

ROCKPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING
Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Chairperson Michael Kelley called the regular meeting of the Rockport School Committee to order at 7:02 p.m. in the MS/HS Library. Members present were Colleen Coogan, Susan Brisson, and Martha Morgan. Tracy McLaughlin-Volpe was absent. Also, present were Superintendent Robert Liebow and Recording Secretary Ingrid Keating.

I. A. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Martha Morgan motioned to approve the regular minutes from February 4, 2015.
Seconded: Colleen Coogan seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

Motion: Martha Morgan motioned to approve the regular minutes from March 4, 2015.
Seconded: Colleen Coogan seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion carried 3-0. Michael Kelley abstained.

B. Personnel Actions

Christine Lenahan has accepted the position of Interim Director of Student Services effective March 23, 2015.

The three Kindergarten Assistant positions were reduced to .8 FTE from 1.0 beginning March 16, 2015 due to a reduction in grant funding.

II. Community Participation

A. School Council Student Representative N/A

B. Public Participation N/A

III. Discussion and Recommended Actions

A. K-12 Guidance/Counseling Presentation

Elementary school psychologist Jamie Nichols explained that she works with student who may be susceptible to bullying. She teaches them how to recognize bullies and how to deal with them. The principal and assistant principal deal with accusations of bullying and any discipline that may be needed. She says that students are referred to her through teachers, parents and sometimes the student themselves. Ms. Nichols reported that the Second Step program is working very well and is excited about the PBIS program (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support). She also teaches students responsible use of social media but knows that third graders are on Instagram.

RMHS school psychologist Mysha Khulman explained that she is not on the front line for bullying, but that guidance counselors will generally hear about it first and the administrators deal with any issues. She will counsel students on self-confidence, recognizing bullies, and how to self-advocate. Mrs. Khulman meets with students who have psychologist services in their IEP, but is able to see other students when needed.

Superintendent Liebow stated that the psychologist and guidance departments are the safety net of the school, that the culture of the school has improved and the school system is extremely lucky to have psychologists K-12.

Mrs. Khulman explained that PBIS is a framework that can adapt to our schools, creating clear positive expectations. This program focuses on the positive actions that students display in the classrooms, buses, on the playgrounds and in the community. Ms. Nichols stated that the program will encourage "same language" K-12 and has ways to involve parents.

Middle School Guidance Counselor AnneMarie Chase was happy to report that the middle school does not have a lot of bullying. She will educate students on bullying; they don't understand that if someone bumps

in to you in the hall that is not bullying. Students will seek her out to ask how to deal with bullies and other issues and she advises them on how to handle those situations and to be secure and confident. She feels her office is a safe place in the school and has done mediations between students. Many issues come up with mis-interpretation of text messages. Prior to the end of the school year she will meet with the 5th grade teachers to find out issues that students might be having so that she has some background information before they enter 6th grade.

High School Guidance Counselor Amy Rose has designed a program, The Lighthouse Project, to influence the culture of the school by empowering students to understand the impact they have through simple, random acts of kindness. It is made up of a mixed group of students some being leaders and the others that are not. The students have created a Twitter site and received a presidential accommodation.

High School Guidance Counselor Linda Vaughan reported that 13 students are enrolled in Dual Enrollment Psychology course at Gloucester High School, 17 enrolled in Virtual HS classes, over 60 students are will attend the first Cape Ann College and Career Fair. 5 RHS chorus and madrigal choir members will sing the National Anthem at the Honor Scholars Dinner, and 6 students are members of the Lighthouse Project. Mrs. Vaughan also reported that students are participating in internships and the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce will be helping in bridging the gap between the schools and local businesses..

Parent Elizabeth Malcomson wanted to add that her son has found Mysha Kuhlman to be the person that he can approach, and as a new staff member she is amazing.

B. School Choice Vote

Motion: Martha Morgan motioned to have the Rockport Public School District remain as a school choice district.

Seconded: Colleen Coogan seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

C. Attorney Review/appointment

Motion: Martha Morgan motioned to reappoint Naomi Stonberg as the attorney for the Rockport School District.

Seconded: Susan Brisson seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 4 -0.

D. Policy review

Martha Morgan reported the policy sub-committee reviewed File JEB: Entrance Age. Former School Committee Member Melissa Tingley thought that the change, for the birth date requirement, came about when the district went from half to full day kindergarten and that the child needed more stamina to participate all day. The social and emotional status and transition years (ie grade 6 and 9) need to be considered if the child is ready or not when placed ahead of the age appropriate grade. The committee looked at other districts and found most are like ours, based on MASC suggested policy. Rockport is one of the few that has a requirement birth date for first grade. They will gather information from other schools and their Gifted and Talented Policies. At their next sub-committee meeting they will review File EGAF: Telephones and Personal Communication Devices.

The following is a first reading for revision to:

File: JFBB-1 SCHOOL CHOICE It is the policy of this school district not to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Interdistrict School Choice Law (M.G.L. 76:12B.) This decision must be reaffirmed annually prior to June 1st by a vote of the School Committee following a public hearing. In the event the Rockport School Committee votes to participate, the following local conditions would apply: 1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students. 2. That by June 1 of every school year, a public hearing will be held to review participation in the school choice program. 3. That resident students be given priority placement in any classes or programs within the district. 4. That the selection of non-resident students for admission when the number of requests exceed the number of available spaces be in the form of a random drawing. There will be

two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place ~~during the last week of the current school year but no later than~~ prior to July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings. 5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the district until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program. 6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.

IV. Information and proposals

A. School Council Update

Minutes received from RMHS School Council. Elementary Principal Shawn Maguire and Assistant Principal Heather Castonguay reported that they are attending an English Language Learners class, which educators are required to take for recertification. The class has taught them a lot of new skills and styles that can be applied to other subjects as well.

The RMHS School Council is discussing standard based grading, where the student moves along at their own pace moving forward after meeting the standard. They also have discussed PARRC vs. MCAS. About 50% of the districts are participating in PARRC and they have heard there is talk about a revamped MCAS.

B. Donations

Mr. & Mrs. Darren Mason donated a hard cello case to be used in the RPS music department.

Mr. Lawrence Robinson donated 100 CDs to the RPS music department.

Mrs. Martha Morgan donated 45 Pre-K picture books and 15 grades 5-10 hardcover books to the RPS Library department.

C. Updates

Sub-committee reports:

N/A

V. Correspondence

From Donald Siriani, on behalf of Senator Bruce Tarr, Re: Budget Input Request. Martha Morgan will respond on behalf of the committee.

VI. Future Agenda Items

A. Superintendent's Report/FundFlow (3/18)

B. Attorney Review/appointment (3/18)

C. K-12 Guidance/Counseling (3/18)

VII. Calendar

April 1, 2015, Regular Meeting

April 4, 2015, Town Meeting

April 18, 2015, Regular Meeting

VIII. Executive Session

N/A

Motion: motioned to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:17 p.m.

Seconded: seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried -0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Liebow
Superintendent of Schools