

**Mansfield School Committee Meeting  
Minutes for Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
Virtual Meeting using GoToWebinar**

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An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. The open meeting session was called to order by Kiera O'Neil at 6:03 pm.

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MANSFIELD  
MASSACHUSETTS

**Members Present:**

Kiera O'Neil  
Lynn Cavicchi  
Lauren Scher  
Jenn Walsh (arrived 6:06 pm)  
Linda Fernando

**Administration Present:**

Teresa Murphy, Superintendent of Schools

**Members Absent:** None

\*\*\* All votes taken by roll call vote \*\*\*

**Roll Call:**

Kiera O'Neil            aye  
Lynn Cavicchi        aye  
Linda Fernando      aye  
Lauren Scher         aye

**School Committee returned to Open Session at 6:06 pm**

**Public Speak:** Public Speak is open for 15 minutes for anyone who has registered via GoToWebinar.  
None

**Communications:**

None

**Old Business:**

**Committee Updates:**

**Budget:** The committee met last Thursday and worked on an updated budget presentation reflecting the complexities of COVID recovery and various rescue plans. The draft has been sent to the entire School Committee for review and comment. Budget subcommittee will not meet on April 15th.

(Jenn Walsh arrived)

**Returning & Learning:** The committee met this morning to discuss various issues. The K - 8 return to 5 day learning has gone quite smoothly. The project checklist for MHS return to school is almost complete. As a district we should be good to start on April 28th. Summer Planning is in progress. A lot of thought has been put into efforts for the summer.

Chair Kiera O'Neil asked if we have had any additional DESE guidance regarding high school return to school. Superintendent Murphy noted that we have not but there is a 3:00 call tomorrow. Perhaps we will get an update at that time.

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**New Business:*****Consideration of MOU: MEA Return to 5 day in person learning:***

Superintendent Murphy discussed the major components of this agreement. Quarantine students will be offered relevant class work in line with current classroom curriculum pacing. This would be in support of students in isolation, close contact quarantine or post travel quarantine. It is important for staff, students and families to understand expectations. Therefore a newsletter was sent out to all staff and family explaining the process. Our focus is on getting students back in the classroom but we recognize the supports that are needed for those students who cannot attend. We want to make sure that we do not promote students who on their own decide to "take a remote day." The MOU also includes language allowing us to bring students back for some afterschool activities, a \$100 stipend for teachers who have spent their own money on classroom supplies, and one additional sick day to allow teachers to recover from vaccine issues.

Teresa Murphy is quite pleased with the final agreement. Staff ratified unanimously so we feel they are satisfied with our response.

Lauren Scher was very thankful that we could work through this difficult situation and is very appreciative of everyone who came together.

Lynn Cavicchi noted that all parties were always prepared and willing to work together toward a common goal of supporting our students.

Kiera O'Neil noted that this MOU has a sunset date of 6-30-21.

**Motion** to approve the MOU for Teachers return to 5 day in person learning by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lynn Cavicchi	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Lauren Scher	aye

**Motion Carries 5 - 0*****End of Year Evaluation of Superintendent Teresa Murphy:***

Kiera O'Neil noted that each individual School Committee created their own evaluation and submitted them to Kiera. She, in turn, tabulated and created an overall score for each category. Additionally, she took common themes from comments and inserted them into the final evaluation. During the meeting, Kiera read each of the categories, the rating and the associated comments.

Kiera highlighted the rating of "Proficient" which is understood to be fully satisfactory and is the rigorous expected level of performance. "Exemplary" indicates that the practice significantly exceeds "Proficient" and could serve as a model of practice regionally or statewide.

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Individual ratings are on listed on the actual evaluation document. **The summarized overall rating is Proficient.** Comments are noted below:

*The Covid-19 pandemic clearly has been a momentous and challenging event for everyone — staff, administrators, students, families alike — and the district’s success in “rebuilding” the schools to meet the many logistical challenges brought on by the pandemic is to be commended. The sheer volume and scope of work required to navigate a constantly evolving situation — from health and safety, facilities, food services, and student transportation, to instruction, curriculum, technology, union negotiations, and fiscal/budget uncertainties — is staggering. I appreciate Teresa’s calm approach more than ever over this past year and her ability to just get things done, despite constant changes (especially from the state level) and a relentless pace of work.*

*2020-2021 was clearly an extraordinary year. The challenges that faced the schools, community, and nation go unmatched. The challenges we faced as a district at times seemed insurmountable. The pandemic created challenges that impacted all four areas of evaluation. Teresa faced these challenges head on and never let herself feel defeated. Her work ethic and that of her staff was extraordinary. Her endless dedication to this district sets the tone for her team.*

*Last March showed Teresa’s ability to shift gears very quickly but her ability to adapt was highlighted even more this year. She excelled at managing to ambiguity and her ability to pivot quickly without much notice is also a tremendous strength. She faced and dealt with high levels of stress and pressure coming from many places and she stayed calm under that pressure; a skill with is truly admirable and exceptional. There were numerous occasions where she guided and empowered the administrators to make decisions which were right for their schools ensuring a unified front when / where needed. She also managed many difficult negotiations with teachers and other parties this year, as well as showed tremendous improvement in both incoming and outgoing communications. The sheer number of emails to which she responded is staggering; especially those which were less than kinds. Teresa managed all of this with tremendous grace.*

*While this rubric focuses on instructional leadership activities in a typical year, this was not a typical year. Instructional leadership required overseeing the development of multiple methods for delivery of learning, which required flexibility and adaptability over the course of the school year. This required a massive acceleration of our district’s technology plan, and a constant monitoring and review of programming provided across the district. As the instructional leader, Superintendent Murphy did a wonderful job empowering her leadership team and supporting their efforts to address challenges and support continuous improvement.*

*This rating reflects the work that was accomplished this year building 3 simultaneous learning models (remote, hybrid, and in person). The district successfully moved throughout the 3 models. The transitions were virtually seamless and had minimum impact to student learning. We all knew that none of these models reflected a desired instructional model, but were required in order for us to provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff during this pandemic.*

*This year, Superintendent Murphy did an extraordinary job managing various management and operational challenges related to staffing, budgeting, and negotiating with multiple bargaining units to address the challenges of the year. She was very attentive to complying with legal and state regulations (which were ever-changing). This year required constant attention to human resource*

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*activities including making adjustments to hiring and staffing through the year to address emerging needs. Through all of this, she maintained strong leadership in budgeting and planning for the future.*

*It's also important to acknowledge the sheer amount of behind-the-scenes work the Superintendent has done related to union negotiations and impact bargaining due to the pandemic. Teresa continually worked with union leaders to keep the lines of communication open and to foster an environment of collaboration, even in a very challenging year filled with many uncertainties, questions, and concerns from district employees, as district and union leadership worked to settle the 3-year teachers' contract and numerous MOUs this year.*

*Virtual conferences and curriculum nights, the technology help desk, as well as the implementation of electronic gradebook access at the high school, were welcome improvements and supports for many students and families. The launch of the district partnership with McLean Hospital was incredibly timely, and well received also by students and families.*

*Through her work with principals, directors, assistant directors, and assistant principals, Teresa has taken concrete steps to support administrative staff growth and to help develop greater capacity for continuity of leadership, which is incredibly important for the district.*

Each member had an opportunity to provide input.

Keira O'Neil noted that it has been an unbelievable year and Teresa has done a tremendous job. Her work ethic is phenomenal. Kiera hopes that Teresa takes some time for herself.

Linda Fernando echoed Kiera's comments and emphasized how important it is for Teresa to take care of herself.

Teresa noted that it has been quite a year. It has been difficult but at the same time amazing to see how everyone has stepped up, come together and helped our students.

Lauren Scher noted that Teresa has often said, "This is what we do." Lauren understands now what that means and no matter what we have had to deal with, Teresa has kept her eyes on the ultimate goal of educating our students.

Kiera noted that this was definitely the year that Teresa could not make everyone happy. What people wanted changed on a regular basis depending on circumstances.

Jenn Walsh noted that it is very difficult to evaluate during a pandemic. Teresa laid the groundwork a long time ago, building a district that could withstand such challenges. Teresa's team managed the pandemic in the best way possible.

Lynn Cavicchi said it was important to note that Teresa is working on many other things besides the pandemic and we are able to look ahead because of these efforts. Lynn expressed her gratitude for Teresa's leadership.

Having completed the review, Kiera O'Neil asked for a motion to enter Executive Session Under Exception No. 2, To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion

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personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.

**Motion** to enter into executive session by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh at 6:37 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lynn Cavicchi            aye  
Jenn Walsh                aye  
Kiera O'Neil             aye  
Linda Fernando         aye  
Lauren Scher            aye

**Motion Carries 5 - 0**

Return from Executive Session into Open session at 7:32 p.m.

***Consideration of Superintendent Teresa Murphy Contract:***

Kiera noted that the following were taken into consideration during Executive Session:

1. Last year due to budget uncertainty, there was a zero % increase in Teresa's salary. Other administrators and collective bargaining units did receive increases.
2. Prior to last year's freeze, it had been noted that her compensation level is very low compared to other local districts. It was the committee's desire to bring her up to a comparative salary.
3. Teresa's effective management in leading our district through the end of the 2019-2020 school year and extraordinary leadership during the 2020-2021 school district was worthy of a good salary increase.
4. The calculated increase was determined as follows:  
Existing Salary of \$177,302  
Increase of 5.5% for 2019-2020 would have brought salary to \$187,054  
Increase of 5.5% for 2020-2021 would bring new salary to \$197,342
5. The committee would like to extend the contract out for 2 additional years through June 30, 2025.

**A Motion** to approve a new contract for Teresa Murphy starting July 1, 2021 with an annual salary of \$197,342 and with a revised end date of June 30, 2025 by Lauren Scher / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call Vote:**

Lynn Cavicchi            aye  
Jenn Walsh                aye  
Kiera O'Neil             aye  
Linda Fernando         aye  
Lauren Scher            aye

**Motion Carries 5 - 0**

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Superintendent Murphy expressed her appreciation for a positive evaluation and thanked School Committee for offering her this increase. She considers it an honor to work for Mansfield Public Schools and will continue to work hard in attaining our goals.

**School Committee Business:** None

**Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting:** None

**Documents Referenced:**

Teresa Murphy End of Year Evaluation  
MOU for Teachers return to school.

**Motion to adjourn:** At 7:37 p.m., **Motion** to adjourn the open meeting by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

**Roll Call vote:**

Lauren Scher	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye
Jenn Walsh	aye
Lynn Cavicchi	aye

**Motion Carries 5 - 0**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Diane Nugent, Secretary to the  
Superintendent & School Committee