

CARVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 9, 2020

7:00 p.m. OPEN MEETING

Town Hall, 2nd Floor, Meeting Room 1

School Committee Present:

Andrew Cardarelli
Jason Greenwood
Stephanie Clougherty
Andrew Soliwoda
James O'Brien

Also Present

Scott Knief, Superintendent
Brad Brothers, Chief Operations and Finance Officer
Meredith Erickson, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

Meeting Opened: Andrew Cardarelli opened the meeting at **7:02 p.m.** with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition:

Grade 5 Bulb Project: Bob Baldo

Mr. Baldo, Grade 5 Science & Mathematics Teacher, shared that in September, Principal Ruby Maestas, approached him with an idea to beautify school by adding flowers to the grounds. Mr. Baldo integrated math, science, reading and writing into this project and it became a research project for Grade 5 students. Students were provided with a series of mathematics questions, measured the front of the building in teams, and practiced persuasive writing as students wrote letters to Mrs. Maestas with their recommendations for flowers and for the project. The project eventually blossomed into a community event and on Saturday, October 26, 2019 community and family members came to plant the bulbs. Mr. Baldo recognized Mike Paduch of Crystal Lake Greenhouses for his efforts and contributions that day as he modeled proper planting techniques and donated 500 grape hyacinth bulbs to the project. After the Saturday planting, there were roughly 500 bulbs left and students finished planting them the following week. In its completion, Mr. Baldo shared, hundreds of daffodils and grape hyacinth bulbs were planted on the grounds of the elementary school and along the Route 58 berm. Mr. Baldo said that it was a great community event, and the kids had a great time and were excited to get involved in all levels of the project. As the committee thanked and recognized Mr. Baldo for his efforts, he also thanked Mrs. Maestas for including him in the project and allowing him to involve his classes as well.

Div. 4 South EMSCA "Coach of the Year": Mark Alessandri

Mr. Mark Alessandri, History Teacher and Boys Varsity Soccer coach was recognized by the committee for having been named the Eastern Massachusetts Soccer Coaches Association "Coach of the Year." Mr. Alessandri has 24 years of coaching experience in both basketball and soccer. This is his second consecutive "Coach of the Year" title and he has also coached the Eastern Massachusetts All-Star Team for the last two years as well. Mr. Alessandri shared his love for coaching and recognized the boys soccer team for their great season and achievement. This year, the Boys Varsity Soccer team was 15-6 overall and was second in the South Shore League for the 5th time in 6 years. This year, the boys team was awarded the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Sportsmanship Award, five of the players were named South Shore League All Stars, two were named Patriot Ledger All Stars, and one was named as Boston Globe All Star. Mr. Soliwoda thanked Mr. Alessandri for not only an excellent year but all of the hardwork in coaching for the many years leading up to this point.

I. Comments from the General Public:

None

II. Comments from the EAPC: EAPC President, Tom Pinto greeted the committee and said that the EAPC is looking forward to getting a lot of work done and finishing up the school year.

III. Update by Student Council and Student Advisory Council:

Student Council Representatives: Morgan Campbell, President & Olivia Camelo, Delegate
Morgan and Olivia shared the details of the new Crusader Day event hosted by the Student Council. This new event occurred at the Middle High School during the second half of the day on December 20, prior to leaving for Holiday Recess. In order to encourage school unity, the first activity was a chorus and band concert for students in grades 6 - 12. After the concert all students participated in a community service hour where they helped to assemble care packages for troops or make holiday cards for troops or children in hospitals or care facilities. The student council preps for this community service by gathering donations from students and families, reaching out to local businesses, and placing donation boxes throughout town. The donations exceeded expectations and using the boxes donated by the post office, over 60 care packages were completely filled and sent overseas to soldiers for the holidays. The community service hour was followed by a school wide scavenger hunt during which time, Morgan and Olivia said, teachers said they saw students helping one another more than ever before. The afternoon event finished with a “choose your own activity” time, offering such activities as bingo, sports activities, a movie in the auditorium, arts and crafts, or cookie decorating. The student council representatives thanked Chef Portelance and the culinary students who made over 700 cookies for the event. They shared that the Student Council has hopes to continue and fine tune this event for next year.

The month of January, the Student Council will be teaming up with the Best Buddies group to participate in a statewide Bocci tournament in Walpole and will also be attending a local event at Silver Lake Regional High School with Best Buddies as well.

The committee thanked the representatives and Andrew Soliwoda thanked them for providing such an articulate review of the Crusader Day event, for receiving feedback on this event and seeking to improve it in the future.

Captain’s Council Representatives: Andrew Walker, Captain’s Council President | Football Team Captain
Andrew shared the upcoming winter sports events with the council and highlighted the various teams recent achievements and statistics. He also shared that the council is still working on the “Be an 11” program which will be held towards the springtime for Grade 7 students where the council will host and lead team building activities in an effort to create unity and interest in athletics which will be offered to those students when they enter grade 8.

Mr. Cardarelli thanked Andrew for coming and noted that the committee would look forward to hearing future updates.

IV. Approval of Minutes

December 12, 2019: Open Session Minutes

Motion: Andrew Soliwoda

Second: Jason Greenwood

Vote: Unanimous

Mr. Greenwood made a noted a correction needed to be made to minutes prior to the vote of approval to change the abstentions in the minutes to James O’Brien and Stephanie Clougherty. Mrs. Russell, Recording Secretary, made note of changes and will make the necessary corrections prior to publishing.

V. Communications:

A. Helping Traumatized Children Learn Grant Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force

Scott Knief, Superintendent, shared with the committee and community that Carver Public Schools is the recipient of the Helping Traumatized Children Learn Grant through the Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force. The task force started with Plymouth and East Bridgewater Police Departments who sought to find out how they could support substance abuse problems and become more active in prevention. They collaborated with the High Point Treatment Facility to offer services to families who encountered trauma. Carver Police Chief, Marc Duphily, entered into this Task Force as the third town represented. In the operation of this task force, the Carver Police and a member of the treatment facility arrive the next day an overdose occurs to offer support to family including a bed at a treatment center. Currently there are 27 communities involved and it is a program that is being observed nationally.

The grant offered through the task force provides professional development opportunities for staff on how to offer support to families and students who have experienced trauma or for staff to assist students who have substance abuse issues in the community. It will be a three part training on the brain and development, social-emotional trauma, and what teachers can do to support students in the classroom. It is a service based grant in that the task force will arrange and pay for all of the training rather than a transfer of monies to the school for the cause.

B. READS Collaborative Annual Report (2018-2019)

Mr. Knief shared with and provided the committee the READS Collaborative Annual Report for their review. It will continue to be an item shared with the committee each January when it is published for their review and reference. This may be of particular importance in the future as READS is seeking a new facility space. Although it is made up of all public school districts, READS collaborative is viewed as a private institution and is ineligible for MSBA funding. Eventually, if they look to move locations - they would be looking for support of school committees for this move and want to be clear and transparent about the needs and plans upfront as it ultimately could result in a rise in enrollment tuition.

Mr. Cardarilelli sought clarification on the breakdown of tuition between member and non-member districts. Mr. Knief noted that non-member districts pay a higher rate in tuition and members get a discounted rate. On a yearly basis -- board of directors votes on member cost and non member costs. New building would impact both. Mr. Knief currently Scott serves on the Board of Directors, as do all Superintendents who are part of the collaborative group.

VI. Reports from the Superintendent:

A. Personnel Updates:

Mr. Knief reviewed the following changes in personnel at Carver Public Schools.

New Hires: Paul Reed, *Temp. Position 1:1 ESP, MHS*; Stephanie Gallow, *Food Services*; Jessica Gemme, *ESP, CAP*;

Resignation: Leah Pow, *Special Ed. ESP, CAP*

Retirement: MaryAnn Sherwood, *Custodian, MHS*; Diane O'Brien, *Custodian, MHS (effective 1/17/2020)*; Kath Farrar, *Director of Food Services (effective 6/30/2020)*

B. Safe & Supportive Schools Grant Updates Ruby Maestas

Principal Ruby Maestas provided an update of the work of the Safe and Supportive Schools Team at the Elementary School. The Elementary School recently received a grant in the amount of \$6,000 from the state to continue their work in providing developing a safe and supportive school climate. This year they applied for third year funding and were approved for a lower amount. They have received the grant for the past two years.

Ruby shared that that state is working with them to support programs that aid student behavioral health and in order to do so they have reconvened with staff and community members to look at the action plans. The focus of the initial grant was to look at the school community and identify strengths and weaknesses using a behavioral health tool to come up with three priority areas.

She reviewed the progress in the identified priority areas with the committee. Paula Foley led the group with counselors to establish a tiered program which started in March of last year. This group delivered two terms worth of lessons with students and helped to identify students with social needs who would receive additional support for eight weeks at a time. The process has continued and has been refined and needs are reviewed at regular interval data meetings during which they see how kids are doing in those programs, move them out to the next tier and look at addressing other kids needs.

Tanya Dawson led the group that focussed on restorative justice as a disciplinary process as opposed to punitive. This group already revised the language in the handbook for the current year.

In regards to collaboration, Mrs. Matestas shared that elementary school has planned a number of family engagement opportunities and plans to offer a survey to the families in the school community in the springtime for additional data after more of the school year has been underway. They have also offered parenting classes in partnership with the South Shore Family Network and from feedback at Kindergarten registration, families have responded positively to that resource.

Mr. Knief inquired as to what content is presented at the parenting workshops. Ruby shared topics like setting limits with children and guidance on how to do that consistently and meaningfully, establishing routines and structure, how to work with the school during conferences, etc. are presented at the free workshops for parents.

Other parent engagement events like bulb planting, annual health and wellness fair, etc. have been run with the support and funding of the grant. Mrs. Maestas informed the committee that in the next steps of the grants, the school will be looking to the P.T.O. and other organizations as well as working within the budget to continue to build on and sustain these engagement events. Events like the "Holiday Express" hosted with the Middle High School and the upcoming S.T.E.A.M. night are examples of how they are beginning to transition into the ownership of such engagement events.

Grant funding has also provided the ability to offer stipends for a number of teachers to serve as Safe and Supportive School Ambassadors. These Safe and Supportive School representatives assist with evaluating priorities, identifying professional learning for staff, community engagement, and also will serve as mentors to others who receive the grant through conference calls, meetings, etc.

Mrs. Cloughety applauded the effort and information and thanked Mrs. Maestas for the presentation. Mr. Cardarelli inquired as to whether or not the children identified within the tiered system have support that follows them from grade to grade. Mrs. Maestas clarified that the support doesn't necessarily follow the students unless of course they meet the criteria that says they need more support and it really is a case by case basis.

Mr. Soliwoda asked if Carver Elementary would be able to apply for the grant for a fourth year. While administration shared that they were not sure of that, they did share that the focus of the third year is really to show the school's plan to sustain such programs without the support of the grant. In closing, Mrs. Maestas also noted that Joel Rastacia, the same gentlemen in charge of the professional

development to be offered next year through the Trauma Grant, worked closely with the Elementary School in initial stages of this grant to develop the Safe and Supportive Schools plan.

C. Upcoming Events Scott Knief

A list of upcoming school events was shared with the committee and community.

VII. Recommendations from Superintendent

A. FY20 Budget Transfers

Brad Brothers shared the current budget and a list of FY20 budget transfers with the committee as of January 1, 2020. He reviewed the following changes in line items:

■ **Line 20: \$98,000** (one time cost)

This school year, the district formed a committee to review the student information system. Alternatively to the current system, iPass, they reviewed three other systems: Aspen, SchoolBrain, PowerSchool. Currently the school district uses 4 different systems to report out and communicate to students and families. The committee found in their review that Aspen was the best fit and offered all functionality in one system. Mr. Brothers is looking to transfer money from vocational tuitions into this line to begin to phase in the new student information system in March with a full integration in July.

Mr. Greenwood asked if there would be a stipend cost in addition to the phase-in costs for someone to be the person in charge of implementation and training during the transition. Mr. Knief shared that the lead people would be the administrators, the district data specialist and the Director of Technology and therefore would not have an additional cost associated for an implementation leader.

Mr. O'Brien added that he has used Aspen and it is a fairly user friendly program. Mr. Knief informed the committee that there would be training for all staff during professional development days and in addition there are a number of staff members who are familiar with and have used Aspen before for support. The district may dedicate additional time throughout the year to support all staff during the transition. The program will eliminate JupiterGrades at the Middle High School and although it will be different for parents as well, Mr. Knief noted that it will eliminate the need to update information in iPass and also access JupiterEd, etc. With all information coming through Aspen, it will also eliminate the need for the App at the elementary school as well. Meredith Erickson added that in terms of leveraging technology as a tool, parents can update their personal information as well, with the goal to eliminate the need for emergency cards - even report cards will be issued digitally. For teachers, switching to Aspen will eliminate the need to do manual entry into two systems.

■ **Line 57: Coding change**

Mr. Brothers explained that the Department of Education is requesting a breakdown of further detail between regular education and special education and therefore there will be a number of transfers of funds between lines that are for coding reasons only and not due to a shortage.

■ **Line 172: \$7,000**

Line 172 reflects a request to move \$7,000 into the line item to support a bus driver floater position. This position was discussed and created to offset the prior coverage issues from the transportation department. The hours of the position are Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. with the potential for afternoon coverage as well. The job has been posted online and in

our buildings.

■ **Line 201:**

Instead of replacing two 3rd shift custodians due to retirement at the Middle High School, the district has contracted out services from S.J. Services on a trial basis for evening custodial coverage. The request is to move money from line 206 to change from salaries to contract services.

■ **Line 247:**

Money to be transferred in from vocational savings to offset the phase-in costs for Aspen.

Mr. Brothers also explained that they are currently trending \$250,000 in the red on special education tuitions, although they anticipate savings from facilities and utilities to begin to offset the cost.

In an effort to be fiscally responsible, Mr. Cardarelli asked if it was the right time to upgrade the student information software with the special education line that much in the red. Both Mr. Brothers and Mr. Knief agreed, as well as Mr. O'Brien, that the Aspen software is a long term need and the budget itself isn't in the red. Mr. Knief also shared that they have open and transparent communication with town hall about this need and they have supported the district in funding the needs in this way rather than adding it to the budget or as a capital request.

Motion made to approved the budget transfers as proposed: Jason Greenwood

Seconded: Andrew Soliwoda

Vote: Unanimous

VIII. Reports from the School Committee

Stephanie Clougherty: Happy New Year to all.

Motion Made to Adjourn: Stephanie Cloughety

Seconded: James O'Brien

Roll Call Vote:

Andrew Cardarelli, Chairperson: **Yes**

Jason Greenwood: **Yes**

Stephanie Clougherty: **Yes**

Andrew Soliwoda: **Yes**

James O'Brien: **Yes**

Motion Approved: 5 to 0

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by: Gina Marie Russell

NEXT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 13, 2020 7:00 p.m. OPEN MEETING