

**Millbury Public Schools
School Committee**

*Regular Session
Meeting Minutes*

2021 FEB -0 AM 9:19

Date: November 18, 2020

Members Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson
Present: Mr. Christopher Wilbur, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Julia Lagerholm, Member
Mr. Nicholas Lazzaro, Member
Mrs. Jessica Bristol, Member

Administrators Mr. Richard Bedard, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Present: Ms. Elizabeth Boutiette, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Mr. Christopher Lowe, Jr./Sr. High School Principal (departed 7:55)
Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services

Guests: Mr. Besian Kodra, Jr./Sr. High School teacher, faculty liaison to EF Tours (departed 7:55)

Location: Media Center, Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School

Time: 7:00pm

Mrs. Nietupski opened the meeting at 7:00 PM and led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Review and Approval of October 28, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to accept the executive session minutes of October 28, 2020, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. All approved (5-0).

Review and Approval of November 4, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to accept the executive session minutes of November 4, 2020, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. All approved (5-0).

2. Report of the Administration

a. Review of Southern Worcester County Education Collaborative FY'20 Annual Report

Mr. Myers provided an overview of the Southern Worcester County Education Collaborative's (SWCEC) annual report for Fiscal Year 2020.

b. Reopening Advisory Committee Update

i. Current COVID-19 positive diagnosis count for the District

Mr. Myers stated that to date there have been fifteen positive COVID-19 diagnoses in the District since the opening of school. Four cases produced close contacts. There is no evidence of COVID-19 transmission occurring in school. No close contacts have become ill to date, indicating no transmission in school.

ii. Cohort D Survey

Ms. Boutiette shared survey questions that were sent to families of Cohort D students to gather feedback about their experiences with remote learning. The district has received 72 responses thus far. These responses will be reviewed at the Committee's next meeting. Mrs. Nietuski asked for the number of students in each cohort, which Ms. Boutiette agreed to provide at the next meeting. Mrs. Bristol asked if the survey includes questions for Cohort D families in grades 7-12. Ms. Boutiette confirmed that grades 7-12 received the survey, which is open-ended and allows families to provide feedback.

Mr. Wilbur asked if the district plans to send communication to families about traveling and gathering during Thanksgiving. Mr. Myers confirmed that communication would be sent. Mr. Wilbur recommended including the "Stop the Spread" website in the email.

iii. International Trip to Berlin, Prague, and Budapest

Mr. Myers introduced Mr. Christopher Lowe, accompanied by Mr. Besian Kodra, high school social studies teacher and international trip liaison, to address questions and concerns from the Committee regarding the international trip scheduled with EF Tours. At its October 28, 2020 meeting, the Committee granted preliminary approval in accordance with Policy JJH (Student Travel) to postpone the international trip scheduled for this April to April 2022. Mrs. Nietupski pointed out that the Committee is revisiting this topic based on questions and feedback from parents.

Mr. Lowe reviewed information he gathered during a recent meeting with Millbury's liaison and trip coordinator from EF Tours, Alexa Scott, and Amy Jones, EF's Regional Manager. Mr. Lowe reviewed the pros and cons of rescheduling the trip and options that families have with a rescheduled trip, including being able to 1.) allow their child to attend the trip in April 2022; 2.) cancel their child's participation and receive a refund, less \$500 (non refundable deposit + cancellation fee); 3.) cancel their child's participation and receive a refund, less \$165 if another student enrolls for the trip by December 15; 4.) receive a travel voucher representing the full cost of the trip, valid until September 2023 and transferable to another traveler. Mr. Lowe noted that vouchers can also be used on a different EF tour.

Mrs. Nietupski asked for clarification about whether the trip has been cancelled yet. Mr. Lowe said that EF Tours has yet to cancel trips due to COVID-19, but has postponed them instead. Mr. Kodra confirmed that Millbury's trip has been rescheduled to 2022 by EF Tours.

Mr. Wilbur expressed concern that the Committee took its vote to postpone the trip without being informed that if EF Tours had cancelled on their own, families would have lost only \$165, the initial down payment. Mr. Wilbur explained that this was the information shared by the EF representative at previous meetings with families and directly with his wife. Mr. Lowe clarified that this information was never shared with him before and Mr. Kodra stated that EF was never going to cancel, but just postpone until the trip could take place.

Mrs. Lagerholm commented on the difficult position this puts families in, but noted that it was EF's business practice, not the fault of school employees.

Mrs. Bristol stated that since graduates could not be permitted to come back for a postponed trip by policy, the options provided to the Committee do not sufficiently address their situation. She also recommended that the district avoid giving EF Tours any business in the future.

Mr. Lazarro asked how the district could support students who choose to navigate the voucher option. Mr. Lowe stated that EF Tours would meet with students and facilitate voucher transactions.

Mr. Kodra expressed his sadness that the trip would not include this year's seniors, whom he thinks is a wonderful class of students. He also expressed his upset and disappointment that a better option was not available to them. Mrs. Bristol commended Mr. Kodra for his work to try to resolve this difficult situation. Mrs. Lagerholm commended both Mr. Kodra and Mr. Lowe for their work and dedication to students.

c. Out-of-District Placements

Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services, provided an overview of our out-of-district placements to the Committee. Tuition ranges from \$43,000 (collaborative placement) to \$237,000 (residential placement), not including transportation costs. Last year, the district budget for 34 placements but currently has 31 placements (15 at private day programs, 14 at public day programs, and 1 residential placement). Ms. Ryan also described changes in placement that have occurred since the start of the school year. Ms. Ryan noted that while placements are relatively low, we are still early in the year and there are several circumstances that may necessitate additional placements. Mr. Bedard noted that since the budget did not allow for pre-payment last year, it is especially good news that placements are lower than anticipated.

3. Finance and Operations

a. Most Recent Indoor Air Quality Test Results

Mr. Bedard reviewed results from a recent indoor air quality test conducted by OHI in each of our schools. This test, which was overall very positive, was conducted proactively to help to determine how best to improve air quality in school and measured relative humidity, temperature, CO, and CO₂.

4. Unfinished Business

a. Report of the Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Field Renovation Project

Mr. Myers described significant tasks completed in the last two weeks, including the completion of lane markings, the installation of the discus cage, and continued work on the amenities building. Mr. Myers also noted that the Athletic Field Build Committee is planning an opening ceremony / ribbon cutting on November 24, 2020.

b. Shaw School Project Update

Mr. Bedard informed the Committee that a pre-bid conference will be held for contractors on Wednesday, January 6, 2021.

c. Policy Subcommittee Update

Mr. Lazzaro updated the Committee on recent work done by the Policy Subcommittee, including policies: JFABD – Homeless Students (which was tabled), Enrollment Rights and Services, JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care (which was tabled), JICH – Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs, JIH – Searches and Interrogations, JII – Student Complaints and

Grievances, JJA – Student Organizations, JJH-R – Travel Regulations, JLCB – Immunization of Students, JLCC – Communicable Diseases.

5. New Business

a. School Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

The Committee considered options for providing instruction when school is cancelled. This year, the Commissioner is allowing each School Committee to determine whether to continue with remote instruction on snow days. Mr. Myers expressed concern about families who might lose power because of a storm. Mrs. Lagerholm was concerned about employees who might need to come in to teach from their classrooms on a snow day. She also stated her preference that snow days remain snow days. Mrs. Nietupski clarified that delays should continue as necessary, but agreed in keeping our current snow day/cancellation procedure. Mrs. Bristol expressed the need to maintain as much normalcy in the age of COVID-19 as possible, including cancelling instruction on snow days. Mr. Lazarro and Mr. Wilbur also felt that remote instruction on snow days was not ideal and the district should continue its current cancellation procedures for inclement weather.

b. Addition of Juneteenth to the School Calendar as a State Holiday.

The Committee discussed including Juneteenth as a holiday in future school year calendars. Last July, the Governor declared Juneteenth a holiday in the Commonwealth. State law requires employers to recognize a Sunday on the following Monday. As a result, there will be no school on Monday, June 20, 2022. Mrs. Nietupski asked Mr. Myers to clarify whether holidays falling on a Saturday are observed on the previous Friday, which would affect next year's calendar

Mrs. Bristol asked whether there would be any changes to the last day of school for kindergarten or seniors because of the year's late start. Mrs. Nietupski clarified that the ten day delay to the year was forgiven by DESE and therefore we are not required to make them up.

c. Review of Updated 2020-2021 School Committee Goals

In accordance with Policy BA (School Committee Operational Goals), the Committee discussed Goal 5: Grade 3 Reconfiguration. At its November 4, 2020 meeting, the Committee voted to accept goal proposals 1 - 4. Mrs. Lagerholm noted that the public forum mentioned in goal 5 would likely need to be held virtually. Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve the Committee's fifth goal, seconded by Mrs. Bristol. All approved (5-0).

d. 2nd Reading and Acceptance of Changes to Policy

i. Policy JFABF: Educational Opportunities for Military Children

The Committee reviewed changes to Policy JFABF, which now reflects updates recommended by MASC and language changes made by the Subcommittee. Mrs. Lagerholm made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. All approved (5-0).

ii. Policy JH: Student Absences and Excuses

The Committee reviewed changes to Policy JH, which now reflects a minor language update recommended by MASC. Mrs. Bristol asked about absences due to pregnancy, which Mr. Lazarro said was addressed in Policy JI. Mrs. Lagerholm made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. All approved (5-0).

iii. Review of Policy JHD: Exclusions and Exemptions from School

The Committee reviewed changes to Policy JHD, which now reflects updates from MASC, including the reference to our current practice. Mrs. Lagerholm made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. All approved (5-0).

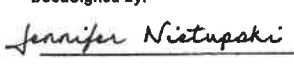
iv. Review of Policy JICFA: Prohibition of Hazing

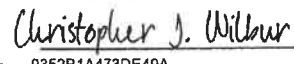
The Committee reviewed changes to Policy JICFA, which now reflects updated language recommended by MASC and reference to district-specific information. Amendments have been reviewed by the Director of Pupil Services. Mrs. Lagerholm made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. All approved (5-0).

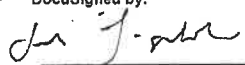
Mrs. Nietupski reminded the audience that the Committee's policies are available online and are searchable by keyword.

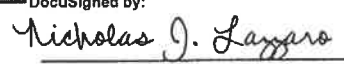
Mrs. Nietupski asked the Committee for any other new business. Hearing none, Mrs. Nietupski asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:23 PM. A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Lagerholm, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. All approved (5-0)

Approved:

DocuSigned by:

7A25F202994B480...
Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson

DocuSigned by:

8352B1A473DE49A...
Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

DocuSigned by:

7D948C780F604DD...
Julia Lagerholm

DocuSigned by:

38CA6C3EB7554E1...
Nicholas Lazzaro

Jessica Bristol