant families when asking for photo ids, especially at this time, and if the possible effect on them feeling safe. She said that the protocols also need to be specified on what will happen for people without picture ids.

The Chair asked that the concerns regarding the visitor management policy be referred to the Security Department as it is not a School Committee policy.

Gloria Pascual said that she spoke during Public Comment on September 18, 2018, as the School Committee Vice Chair, regarding accusations about her and her conduct as a member which she says were false. She asked for follow up, as well as for this to be recorded in meeting minutes. She said that the State Ethics Commission found no substantiation to the complaints and closed the case, and they do not require any further action. She said that she knew there was no basis for these accusations, and at the time was running for City Council, and those within the School Committee and Central Office who went forward with these claims put themselves in the election process.

City Councilor Cesar Stewart-Morales said that he is here to speak for his district's constituents, many of whom attend Stapleton. He said there is a need to prioritize finding solutions to the problem being raised, both in the short and long term, as well as to communicate these plans, and asks that the short term plan be done so by next week.

Robert Bolles said parents should continue to attend School Committee meetings like he has, a lot of the time he is here by himself and one other member of the public. He said that they should show up to School Committee and City Council meetings to find out what's going on and to get something done.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair said that he went to the most recent President's PTO meeting where he spoke about the School Committee Long Term Agenda, went over the public comment rules, and encouraged anyone to provide feedback as part of the FY21 and Student Opportunity Act development processes.

Update from the School Building Committee on the Fuller Middle School Building Project

Fuller Middle School Building Owner's Project Manager Joel Seeley, Co-Chair of the School Building Committee David Miles, Architect for the Fuller Building Project Jonathan Levi and Christian Riordan from Consigli Construction went over the design overview of the project, including the total project budget summary of costs and showing how it is under budget, the milestone schedule, and the construction update. David Miles said that all updates are on the Fuller Middle School Building Project website, including aerial pictures from the drones.

Questions. Mr. Wadland said items that are listed as being alternate costs were actually originally approved by the City, and were added due to other items coming in under bid. Mr. Epstein asked if they are going to be putting in a heat pump for HVAC, and if not if it would be easy to swap out from gas in the future. Mr. Levi said that for Fuller they studied over six technologies for HVAC, and that if the choice was fossil free the District would be paying a large amount of capital costs, and also operating costs, and it would be millions more than the high efficiency HVAC system that was chosen. He said that in the future if there is a need to switch, it would be a new plant system but not a new distribution system. Mr. Seeley said that LEED certification is part of the MSBA process; schools have to achieve at least 40 credit points within metrics, and be 20 percent more energy efficient than code. He said that the HVAC system that was chosen is 38 percent better performing than code. Mayor Spicer asked if they found any surprises during construction they did not anticipate. Mr. Riordan said they did find a surprise within the soil, but reacted to that and still remained on schedule. Mr. Miles added that they found an old oil tank buried in the front that was removed with no problem. Ms. Sousa asked if the furniture fixtures and equipment listed in the budget are custom made for the building. Mr. Seeley said this category includes anything not attached to walls or floors, down to the level of pots and pans in the kitchen, and cleaning machines, and they are procured through manufacture standard furniture. He said it will be quite a process to be looking over all the items that are available, and the amount in this section was determined in the schematic design phase. Ms. Dempsey said she looks forward to the Disability Commission discussing accessibility at their next meeting with School Building Committee officials.

Special Education Department Program Update and Annual Report on ACCEPT and TEC Collaboratives

Director of Special Education Laura Spear and Assistant Director of Special Education Ildefonso Arellano gave an overview of Accept and TEC Collaboratives, including the amount of students and the financial benefit of being part of the collaboratives. They went over a Special Education update including the population and characteristics of all the different special education programs, and an update on the Special Education Audit. They said the number of students in the Sensory Hearing TLC Program is higher than other districts due to families moving to be closer to The Learning Center for the Deaf. They spoke about the Special Education Program Strand Committee that was started last year and what they have been working on, including the feeder school pattern. Ms. Spear said that programs were originally put where there was space available, and were not thinking of relationships, connections, and feeder patterns. She

said the district has saved money by keeping students in district through the multi program expansion, and it is also in the best interest for the students. She went over the trends they are seeing in BLOCKS with an increase of special education students, and how this will affect the elementary schools.

Questions. Ms. Sousa asked how transportation will be effected with the trend of more high need preschoolers. Ms. Spear said that in elementary schools this will require additional monitors on a smaller reduced capacity vehicle. Mr. Epstein asked about facilities and space, and what changes need to be made to correct the feeder system. Ms. Spear said they have to find the best space for students; this could include bathrooms being altered, access and air conditioning need to be thought of, among other items, while still trying to give opportunity to be with their peers. Mr. Epstein asked how to address the higher amount that is spent on out of district students compared to other districts within the budget. Ms. Spear said she would love to create more internal programs, but this requires location and space. She said that the priority would be at the high school level, such as an internal program for students with high anxiety, school phobia, and an emotional piece. Mr. LaBarge asked about all the behaviors that have been recently discussed at Stapleton. Ms. Spear said that while the Emotional Disability Program is at Stapleton, not all of the behaviors that we are seeing in the school involve students within that program. She said that a lot of resources that were for the program have been used and pulled in other directions, and they need to figure out if tightening that up, and seeing if it will create more concerns on the other side for students not in the program. Ms. Hugo said it is important for as many children as possible to attend preschool, and asked if any students are accepted and turned away due to space. Ms. Spear said the concern would be space in order to continue to add special education classrooms. Mr. Freudberg said the district and School Committee members are working with Framingham Special Education Parent Advisory Council to schedule a public information forum on special education.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Tremblay said there have been a lot of meetings at **Stapleton** looking for root causes. He said some changes that have been made include tracking data to see if improving or not, adding staff and three new behaviors support specialists, midterm realigning programming staff to make sure they are in the right places, in addition to setting expectations around behavioral expectations for bathroom use, for consequences for inappropriate behaviors, and in the longer term getting classes set in the right way and making sure the Emotional Disability classroom has supports in the fall. He added that with the attempt to get more accurate data, it's likely that the data will get worse with better collection practices in place. He said he is looking to create a survey for bus drivers to give feedback on behaviors they are seeing, working on developing a code of conduct to have everyone be involved in what expectations are for behaviors in school.

Questions. Members spoke about needing to have faster action and the seriousness of the problem and behaviors. Dr. Tremblay said the data is not to look at what to do about staffing, the data is to see if the staff that are added are making a difference, and if additional or redeployed staff are needed. Mr. Epstein asked about looking at the program to see if students who are in the inclusive program, perhaps should be in the substantially different program. Dr. Tremblay said they have looked at that, and some students in the program did not probably need to be; there is a mindset in the district that if a student has behavioral challenges should go to Stapleton, and trying to shift that mindset. Mr. Freudberg said that School Improvement Plans are within the committee's purview, and asked for update on the status on where things

are going right and where they aren't within Stapleton's previously approved plan. Mr. Freudberg added that Mr. Epstein has also asked about the correlation between arrivals at Stapleton and student behavior; the longest bus rides tend to have more behavior, are there specific Stapleton busses that should have monitors that don't currently have them.

Mr. Freudberg said that due to time, and the fact that at the meeting next week Durham will be in attendance due to the letter sent regarding the breach of contract, there will be no transportation update tonight.

Dr. Tremblay said that for the **Student Achievement Update** he wanted to talk about some items at Woodrow Wilson. He said they have developed a Student Council Ambassador Program, where two students per classroom in 5th grade are elected to promote student agency. He said that 5th grade students started a school wide fundraiser for animals affected by fires in Australia. He said that they have moved away from a PTO model to a community gathering model, and they have over 200 attendees each month where they provide meals, homework help, and with community partner Jewish Family Services provide many other resources.

Dr. Tremblay presented the **2020-2021 School Calendar** for a first reading. He said that some items they discussed were taking away a February or April vacation and starting before or after Labor Day, all which could come with complications. He said that by law districts cannot end the school year after the end of June, so if they have to make up days due to snow days, they have to take away from other places, such as vacations or Saturday school. He said they are looking for feedback from the public.

Questions. Mr. Wadland suggested that in the future the calendar is addressed earlier in the year to help parents figure out summer programming and childcare. There was discussion about encouraging feedback from parents and teachers, working on no homework days being regulated, and if professional development days could be more beneficial to the students throughout the year instead of towards the end of the year. Mr. Freudberg asked about the decision of December 23rd being a full day instead of a half day. Dr. Tremblay said the 23rd has never been a half day on 23rd in his tenure, but many years ago it was, the 24th is a full day off and want to avoid playing favorites to one holiday or celebration over another.

Motion: To approve a first reading of the 2020/2021 school year calendar.

Moved: Mr. Wadland **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mr. Freudberg noted that the vote to finalize the calendar is listed for February 5, 2020.

Mr. Lynch said that the **FY20 Budget** is just under 55% spent or encumbered. Ms. Maskell asked what occupational education includes, and why it is at 112%. Mr. Lynch said that line is for high school students who want to go into a vocational field that is not offered at Keefe Tech, the district has to provide transportation and pay tuition for that school. He said that they project the amount based on previous years trends, and they were off 2 or 3 students this year. He said that the Negative Food Balance is at \$60,727.10 which is a little below where it was last year, he said part of this is likely due to the fact that Woodrow Wilson this year is part of the Community Eligibility Program, which means all students get free breakfast and lunch. Mr. Freudberg said they will be looking to get public feedback for the Student Opportunity Act, including a public forum which is being planned.

Dr. Tremblay said that the Mayor and City Solicitor have followed up since the City Council voted on the Perini lease, and no action is required from the committee tonight. He said that next week the Department of Environmental Protection is having a community forum on the remediation efforts of the cleanup of the general chemical site adjacent to the Woodrow Wilson school, and they are working on offering childcare and translation so families can attend. He said information on the school security visitor sign in process was issued this afternoon, there is information available on the website, this was the initiative the Director of Safety and Security identified and presented on in the summer to the committee, as well as has been in place at high school since the beginning of the school year. He said that this is not linked to any immigration status, stressed that no information is shared outside of the school, except with the solely localized system that does cross checks on the National Sex Offender Registry. He said that there are protocols in place for visitors without photo id. Ms. Maskell asked who is responsible for this new implementation staff wise and said she is concerned about how it was rolled out to parents, there is a need to follow up on thoughtfulness and reassurance to families. Ms. Barnhill said she appreciates that this is being done with student safety in mind, and is the reality of the situation we are all in now.

Rules and Administration Subcommittee Presentation and Vote on the Report

Mr. Wadland went over the rules report on what is being recommended to change on items such as the meetings schedule, subcommittees, liaisons, and agenda framework. There was discussion about how liaisons for PTOs would provide better connection with the community. Mr. Freudberg recommended lowering it to one member per PTO, and not with the expectation that they attend every month, so members do not overextend themselves, and as some PTO meetings don't expect external guests. Ms. Hugo said that the Delegate Taskforce was not discontinued by the MASC, it was put together by the committee to write resolutions. She would recommend that the MASC Legislative Liaison can oversee the writing of the resolutions. Mr. Wadland said that the Wellness Committee is in the process of reconstituting this year, so he recommends that once they have an updated mission it will be included in the report. Mr. Freudberg said there are other potential future liaisons by ordinance or Mayor policy, as there are two already; the Welcoming Immigrants Taskforce and the Census Complete Count Committee. Members discussed the naming of the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee versus Student Achievement and Accountability, and what the subcommittee achieved and focused on in the last term. Mr. Freudberg recommended adding a line at the end of the description "with a focus on student achievement and accountability", no objections. Mayor Spicer suggested adding Inclusion to the title for the Equity and Diversity Subcommittee. There was discussion on removing racial from the subcommittee title and the reasoning for it, including to be inclusive of more types of equity and what effect that has. Mayor Spicer also added Inclusion needs to be added in the description of the performance for the subcommittee, no objections on either suggestion. Mr. Freudberg asked if the Health and Wellness subcommittee will be looking at how much time students get for recess. Mr. Wadland said that the descriptions for subcommittees were meant to be general for scoping out the broad frame, not meant to be exclusive of anything. Ms. Hugo suggests that within the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity description it list out including but not limited to race, LGBTQ, socioeconomic, etc. Mr. Small said he is in support of the student advisory update being added to the agenda; this will let members know what they are working on and what to expect

between presentations, as well as it is good to hear student voice. Mayor Spicer said she attends almost every School Committee meeting, and happy to give the Mayor's Update as listed on the agenda to keep members informed.

Motion: To approve the Rules and Administration Report with the changes discussed.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mr. Freudberg highlighted that how the public can get accommodations to attend meetings is now listed on the agenda, and that the School Committee has gone paperless. He said that members will be getting future communication on appointments to subcommittee and liaisons.

Subcommittee Reports

Mr Epstein said that three warrants were signed.

Approval of Minutes, Gifts, and Scholarships

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of December 18, 2019.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Motion: To accept the \$1,000 gift from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care to The Community Resource Development Office for non-curriculum classroom supplies

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Sousa **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Second Round of Public Comment

Robert Bolles said that he is confused about changing the name of subcommittees to Building and Grounds. Mr. Freudberg clarified that there are two different subcommittees: Building and Grounds and Teaching and Learning.

Adjournment

Mr. Freudberg said that he has public records information regarding one of the issues that was discussed at public comment, and it will be added to the packet.

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Memo on the Fuller Middle School Building Project

Fuller Middle School Project Slides

Special Education Department Program Update

ACCEPT and TEC Membership Analysis

ACCEPT Annual Report

TEC Annual Report

Draft 2020-2021 FPS School Year Calendar

Stapleton Elementary School Update

FY20 YTD Budget

Food Services Negative Balance Report

Food Services Negative Balance Notification Memo

Rules and Administration Subcommittee Draft Report

Warrants

Draft December 18, 2019 Open Session Minutes
\$1,000 Gift from Harvard Pilgrim
Public Comment Submissions

These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee in Open Session on February 26, 2020 .

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on March 4, 2020.