

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners.*

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jonathan Pope, Chairman  
Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson  
Kathy Clancy, Secretary  
Tony Gross  
Michelle Sweet  
Acting Mayor Paul McGeary

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Gregg Bach, Assistant Superintendent  
Hans Baumhauer, Director of Finance  
and Operations  
Telena Imel, West Parish Principal  
Matt Fusco, Veterans Principal

---

Recorded by Cape Ann TV

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.
- II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**
- III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.
- IV. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON** – None.
- V. RECOGNITIONS** – Kathy Clancy recognized the O'Maley students who attended the Raytheon "Math Alive!" exhibit ribbon cutting at the Museum of Science for their wonderful behavior and enthusiastic participation. She thanked Raytheon for their hospitality and Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, who helped introduce Raytheon to our schools.
- Dr. Safier congratulated the Class of 2014 and thanked the administration for their orchestration of the graduation ceremony. He also thanked the teachers for their efforts throughout the year to help bring students to the point of graduation. Ms. Teixeira thanked the administration for their efforts with respect to Scholarship Night, as well.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – Leanne and Sam, co-presidents of the Student Council, introduced themselves and updated the committee on the following events at Gloucester High School: prom, senior events scheduled for next year, baseball, track, class elections, and the new performing arts position.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. Building & Finance Subcommittee of May 21, 2014

2. School Committee of May 28, 2014

**B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets**

**C. Acceptance of Project Bread Summer Food Service Program Incentive Grants**

1. Gloucester High School, \$900.00
2. Veterans’ Memorial Elementary School, \$900.00

Mr. Gross removed Item B from the Consent Agenda since there are no warrants included in the packet.

On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

**VIII. DELIBERATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**A. Veterans’ Memorial and West Parish School Improvement Plans (SIPs) –**

Dr. Imel stated that the elementary schools have focused on goals that directly support the goals of the District Improvement Plan. She noted that the first two goals of the SIPs are the same across all five elementary schools, which are focused on implementation of the standards-based report card and an emphasis on aligning mathematics to the Common Core Standards.

Principal Fusco reviewed Goal 3 of the Veterans’ Memorial SIP, namely improvement of parent involvement and attendance at PTO and school events. He described an incentive program called the “Eagle Card” where parents will receive prizes for attending a certain number of events.

Dr. Imel reviewed the third goal of the West Parish SIP, namely the fostering of social responsibility in the community and the environment, including the hosting of a bullying awareness presentation, hosting of more parent/family events, and student involvement with community organizations. Dr. Imel reported that the adjustment counselor and psychologist are preparing students emotionally for the transition to St. Ann’s next year.

Finally, Principal Fusco described the activities of the Veterans governance team and the implementation of “peace time” after recess, and Dr. Imel spoke about the ongoing packing process at West Parish and how hard the teachers are working. She noted that bookcases and storage are going to be one of the challenges at St. Ann’s.

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mr. Gross, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to accept the Veterans’ Memorial and West Parish School Improvement Plans.

**B. MCAS vs. PARCC** – Mr. Bach presented a slide show demonstrating PARCC practice tests, and the committee discussed the following matters:

- Accommodations for special education students
- Online versus paper tests – Dr. Safier stated that elementary students will take papers tests for the next three to five years.
- Developmentally appropriate use of technology – Mr. Bach reported that students were very comfortable with navigating through the PARCC pilot test this year but had trouble typing answers.
- Middle school students who are uncomfortable using a computer having the option to take the test on paper

Dr. Safier reviewed several publications from the DESE regarding PARCC, including information regarding educator evaluation and reporting of data. He noted that in comparing MCAS and PARCC results, the DESE assumes that students will perform similarly on both tests. Mr. Gross disagreed with that assumption, stating that they are totally different tests and students' scores could be completely different. Dr. Safier reiterated that the district will be held harmless on its accountability and assistance level and that parents should be notified that since this is a pilot year for PARCC, students may not have the same results that they did on the MCAS. The advantage of that scenario is that if the baseline is slightly lower, the student growth percentile will show larger growth the following year. There was a discussion about the need for DESE to have representative samples to balance the results.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she does not believe a district should be held harmless because there is no accountability. Dr. Safier replied that the PARCC scores will be reported out and the district will see the same data that it sees for MCAS.

Ms. Teixeira questioned whether teachers have concerns about the curriculum being aligned to the PARCC test. Mr. Bach noted that MCAS has shifted over to the same Common Core standards and stated that the teachers' only concerns related to elementary school students taking the PARCC test online.

Acting Mayor McGeary expressed concern about the psychological and educational impact on high school students who have been taking MCAS all along and then perform poorly on PARCC. Dr. Safier stated that high school students will still be taking MCAS. However, if the DESE switches to PARCC at some point, high school students will be required to take that test. Dr. Safier stated that MCAS results are not part of a student's record that goes to colleges.

Dr. Safier reiterated that this is a pilot year for PARCC throughout the state. He believes it is important to see what it's all about and to begin to adjust our instruction more closely to the questions that are being asked. He believes it is the district's responsibility to seek the expectations and rigor that are being brought forward and to take a chance on raising the bar and stated that the district has an opportunity to begin that process next year while being held harmless. Therefore, Dr. Safier recommended that the district implement PARCC next year for Grades 3 through 8, with the elementary grades taking it on paper and the middle school grades taking it online.

Chairman Pope reminded the committee that the PARCC pilot program is first come, first served and that the DESE is asking districts to commit by June 30th.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Kathy Clancy – yes

Mr. Gross – no

Acting Mayor McGeary – yes

Chairman Pope – yes

Ms. Sweet – yes

Ms. Teixeira – yes

To adopt the PARCC pilot program for Grades 3 through 8 for the 2014-2015 school year.

Mr. Gross expressed concern that the DESE just instituted a new evaluation system and now the game has been changed for teachers, which is unacceptable to him. He also believes that some students are not able to think that way. He expressed concern that PARCC will create a bigger gap between the “haves” and the “have nots,” and the state is not giving our district anything to help us get there. Mr. Gross also noted that there are twice as many test days for PARCC and pointed out that keyboarding is not taught in any of the schools. Finally, he stated that his lack of support of the motion should not be seen as any lack of confidence in Dr. Safier’s leadership but a lack of confidence in the DESE.

Ms. Teixeira stated that she supported the motion with a lot of reservations. She does not believe every student at O’Maley is on the same level with respect to computer skills, and she is very uncomfortable with the idea that there is no option for taking a test on paper in the pilot year. She also believes implementing a new test next year is adding more pressure to a district that is already overburdened. However, she trusts Dr. Safier’s judgment and therefore supported his recommendation to move forward with PARCC.

Acting Mayor McGeary stated that whatever test the district ends up taking is going to be more focused on the Common Core anyway, and computer skills are a necessary part of life these days. He believes it is important that the district move toward that kind of environment.

Chairman Pope stated that PARCC is coming our way and to be able to get on board a year early and be held harmless for that year makes sense to him. He noted that the district has many other assessments and the committee will be able to see how PARCC scores relate to what we know our students can do. We will also have a seat at the table to comment on the PARCC test. Therefore, he does not see any reason not to go ahead with it.

Kathy Clancy requested that when the PARCC scores come out, that we are sensitive to the fact that it is a new test and we defend our teachers and what they do every day. Dr. Safier stated that he does not see the PARCC results having a direct impact on teacher evaluations.

Chairman Pope noted that Jack O'Maley is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

- C. BSRI Partnership Report** – Mr. Bach stated that the district has an agreement with BSRI to create a joint exploratory committee to look at the needs of the district and the available options with respect to writing and to have a representative group of teachers work with BSRI this summer to come up with a proposal, professional development, and a timeline. He stated that he will report out on that in the fall.

Dr. Safier emphasized that teachers need to be part of the decision-making process and noted that they possess a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise, which was clearly demonstrated through the process of adopting a new math program.

Dr. Safier reported that BSRI has been running a program that pairs principals and reading coaches between schools. There will be a number of sessions where schools will partner together with BSRI, which reduces the workforce of BSRI coming in and gives our principals and reading coaches an opportunity to have more extensive conversation about the nature of instructional practice. Dr. Safier anticipates this will also provide some savings for the district.

**IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** – None.

**X. ACTION**

- A. Acceptance of Veterans' Memorial and West Parish School Improvement Plans**  
– See Item VIII.A.

**XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER COMMUNICATION/OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters with respect to the West Parish project:

- Traffic signage process with Traffic Commission and City Council
- Packing instructions for West Parish teachers
- Increased trash and recycling pickups at West Parish
- Room numbers and square footage at St. Ann's
- Copier locations and staffing at new West Parish School
- Rehab project at St. Ann's – completion date between August 1-10
- Modulars
- Interiors Committee – colors of brick
- Existing West Parish time capsule

The committee discussed the appropriate time for a groundbreaking ceremony at West Parish. Chairman Pope suggested the last day of school.

- B. Governance Workshop** – After discussion, the workshop was scheduled for Monday, August 11, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. Chairman Pope will ask Dorothy Presser to attend.
- C. FY15 Budget** – Chairman Pope reported that the City Council voted to increase the school budget by \$40,000 and to increase the appropriation for user fees from \$65,000 to \$75,000. Acting Mayor McGeary added that the St. Ann’s expenses will be paid by the city.
- D. City/School Facilities MOU** – Mr. Gross requested that a discussion be held with Acting Mayor McGeary to try to get this agreement signed. Acting Mayor McGeary said he would be happy to do so and indicated that he proposed some language months ago.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – On a motion by Chairman Pope, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

- Kathy Clancy – yes
- Mr. Gross – yes
- Acting Mayor McGeary – yes
- Chairman Pope – yes
- Ms. Sweet – yes
- Ms. Teixeira – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussing salary increases for non-union personnel, contract negotiations, and settlement of a grievance and to enter back into regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Chairman Pope, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of June 11, 2014 at 9:39 p.m.

*All reference documents and reports are filed in the Superintendent’s office.*

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*