



TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
March 22, 2016
Conference Room F
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Daryl Rynning, Chairman
Laura Often, Vice Chair
Peter Carlson, Secretary
Maureen Cohen, Member
Jennifer Connelly

Student Bianca Carangelo
Representatives: Hannah Kelley

Also Present: Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools
Tracey Calo, Assistant Superintendent
Daniel Gale, Finance Director

Call to Order – Open Session

Chairperson's Update - None
Community Groups and Citizens - None

1. Educational Reports

DECA Conference Update: Bianca Carangelo and Cadrin Msumba, were present to give an overview of their DECA Conference experience. On March 10th, 11th and 12th they were in Boston participating in the event. The competition includes individuals and teams who create business projects, they role play, answer questions, and are scored on their projects. Grafton had a 1st place winner and she will be competing in the international conference held in Nashville, 7 students in all will be attending. Cadrin outlined his project which was a financial literacy project. With his project, students are taught banking, the value of saving, budgeting, budgeting around holiday events and how to plan for life after college. Participants included students from the elementary level through high school. Lessons given were interactive for both students and teachers and both found it valuable. Cadrin placed 4th out of 11 which qualified him for internationals. Cadrin felt this program was teaching lessons beyond the common core curriculum and noted that the program had grown in size a lot since he began participating. The School Committee thanked Bianca and Cadrin for their presentation/update on the conference.

2. Improvement Plan Update Millbury Street Elementary School
 - a. Joanne Stocklin was present to give an overview of the MSES School Improvement Plan. She acknowledged the School Advisory Council and thanked them all for their continued hard work and support. Ms. Stocklin reviewed the 4 goals for the year and highlighted some specifics on each. Goal #1 Collaboration: The collaborative learning groups will continue to develop to expand teachers' repertoire of instructional strategies and assessment practices. Goal #2 Instruction: Implement research based instructional practices supporting the learning needs of all students. Goal #3 Assessments: Collaboratively develop and implement district assessments in alignment with district curriculum maps to inform instruction and measure student progress. Goal #4 Communication/Community: Use a variety of strategies to support every family to participate actively and appropriately in the classroom and school community. Mrs. Coakley outlined the difference between cooperative learning and collaborative learning. Cooperative was usually a role or a task and collaborative learning engaged students in solving a problem/task. The students developed the product and the solution which improved student engagement. Mrs. Stocklin also reviewed the MSES values; Interactive learning, academic excellence, social responsibility, personal integrity, critical thinking and student empowerment. Mrs. Connelly was impressed, through the eyes of her second grader; she could see how the collaborative learning was working. Mrs. Rynning thanked Mrs. Stocklin for her report, it was done well and very informative.
 - b. MSES School Report – Joanne Stocklin and Chris Miller gave their report on Instructional Technology Infusion at the Millbury Street School. The intent was to prepare the students for a global society. Mrs. Stocklin discussed the necessary skills students would need as they entered society; critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. Ms. Miller gave an outline of skills being taught to the children through technology; by using Google aps for education which included Google drive, Google docs and slides in Google drive. Students begin learning in the second grade so by the time they leave for middle school they are prepared. Ms. Miller explained how they were expanding technology from one grade to the next and by using Google docs they could share projects with students from other schools; a great way to teach collaboration and incorporate collaborative learning and creativity. Ms. Miller reviewed some additional programs being used such as storyboard, animation, iMovie, scratch, inspiration and Kid Pix. Ms. Russo, discussed incorporating technology in to the ELA Classroom and how they created the “Readbox”. With the Readbox students were able to create a book trailer in lieu of a book report. They used Adobe Voice to create the trailer, uploaded their work connecting to the teachers web page and with a QR Code students were then able to view other students presentations/trailers and decide if this was a book they may be interested in reading. Ms. Russo also used newsela.com for the second year. This allowed students to connect with current events; the articles are adapted for the students. The articles have a short quiz at the end and the articles automatically

adjust to reading levels. This program also allowed teachers a tool to track reading process. Mrs. Russo also noted that in March as part of National Reading Month, Grafton will be paired with a school in North Carolina to participate in an online session with the other classroom. Mrs. Often felt bringing technology and students together globally is fantastic. Mrs. Rynning felt this was very creative and pertinent, a great benefit for the students. Rich Carew was present to discuss how Chrome books were being used in the Millbury Street and North Street Schools. The books have been available for about a month now, they had a mobile cart with 25 laptops. This was a great benefit, the 6th grade students are beginning to see more technology noting this was a great age to begin teaching mobile technology. Students were using Newsela, grammar Webquests, writing assignments and Google docs. Laptops are assigned to each student and they are taught about care as well as appropriate uses. Mr. Carew discussed what programs they were using such as the Newsela program, grammar Webquests, writing assignments through Google classroom, and Google docs. Students were learning how to type, write, share documents and see quick results. Mr. Carew discussed math and how technology was being used here as well. Common Assessments can be done and shared immediately with Google classroom. Students can do practice games, review math videos and take online quizzes. Kathy Carew outlined additional benefits of chrome books; and it's assistive technology in the classroom. She outlined programs being used such as Kursweil text reader, Bookshare and Learning Ally-audible books, Speech to text and text to speech and Ipad Apps (snaptyping, dragon & SeeSaw). Ms. Carew felt these were great way to assist students with reading and writing; they are already seeing test scores rising. Also discussed were technology being used for students who still needed more. They were using Augmentative Communication Voice Output Devices such as switches, go Talk Voice Output sing Use devices, Ipad with applications for voice output and Boardmaker online. Mrs. Often said it was clear how technology enhances, and engages students learning abilities; technology was not just a luxury, it was just as important as the books. Mrs. Stocklin recognized the staff that attended this evening and thanked her entire staff for their work. Neil Trahan thanked Mrs. Stocklin and was happy to see the benefit behind the technology department and how it worked in the classroom. He commended the teachers for risk taking. Mr. Trahan wanted to make sure the tools were available along with training for educators across the district. Mr. Trahan thanked the staff for their impressive technology visions and he discussed his future visions for instructional technology. The committee thanked Mrs. Stocklin and her staff for an informative presentation.

- c. Curriculum Update – Tracey Calo and Kristen Gasper: Ms. Calo gave an update on teaching and learning across the district. The March Professional Development day offered 20 workshops with a diversity of topics. There was a commonality, they all targeted district needs while being different in nature. Teacher participation was strong and the feedback was positive; they hoped this would be offered again next year. Ms. Calo thanked the 20 presenters. Ms. Calo said the majority of participants were satisfied with the outcome; felt it was

useful and engaging, well planned and interactive. Ms. Calo discussed Boys in Mind they ran a parent workshop on male learning styles to support male learners. Ms. Calo will run these sessions next year as well. The Summer Academy is being rolled out for teachers to engage in professional development over the summer. The collaborative learning pilot was discussed by Ms. Calo; there was great success even with it being relatively new to the district. She would work over the summer to identify topics, and then run pilots like this one, in all buildings next year. Ms. Gasper outlined the Professional Development days for English Language Learners. Seven students from the High School presented to 50 teachers using their favorite instructional strategies which they hoped would be used in the classroom. Ms. Calo noted that the midyear coffees just finished up, they meet with staff across district. She thanked the Dauphinais family for allowing them to hold meetings at the country store. The positive feedback across the board discussed. There was great appreciation for the PD Days and the staff truly appreciated the support given across the district. Additional feedback was relative to balanced literacy which Ms Calo reviewed. They were looking into this to be sure instruction had the key elements to be effective. Ms. Gasper outlined the success of working with writing and word study throughout grade levels. The Report Card was completed and they updated the reporting standards across the district. They changed the format of the card as well. The committee has asked to continue and work on a teacher grading manual. Ms. Gasper gave an update on the Math Resource Committee which began working over a year ago. She also discussed the changes adopted by the state for new science standards; the biggest change would be the approach. In conclusion, Ms. Gasper noted that the new teacher workshops and the mentor/menttee workshops were moving forward hand in hand this year.

3. General Business

- a. Food Services Presentation – Joe Armenti and Betsy Labonte were present from Whitson’s to give an update on their services to Grafton. Mr. Armenti outlined their backgrounds in the food service industry. He discussed some of the challenges and implementations over the years, noting they’d been in Grafton for 7 years. Mr. Armenti said they restructured the district with the addition of the new high school. Their mission was to enhance life one meal at a time. They accomplish this by focusing on key values; treat everyone like family, serve wholesome foods that taste great, and have good communication (listen, learn and lead). Mr. Armenti stated that promoting health and wellness was a key component to their program. They provide a Grafton nutrition website, they offer a menu App for parents and students and offer nutritional educational programs. The company offered a smart choice newsletter; they have activities of the month and a monthly nutrition message. They’ve offered and held special visits by guest chefs; the students enjoy sampling and learning healthy benefits. Mr. Armenti gave a financial update. The overall average lunch participation was 36% and breakfast participation was about 3%. They were meeting their budgeted goals and anticipated no increase to the district this coming year. Looking forward Whitson’s first priority was and will continue to be, providing

healthy choices to its customers. They are looking to be one of the first vendors to offer organic options. Next year they will create a video tour of the facility to assist parents to see what is offered to the students. This could possible air on the local access channel and/or the town's web site. They would continue to provide ongoing training, and processes to ensure compliance with all state regulations. Mr. Armenti thanked the School Committee for their continued relationship. Mrs. Rynning asked if Whitsons would submit a better financial picture during their next update rather than just a percentage of usages. Bianca Carangelo and Hannah Kelley left the meeting.

- b. Chapter 70 Referendum: Maureen Cohen reviewed the Chapter 70 Foundation Review Budget Commission (FBRC) charge to review the way foundation budgets are calculated, make a recommendation for potential changes in those calculations and recommend measurers in which resources can be most effectively utilized and considered various models of efficient and effective resource allocations. Mrs. Cohen reviewed the findings of the FBRC; the actual spending on employee health insurance was generally higher than the current foundation budget allotment for costs, there was a higher rate of in district special education placements than what was assume in the foundation budget and districts spend much more on special education tuition for out-of-district special education placements than the current foundation budget allotment for this costs. Overall, Mrs. Cohen said there was a disconnect between the governor's budget and FBRC findings. The governor's budget did not recognize the findings of the FBRC regarding the systemic underfunding for the Foundation Budget in the areas of special education and employee health insurance. Mrs. Cohen stated that many area school districts in the area were in support of full funding. The key points of the resolution were reviewed; the foundation budget understated the true cost of health insurance and special education costs and this was in turn an expense borne by local communities often placing the expense on other municipal needs. The resolutions, if agreed on by the school committee included a statement calling on the Massachusetts legislature and governor to fully fund and adopt the recommendations of the Foundation Review Commission in the immediate future. Mrs. Rynning asked if the School Committee wanted to present this to other boards such as the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen. Mr. Carlson thought this was a good idea, it would send bigger message that the town as a whole supported this. Mrs. Cohen had a draft this evening and was looking for the support of the committee. A copy of the letter would also be sent along to Representative Muradian, Senator Moore and the Governor's Office. Mrs. Often felt it was on the committee to advocate on the State level. We want to show we are looking to other means other than the local tax dollars. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to support the FBRC report established by the legislator in FY16 that was charged with examining the foundation budget for the Chapter 70 formula as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Motion carried 5-0 School Committee. The committee will sign the letter when it is prepared as a final. Mr. Carlson asked if Mrs. Often and Mrs. Cohen would be willing to present to the Selectmen and the

Finance Committee. The intent was to get the letter out as soon as possible and meet with the other boards in the near future. Mrs. Rynning would contact the Selectmen and Finance Committee to get on their next agendas.

- c. GHS Field Trip Proposal – Celia Senckowski and Jim Pignataro were present to give an overview of the proposed world language high school trip for students mainly in the foreign language department, however it may include some students from the biology department as well. The trip, to the Galapagos Islands was planned for Spring Break April 15-25, 2017. They expect approximately 42 students and 8 chaperones will participate. Ms. Senckowski gave an update on last year’s 6 day trip to Puerto Rico. The trip was a lot of fun and very successful. The request was before the committee early in order to get an start on planning as well as give more time for parents and students to budget for the trip. They will do some fundraising events to help assists with the cost. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the proposal for a field trip to the Galapagos Island April 15-25 as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 5-0 School Committee and 2-0 Student Representatives.
 - d. DECA International Conference-Nashville, TN – Dr. Cummings reviewed the proposal for seven students to attend the International DECA Conference in Nashville, he was asking for the committees support. The anticipated cost would be \$1,000-\$1200 dollars. DECA had done some fundraising to assist with the costs. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the DECA International Conference trip on April 22-27, 2016 as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 5-0 School Committee and 2-0 Student Representatives.
4. School Committee Member Reports
 - a. Mr. Carlson stated that the next CIPC meeting was planned for Wednesday evening, at which time they planned to finalize the list.
 5. Superintendent’s Report
 - a. District Update - Dr. Cummings attended two fundraising events; the North Street Talent Show and the Millbury Street basketball game. He thanked the PTO and staff for great their hard work and planning. Dr. Cummings thanked Dave Crouse for his responsiveness and the great work he and his crew continues to do each winter.
 - b. Upcoming Activities: Dr. Cummings had a list of upcoming activities for the members.
 6. Future Agenda Planning - None
 7. Approval of Minutes - None
 8. Financial Report - None
 9. Policy - None

10. Correspondence – None

11. Executive Session – At 9:20 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Carlson to enter into executive session for the purpose of non union negotiations under Chapter 30A, Paragraph 21, Section A, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation of discussions with non union personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non union personnel. Motion seconded by. By Roll Call vote, Mrs. Rynning, Aye; Mrs. Often, Aye; Mrs. Connelly, Aye; Mrs. Cohen, Aye; Mr. Carlson, Aye. Motion carried 5-0. The Committee will return to open session to adjourn only.

Respectfully submitted



Cindy Ide
Recording Secretary