



**Mansfield School Committee Meeting
Minutes for Tuesday, May 25, 2021
Virtual Meeting using GoToWebinar**

An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, May 25, 2021. The open meeting session was called to order by Chair Kiera O'Neil at 6:05 pm.

Members Present:

Kiera O'Neil, Chair
Lynn Cavicchi, Vice Chair
Linda Fernando
Lauren Scher
Jenn Walsh

Administration Present:

Teresa Murphy, Superintendent of Schools
Michael Connolly, Assistant Superintendent (Teaching/Learning)
Edward Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent (Finance/Operations)

Members Absent: None

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

Roll Call:

Lynn Cavicchi aye
Jenn Walsh aye
Kiera O'Neil aye
Linda Fernando aye
Lauren Scher arrived at 6:08

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

Communications: One email providing an opinion on school committee statements.

New Business:

Consideration of Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy:

This policy was created by the Town of Mansfield to fulfill a commitment in becoming a green community. It was originally proposed last week but sent back to the town for changes.

Motion to approve the revised Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy 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

Consideration of District and School Improvement Plans:

Last week the district presented the district-wide initiatives for the upcoming school year including a Data Assessment System, Equity Audit & Professional Development, Special Education Programs and Educational Space Study. Tonight, the presentation will focus on the 5 individual school plans in order to support the district goals. It should be noted that the plan is for 2021-22 only. Typically

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it is a two year plan but due to COVID, we are focusing on one year. The proposals are the first step in a multiyear plan so upcoming improvement plans will build on this year's information. The planning took place over several months with the leadership teams of each school along with input from faculty, parents, students and community members who serve on our school councils. Our four key strategic initiatives are: Teaching & Learning; Equitable & Inclusive Practices; Social, Emotional and Physical Supports and finally Collaborate to Innovate. For each initiative, the school principals presented their school initiatives along with action steps and activities. Questions and Answers were held at the end of each strategic initiative. The presentation is referenced in these minutes while Questions and Comments are noted below.

Teaching & Learning Q&A:

Lauren Scher: The plan includes references to new math data systems at Robinson. Will this be compatible with the new data analysis system? Yes, Kerry Sankey has been working with Julia Greenstine to ensure compatibility. MHS plans to review the course selection process; will MHS and QMS collaborate on placement decisions since a high school placement can be impacted by decisions made as early as grade 6. Mary Watkins noted that they are currently focusing on AP and Honors classes but it does make sense to broaden that view. Dave McGovern noted that both MHS and QMS principals along with department chairs discuss placement issues currently.

Linda Fernando noted that the elementary level emphasized small size math groups in the Elementary Schools. Do these groups exist for ELA as well? Kerry Sankey noted that we have had small groups in place for ELA for a long time. Instructional delivery for both ELA and math are via whole group, smaller groups then some individualized work. John Nieratko noted that small group ELA instruction is a cornerstone of our literacy model at Jordan/Jackson. What was the source of the text selection rubric for bias and diversity? Both Michael Connolly and Julia Greenstine researched and found this rubric on which Mansfield will base their custom rubric.

Lynn Cavicchi asked if we budgeted for curriculum changes at Roland Green. Teresa noted that we did not for the upcoming year, but plan to do so in FY23. During the upcoming year, we will do some research and planning.

Equitable and Inclusive Practices Q&A:

Linda Fernando loves the work we are doing on this initiative and is excited for the outcomes. Jenn Walsh asked who would be assessing the (Robinson school) Journeys resources and trade books for cultural and ethnic bias. Kerry Sankey reported that it would be our ELA curriculum associates and our reading specialist.

Lynn Cavicchi noted that "Teaching Tolerance" is no longer the correct name and it needs to be changed to "Learning for Justice." Why did Robinson note the creation of a Rubric under this initiative while J/J noted it under Teaching & Learning? Teresa Murphy noted that the work overlaps and is intertwined among the initiatives. The rubric may be used to measure different things at each school and she was comfortable that it remain as noted. When Robinson reviews the print resources for bias will they also review supporting classroom activities and projects? Yes, however, the plan is to start with the printed materials. Once identified, classroom activities will be adjusted accordingly. Will the Jordan/Jackson virtual after-school program be accessible to all students? John Nieratko reported that administration will work with the needs of all students and provide chromebooks and/or hotspots, etc as needed. Lynn asked Mary Watkins to provide

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additional input on the various newsletters. Did she get student input on their desire to read a newspaper? Is that the best way to reach students? Mary noted that it was her impression that students were very pleased with our digital publications as noted by the number of students who come to interview her for articles. She is not aware of readership levels but so far feedback has been positive. Lynn noted that as far as ADL training, it has been 4 years since we started this and that it may be time to hold a school-wide assembly again. Mary noted that we have migrated to small group instruction but will review the benefits of a school wide vs. small group delivery.

Lauren Scher thinks the activities sound great and it looks like we are making current programs stronger. We should also review programs in each school to determine if there can be any cross use of these programs. She also noted we should we use parent feedback on reviewing materials for bias, etc. Lynn Cavicchi asked if we would use school councils for the material review. Teresa noted that although the improvement plan is for 2021-22 it is really a long term plan and these are just the first steps. Reviewing material will be an ongoing effort. We probably will not pull in parents or school councils right away but we will consider that option.

Social, Emotional, Physical Supports Q&A:

Lynn Cavicchi asked about the J/J BOKs program in the morning before the start of school. Will we provide transportation? If we rely on parent transportation we are building barriers to those who need to take the bus. John Nieratko noted we will look at options to provide access to all. She noted that QMS and J/J used different approaches to social / emotional learning. Will this cause issues for our students as they move from one school to another? Dave McGovern noted that students at different age groups have different needs. The administration from each school works closely together to ensure smooth transitions for our high needs students.

Lauren Scher asked Krista DeMello to explain a bit more about the Pyramid Model Consortium. Krista noted that it is very similar to PBIS. It provides a framework for social/emotional support where 80% of our instruction can be based in our everyday curriculum. A smaller portion must be provided in smaller groups with more detail. Finally an even smaller group of our special education students will require direct and explicit instruction. We are in the 3rd year of using this model at Roland Green. Lauren then asked about the many students who will be coming out of the Virtual Remote Academy. There could be in-person hesitancy and more broad social/emotional needs across the district. Do we plan to expand our capacity to welcome back these students? Dave McGovern noted that QMS administration have discussed this possibility a lot. QMS is working on putting supports in place. At the beginning of the year, teachers will focus heavily on establishing routines, providing supports in order to setup our students for success. Other schools are working on similar plans.

Kiera O'Neil is pleased with the great work noted in the plan. She asked that we communicate to parents the definitions of the many acronyms that are listed. Teresa noted that the acronyms are all detailed and defined in the plan that was distributed but are not in the school committee presentation. Kiera noted that many kids have been completely isolated from the world and it will be a huge adjustment to return to a regular daily school routine.

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Collaborate to Innovate Q&A:

Kiera O'Neil asked Mary to explain the difference between Early College programs and Dual Enrollment programs. Early college programs are designed for those students who did not find a lot of success in a traditional high school setting. Dual enrollment programs are typically for stronger students who want to pursue a college education while checking off high school credits at the same time. Some of our evening school students may benefit from an early college program which typically provides a lot of wrap around services.

Lynn Cavicchi asked how many students are in our Southeastern career program. We only have 1 or 2 students enrolled in the dual program but we would like to see more. Lynn also recommended including social studies emphasis in Jordan/Jackson programming since not all students are STEM strong.

Lauren Scher asked us to reflect on the collaboration and innovation from this school year and identify what we have learned and how we can improve going forward. Dave McGovern noted that there was a significant amount of lessons learned and they will leverage the technology skills learned. Students are creating and operating at a higher level of thinking. Teachers are collaborating on student centered projects. John Nieratko noted that at J/J, administration is learning how adaptable students are and gaining insight on how students learn. Kerri Sankey said there was a strong sense of community even though students were not always together. Young students are resilient and were able to use devices in an online environment. Linda Fernando asked Dave to elaborate on the coaching for co-teaching; is it an internal or external person? Dave noted that it will be an external coach. We have someone in mind who has a very good reputation. Linda also noted the importance of cyber security and the big push nation-wide to introduce students to this as future career opportunities. Perhaps we can include this in our STEM programming.

Lauren Scher asked about the GPA requirement for entry into the Southeastern dual program and whether or not it was a barrier to entry. Mary Watkins did not feel that this was the case since the review focuses more on coursework and GPA trends. Lauren recommended various options to advertise and talk up the program for underclassmen.

Motion to accept the Superintendent's School Improvement Plan for 2021-2022 by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Please add a review of the plan as a year-end activity each spring.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion Carries 5 - 0

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Consideration 2021-2022 School Handbooks:

Assistant Superintendent Michael Connolly provided an introduction to the handbook changes by reviewing the process. First, all policies approved this year by school committee were reviewed for impact and changes were made to the handbooks by either 1) dropping the policy content directly into the handbook 2) modifying the language in the handbook to reflect the changes or 3) revising any policy links. Mr. Connolly then provided a high level overview of policy changes for the year. Next, each school's administrative team brought forth key changes that they are looking to make for the year. Each school then reviewed their items.

Tim Tichacek presented revisions to MHS including change to the dress code to allow hats and a change to the locker policy to make locker use optional. The hat request is something that our student body has requested for some time. The high school felt that they could pilot this. Making the lockers optional will benefit the school and our students. Currently everyone is assigned a locker. For those that choose not to use them, locks are often lost or random items are left in unlocked/unused lockers causing extra cleanup at the end of the term.

The committee was in agreement with the handbook recommendations. Kiera has long been in favor of reducing clothing restrictions. Lynn Cavicchi asked if the handbook was reviewed for graduation requirements and proposed fees. Assistant Principal Tim Tichacek will make sure the graduation guidance is updated. Fees will be reviewed in June. Once approved, handbooks will be updated. Lynn also asked if the committee would see the changes to the bus conduct language. This language will be brought forward in June and then dropped into the handbook.

Motion to approve the Mansfield High School 2021-2022 Handbook by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Lynn Cavicchi asked everyone to remember that there are still a few outstanding items that need to make their way into the handbook over the summer. All administrators understood that there would be some additional changes.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Principal David McGovern presented changes to the QMS handbook. The "N" (narrative) grade option is being changed to "NG" for No Grade which is consistent with language at MHS. The promotion policy will be changed to reflect the changes brought forward to the committee in the spring. This change allows students to take all four academic courses in summer school if needed. Language was added to define the role of a school counselor. Finally, changes were made to clarify expectations for students who take the late bus.

Lynn Cavicchi asked if QMS had looked into the use of hats similar to the high school. Dave McGovern noted that it is a conversation to be had; but administration was not yet ready to

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approach the change. Michael Connolly noted that it was wise to test it in the high school and then look to other schools.

Motion to approve the Qualters Middle School 2021-2022 Handbook 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

Denise daGraca and Ryan Gentile reviewed changes for the combined elementary handbook. There was a heavy review of the handbook this year with many housekeeping changes. Several changes were made to arrival and dismissal procedures in order to clarify instruction and improve safety. A change was made to attendance procedure to limit the amount of make-up work due to illness and to note that teachers are not required to provide school work for a family vacation. A change was made to clarify that students go outside to recess in all kinds of weather and students should be prepared with the proper clothing. Open Circle language was removed and replaced with the current language in support of social/emotional learning. The new security check-in stations were clarified for parent access.

Linda Fernando noted that there were a lot of changes to the elementary handbooks and asked how the changes would be communicated. Denise daGraca noted that they could create a cheatsheet, notify parents during curriculum nights and add to newsletters.

Lauren Scher asked why the language regarding traffic in the bus loop during half days was removed; she felt it should remain for clarification. Ryan Gentili agreed and will add back in. She was concerned about the language on recess clothing as it relates to those families who may struggle financially. The administrators are aware of those issues and are always willing to accommodate. The committee discussed whether or not language should be added to the handbook letting parents know that if they need assistance they can call the school. Denise and Ryan will work on language for the handbook.

Lynn Cavicchi asked that the elementary school be specific about student dismissals as it relates to someone not on the emergency dismissal form.

Motion to approve the Jordan/Jackson and Robinson 2021-2022 Handbook by Linda Fernando / Lauren Scher

Roll Call Vote:

Lauren Scher	aye
Linda Fernando	aye
Kiera O'Neil	aye

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Lynn Cavicchi aye

Motion Carries 4- 0 (Jenn Walsh temporarily left the meeting during the review of the elementary handbooks.)

School Committee Business:

Jenn Walsh returned to the meeting at 9:08 pm

The committee discussed the agenda items for June 15th. The committee also discussed the pending return of in person meetings. The committee prefers to remain remote through the summer and then go in person right before the start of school. Diane Nugent will work with the Town to determine the protocols for hybrid meetings.

Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting:

The committee needs to approve the minutes for 5-18-21 so that a copy can be sent along with the Statement of Interest Boiler requests.

Motion to approve the Open Meeting Minutes of May 18, 2021 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

Documents Referenced:

School Improvement Plans 2021-22
Handbooks 2021-22
Vehicle Policy

Motion to adjourn: At 9:13 p.m., **Motion** to adjourn the open meeting 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

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Nugent, Administrative Assistant to
Superintendent & School Committee