

ROCKPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING  
Wednesday, May 2, 2018

Chairperson Colleen Coogan called the regular meeting of the Rockport School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Middle/High School Library. Present were Nicole Altieri, Colleen Coogan, Heather Nelson, Mary Porter and Rebecca Sly. Also, present were Superintendent Robert Liebow and Recording Secretary Ingrid Keating.

I. Opening of Regular Meeting

A. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Heather Nelson motioned to approve the regular minutes from April 4, 2018  
Seconded: Nicole Altieri seconded the motion.  
Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

B. Personnel Actions

RESIGN: Angelina Coneys will be resigning from her position of Elementary School Kindergarten Teacher effective July 1, 2018.  
LEAVE: Beth Kardenetz has been approved an unpaid one-year leave of absence for the 2018-2019 school year.  
APPOINTED: Kirk Keating has been appointed to the position of Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, beginning August 1, 2018, at the annual rate of \$68,970 prorated to \$63,156.  
OTHER: Danielle Jylkka has been granted a permanent transfer from 5<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Nicole Pizzimenti has been granted a permanent transfer from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to kindergarten.

II. Community Participation

A. Student Advisory Representative N/A  
B. Public Participation N/A

III. Discussion and Recommended Action

A. K-12 Social Studies Presentation

Stacey Twombly Reading Specialist/Curriculum Coordinator and Julie Raftelis Title 1 Teacher/Curriculum Coordinator reported that they were awarded a grant to build literacy and have been able to purchase whole class sets of books, supply a Grade 4 Book Cart and offer a Big Top Books Reading Celebration. They reviewed the Narrative Writing Rubrics and ELA Data Days. They are in the process of Spring benchmarking and working on next years caseload. Ongoing ELA initiatives are the use of Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment system, training staff in Foundations/Wilson, and Response To Intervention instructional model. Elementary Principal Todd Simendinger stated that Mrs. Twombly and Mrs. Raftelis are doing an incredible job, the focus on reading has increased and they are already seeing successful results at all grade levels. They reviewed the revisions to the Massachusetts History and Social Science curriculum frameworks.

Middle School Social Curriculum Coordinator Joanne Hildreth reported on the investment in learning through how kids learn, focus on active over passive learning and growth mindset. The department is upgrading existing writing prompts, re-examining their essential questions, opportunities for students to show their thinking, creativity and learning. Mrs. Hildreth wished they had more time to work with the high school to align writing and analyze documents, and create targets for growth in the DDM areas. She

explained that technology is helpful in visualizing the world, research, word processing and virtual field trips. Grouping in action is a student goal by increasing student engagement, teach comfort and norms around collaboration, use a variety of groupings, and allow students to be the teachers. They will continue to work on grouping in action goal and align with the new frameworks.

High School Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator Scott Larsen reviewed the current and future course offerings. The department has been implementing pieces from a self-study that was coordinated/mentored by Kevin O'Reilly, a retired department chair from Hamilton-Wenham HS. Last summer they identified goals, created matrix for assessments, work on a more even "stair case" from grade to grade, and working to create expectations for electives. Mr. Larsen explained the assessment sequence and the use of U block time. Once a month the department meets during U-block to "talk history", they are reading "Friends Divided, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson." In the future the frameworks will be changing, social studies may be a 4 year requirement, continue work with Kevin O'Reilly, and create consistency in expectations and guidelines in the department.

B. K-12 ELA/Reading Presentation

Middle School ELA/Reading Curriculum Coordinator Kriisten Fauci presented the goals for the department including alignment with the frameworks, create common rubrics, graphic organizers and checklists, vocabulary instruction, update materials, revitalize summer reading expectations and analyze data from testing and continue departmental work with argument writing. Some departmental changes are easyCBM benchmark/progress monitoring, increase chromebook use, implementation of Literature Circles; focus on speaking and listening and development of Integrated Literacy Skills. Department highlights are focused on revitalizing summer reading, presented "To Kill a Mockingbird", spelling bee, 8<sup>th</sup> graders reading to elementary students, creative writing students wrote and read books to kindergarten, students engaged in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" production. They would like to see their students read more, write more, speak more, and listen more.

High School Curriculum Coordinator Chris Amuzzini spoke about current course offerings and the advantages and potential disadvantages of a theme based-curriculum. The department would like .4 - .6 FTE added to the teaching staff which would enable them to increase elective offerings. High School Principal Amy Rose noted that the department did a complete review of the English curriculum last summer and when she observes a class she doesn't want to leave.

C. NEASC

(Referenced in high school improvement plan)

D. Student Handbooks

The elementary school does not have any changes.

High School Principal Amy Rose stated that the Principals need the support of the school committee in relaying the importance and enforcing the school handbooks. Attendance, system-wide, has been an ongoing problem. Parents frequently request flexibility and if you adjust for one then you have to adjust for everyone. Mrs. Rose has seen more habitual attendance problems and feels it is because of the inconsistency of rule enforcement. Principal Rose is also looking at increased punishment in vaping, possibly a Saturday detention with cessation lessons. Cell phone use is total out of control and we are doing a disservice to our students. There is discussion with the faculty for implementing consistent routines and practices throughout the whole school on eliminating use in the classroom. Principal Rose will notify the parents before school starts next year regarding the changes. The School Committee supports her 100% and suggested that the principals publish in notices to parents some language like the following: the school committee support the schools in enforcing the rules in the handbooks so that students may be more successful in the future.

E. School Improvement Plans

Elementary School Principal Todd Simendinger presented the school improvement plan. The elementary plan includes increasing K-5 instructional time with social-emotional curriculum, PBIS Implementation: Phase II, meet diverse needs of students, ensure that students are appropriately supported and challenged, and school safety.

Middle School Principal Amanda Lamantia presented the Middle School Improvement Plan which focuses on Student Motivation and Pride in Achievement, Student Empowerment and Student-Centered Instruction. The Middle School will evaluate the current schedule and research alternatives, participate with the district to identify and implement assessments that collect data from multiple measures and assess the social/emotional learning into the curriculum during the 2018-2019 school year.

High School Principal Amy Rose presented the high school improvement plan. Goal 1 revolves around the overlapping theme of creating a student-centered school where students are active participants and leaders in all aspects of their educational development. The district is working with consultant Kathy Pacardo on professional development consistency K-12. Mrs. Rose explained that the recent NEASC report helps to create and implement the improvement plans, focusing on curriculum alignment K-12 and having common expectations for grading within departments and school wide.

F. Half Day Professional Development Re-schedule (6/1)

Motion: Mary Porter motioned to reschedule the Professional Half Day cancelled due to a snow day on March 13<sup>th</sup> to June 1, 2018  
Seconded: Nicole Altieri seconded the motion.  
Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

G. Superintendent's Evaluation

Chairperson Colleen Coogan stated that the DESE Superintendent Evaluation format does not have flexibility regarding additional efforts during the school year that Mr. Liebow takes on and does not get recognition. She stated that his overall performance is really "Proficient Plus", but they feel he is an exemplary superintendent. He is highly visible, fosters a team culture, respectful, mentors relationships, and is strong in budget preparation. One area to work in would be in working with building principals to evaluate how well students are prepared for their next step.

H. School Committee Self-evaluation

The school committee struggles with the time, due to open meeting laws, to update the policies. The new school committee member handbook has helped with orientation but the committee feels there is still room for orientation improvement. Members feel there is respect amongst the committee, they share pertinent information and due their homework. There is a cooperative and transparent relationship with the Superintendent. Perhaps the committee could strengthen their advocacy in the community regarding the budget. Public communication is still a struggle, even with the use of facebook and website updates.

I. Field Trips N/A

J. Policy revise/review N/A

K. Warrants and Payroll

IV. Information and proposals

A. School Council Update

B. Donations

Mr & Mrs. Bryan Langley donated two books “Loot” and “School for Good and Evil #3” to be used in the RMHS Library.

A Bigfoot Sound System (43,200) was anonymously donated to the used by the athletic department.

C. Updates

Sub-committees: N/A

D Other Business

Mr. Liebow reported that there is a meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup> to further discuss school safety. He has offered a video of him taking Alice training via a webinar. He believes that the Rockport Schools will develop a blended version of Alice that will meet the needs of the district. Mr. Liebow, Chief Horvath, Officer Wesley and Officer Mahoney are all trained to be trainers. They will teach the staff what to do and feel the students will follow their instructions. The students will not receive Alice training. Mr. Liebow feels that this approach gives the teachers more options such as deciding to stay in place or evacuate. Discussion regarding the “C” in Alice – Counter, Mr. Liebow says that we would never practice with the students but want it be in the minds of the faculty as an option. The implementation of “Alice” will be a work in progress establishing what works for the school district and getting all staff trained.

V. Correspondence

Chairperson Coogan received advice from Mike Gilbert at the MASC regarding candidate endorsement. She was advised that a school committee can’t endorse a specific selectmen candidate but can publish what they are looking for in one. She presented a statement that reflects the traits and policies that support our schools and that they believe are needed in a selectman. The committee approved that she should send it to the Gloucester Times and publish on the school committee facebook page with the additional language of something to the affect of “what families and children bring to a town, vibrant, and sustainable future with families..... “

VI. Future Agenda Items

- A. Superintendent’s Report/FundFlow
- B. K-12 Math Presentations (5/17)
- C. K-12 Science (5/17)
- D. School Committee Handbook Review (5/17)
- E. Curriculum Highlights (6/6)
- F. Essex Tech Rep. Bruce Perkins (6/6)

VII. Calendar

- A. TBD, IT Review/”Vision of RPS” at Selectmen’s Meeting – Town Hall
- B. May 16, 2018, Regular Meeting
- C. June 6, 2018, Regular Meeting

VIII. Executive Session

Motion: Mary Porter motioned to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:29 p.m.  
Seconded: Heather Nelson seconded the motion.  
Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Liebow  
Superintendent of Schools