

**EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA**

Minutes of School Committee meeting of November 5, 2009, Simmons Lecture Hall, convened at 7:05 p.m. Present: Caroline O'Neill, Dawn Boynton, Colleen Less, Jane Martin, Allen Duarte, and Dr. Michael Green. Mrs. Turley was absent.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK OBSERVANCE:

In observance of American Education Week, which is being held the week of November 15 to November 21, 2010, the School Committee prepared a Proclamation which is distributed to each school.

Chair O'Neill remarked that this Proclamation articulates and proclaims the Committee's gratitude to the entire staff.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded Mrs. Martin, and with a 3-0 vote, the Committee moved the Music Department Trip Request to this juncture.

Music Department Trip Request:

Dr. Green stated that information was included in the School Committee packets for the OAHS Show Choir and Pit Band trip request. He said that Charlene is here this evening to present the request and answer any questions.

Charlene Dalrymple, Music Department Chair, explained to the Committee that three of her staff got together last Spring about possible plans for the Show Choir and the Pit Band to enter in the National Competition. A handout was provided to each member, depicting the trip proposal. She said a survey was conducted with the parents and over 75% were in favor of entering this competition. The competition is comprised of groups from the Mid-West, West Coast, Washington and Arizona. The trip would take place April 15 to April 20, 2010. Students would only miss 2 days of school due to the upcoming April school vacation. The cost is \$939 per student with fundraising activities already taking place and more planned.

Mrs. Martin questioned "If a child doesn't raise enough money, would that student not be able to go?"

Music Department Trip Request

Charlene responded that there are ways to offset this. She mentioned that there will be 3 staff chaperones and 5 sets of parents.

Mrs. Less asked, "What happens if a student can't afford to go?" Charlene replied that there are a couple of things that can be done.

Mrs. Martin wanted to be certain that teachers understand that these students will be missing two days of classes.

Charlene said that because it is just prior to school vacation, tests are usually not scheduled. However, the students are responsible to make up whatever work will be missed at that time.

Chair O'Neill believes this to be a wonderful opportunity for the students and a beautiful area to travel to for the competition.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with a 3-0 vote, the Committee approved the Music Trip to San Diego April 15 to April 20, 2010.

MINUTES:

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with a 3-0 vote, the Minutes of 9/14/09 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with a 3-0 vote, the Minutes of 10/8/09 were approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:
Schedule of Payments:**

Circulated for signatures.

Update on the Work of the Administrators Regarding Placement:

Dr. Green referred to the February 11, 2009 School Committee meeting at which the School Committee voted to act on the recommendation of the administrative team and approved the implementation of a Non-Geographic Placement Procedure for students entering grade 3 at FLO and HHR schools. This new procedure will be in place for the 2010-2011 school year. He stated that the team will provide the Committee with an update of their work to date on the placement process as well as future plans.

Via the team's PowerPoint presentation, members enthusiastically presented the various components of the placement process for grade 2 to 3 for September 2010.

Dr. Green pointed out what the team identified as advantages regarding the implementation of a Non-Geographic Student Placement Process:

- Provide for balanced enrollment at FLO and HHR schools.
- Ensure balanced enrollment of students receiving support services.
- Allow for greater scheduling options for students.
- Enable children to become familiar with youngsters from other locations in the community early in their development.
- Support the goal of further developing a sense of community.

Dr. Green remarked how excited the team is about this process and what it will provide for the students. He said the goal is to to effectively implement a Non-Geographic Placement Process for Grade 3 students entering FLO and HHR Schools for the 2010-2011 academic school year, which will provide for the thoughtful placement of students into balanced classes that will enhance their academic, social, and emotional growth and development.

Dr. Green stated the research is clear that nothing in education is more important than what takes place in our classrooms minute by minute and day to day between teachers and students. Therefore, finding the best placement for each child is essential.

**Update on the Work of the Administrators
Regarding Placement(continued):**

Allen Duarte, Interim Assistant Superintendent, mentioned that the Administrative Team believes this is a unique opportunity for our children attending the FLO/HHR complex. He said a survey was conducted in which 163 parents responded. This survey was used to identify a number of common themes, i.e. keep siblings together, slow the process down, balance class sizes, have PACs talk more about this, developing "whole" school activities that include both HHR and FLO.

Allen described the tasks completed to date:

- A survey was distributed to parents last fall seeking suggestions and comments regarding the Non-Geographic Placement Process.
- Members of the teaching staff have provided input and suggestions for the new placement process.
- Administrators have worked together to develop an Action Plan that includes timelines, specific activities, persons responsible, and the current status of the various elements of the new placement process.

Allen reported that the plan continues to be updated as activities are completed.

Bob Smith, Moreau Hall Principal, talked about the tasks completed or scheduled to date:

- Updated Teacher Placement Cards for students entering Grade 3.
- Updated Parent Information Sheets for Grade 2 parents.
- A Question and Answer (Q&A) document regarding the new placement process.

Bob explained the function of the following documents:

- Placement Card - provides information regarding each child's overall academic performance, study skills, work habits, learning styles and services.
- Parent Information Sheet – informs parents about the flexible assignment process and asks them to share information about their child with school personnel.

**Update on the Work of the Administrators
Regarding Placement(continued):**

- The Q&A document – includes 11 questions that are based on the parent survey information. It includes information about the sibling option, how students will be placed, when parents will be informed of their child's placement, and when they will be notified of their child's Grade 3 teacher.

A February to June 2010 Student Placement Timeline has been developed during which time specific actions and target dates will be completed by the administrators, school staff and parents:

- Dates to send the letter and documents to parents as well as the date they need to be returned.
- Pre-Placement task dates concerning siblings and services and who is responsible.
- Placement meeting dates.
- Parent notification of school assignment.
- Parent notification of teacher assignment.

Dr. Beauchaine, Parkview Principal, stated that April 26 to April 30, 2010 has been established for pre-placement activities at which time all students who receive support services will be pre-placed.

Pat Lucier, Principal at HHR, said that he will be working in conjunction with Dr. Mazzola on the preliminary plan for bus arrival and dismissal which has been discussed by the Administrative Team.

Dr. Mazzola, FLO Principal, and Mr. Lucier will be working with School Councils and PACs to assess, modify, and pilot collaborative activities with their respective schools. Dr. Mazzola said that he and Mr. Lucier will continue to meet to "fine tune" their plans, activities, and timelines.

Debbie DiCenso, Principal at Center, mentioned that the Team is in the process of developing plans for upcoming placement meetings that will be held with Grade 2 and Grade 3 staff and administrators.

**Update on the Work of the Administrators
Regarding Placement(continued):**

In summary, Dr. Green remarked that the administrative team is pleased with the progress that has been made to date with the placement process. He said that the team will continue to update the members of our parent community via School Council and PAC updates as well as include pertinent information regarding progress with the new placement process in future parent newsletters.

Mrs. Martin commented that this task is bringing the staffs together and more sharing of information. She is very excited about this new placement process.

Mrs. Less thanked the Administrative Team for all their time and effort put forth on developing a plan that will benefit the students and teachers.

Chair O'Neill thanked the team as well and applauded their efforts. It reflects collaboration and team work, and we are tremendously fortunate. She said that this work could become a "model".

A brief question and answer period was held.

Again, the Committee thanked the Team for their presentation this evening which evidenced the enormous amount of work that has gone into this placement process.

**NEW BUSINESS:
Retirements:**

None.

Resignations:

Dr. Green stated that he had received a resignation letter from Jennifer Potts, a part-time Art Teacher at Center School, effective November 10, 2009. In her letter, Ms. Potts indicated that she was offered a full-time job at the Museum of Fine Arts.

Appointments:

None.

Green Communities Committee Appointment:

Dr. Green conveyed that we have been asked to appoint a new School Committee member to fill the Green Communities Committee seat that was held by Mrs. Boynton.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 3-0 vote, the Committee unanimously agreed to table this item until the vacancy on the School Committee is filled, provided that committee can hold off until then.

Dr. Green said that his office would contact the Green Communities Committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

H1Ni Update:

Dr. Green reiterated the many preventive approaches that continue to take place in the buildings. He spoke about the flu clinic that took place this afternoon by the Board of Health for children age 3 to Grade 2. As more vaccine is made available, efforts will be expanded to children in the other grades and those parents will be notified. Dr. Green said the school department will continue to work closely with the Board of Health and other Town Departments.

Mrs. Less asked if there was a significant number of absentees in Easton to which Dr. Green replied no.

Chair O'Neill expressed appreciation to Dr. Green for working with the Board of Health in this matter.

Unanticipated Expenses:

None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES:

Dr. Green provided an update on the OAHS Security System. As part of the construction project a security system was installed at OAHS. It is up and running and contains security cameras that cover the exterior of the building, including parking lots, building entrances, corridors and common areas. Dr. Green pointed out that there are no monitors. The cameras record on a 30-day loop that is then re-recorded. Only the principal and assistant principal have access to this through their computers, which are secured.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:

Mrs. Martin asked what the impact will be in funding as a result of the cuts in local aid.

Dr. Green said it will impact the circuit breaker funding but it is in the preliminary stages. He stated that if the reduced funding is a limited amount, the School Department will be able to absorb it.

Chair O'Neill spoke of additional students receiving services, yet the percent of state reimbursement has decreased.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with the members polled, the Committee entered into Executive Session at 7:59 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the Minutes of 10/8/09, to discuss contract negotiations through collective bargaining, and to approve the Executive Session Minutes of 9/11/09.

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with a 3-0 vote, the Committee approved the Executive Session Minutes of 9/11/09.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with all members in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Green, Ed.D.
Secretary