

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

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  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken

**Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent  
Dr. Arthur Unobskey, Asst. Superintendent  
Tom Lafleur, Director of Finance and  
Operations  
Patricia Wegmann, Special Education  
Director  
Tammy Morgan, Plum Cove Principal

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Pope called the meeting to order at 7:02 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** – Dr. Safier recognized Tammy Morgan and Plum Cove School for being one of 45 schools statewide to be named as a commendation school for raising their test scores and reducing proficiency gaps. In addition, Plum Cove went from a Level 2 to a Level 1 school as a result of last spring's PARCC exam. Mrs. Morgan credited her staff, who work very hard and are very open to trying new practices to reach their students.
- Kathy Clancy recognized Maggie Rosa, who is transitioning out of the role of President of the Gloucester Education Foundation after three years, and thanked her for everything she has done for the district.
- VI. GHS STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL** – None present.
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA**
- A. Approval of Minutes**
1. School Committee of December 2, 2015
  2. Building & Finance Subcommittee of December 9, 2015

- B. Approval of Warrants – Cover Sheets**
- C. Approval of Transfers – November 6, 2015 to December 3, 2015**
- D. Referrals**

Chairman Pope removed Item A2 from the Consent Agenda.

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

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to approve the Consent Agenda as noted above.

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

- A. Special Education Report –** Ms. Wegmann reported that the proficiency gap at the high school is narrowing for students with disabilities in ELA. There was no change in the accountability rating in math, which remains just below the target level. In general, at Plum Cove the high needs category met their target in making progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps in both ELA and math. East Gloucester showed improvement in ELA and there was no change in math, which remains below target. West Parish, Veterans and Beeman showed the strongest gains in narrowing the proficiency gap for students with disabilities, which are on or about target in both ELA and math.

Ms. Wegmann stated that more work needs to be done at O’Maley on how to meet the needs of students with disabilities since the proficiency gap is widening in ELA and math is still below target. Dr. Safier indicated that they are in the process of working with the middle school on some of these issues and challenges, including the possible extension of co-teaching to ELA. The goals from the summer retreat are also being reviewed.

Ms. Wegmann reported that the district currently has 786 students identified as having a disability, which is 24% of the total student population, the majority of which (22%) are identified with specific learning disabilities. Similar districts in the DART analysis range from 16.5% to 23.7%. Of the total number of students on IEPs, 58 students are currently placed out-of-district and we continue to tuition two students from neighboring districts into specialized substantially separate programs.

Ms. Wegmann reported that every six years as part of its accountability system, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees compliance with education requirements through the coordinated program review (CPR). She reviewed the process of the CPR and indicated that the district will participate in the review during the 2016-2017 school year. In order to prepare for the process, documents are currently being gathered to submit with the self-assessment portion of the review, and several policies and procedures will be reviewed, as well as selected student files.

Ms. Wegmann reported that the high school has a new special education coordinator, who is working diligently with the deans and assistant principal to make sure that the

academic support classes are appropriately maintained. She is also looking at creative ways to program for those students returning from hospitalizations or who experience high levels of anxiety in the school setting.

Ms. Wegmann stated that when the West Parish project is completed, two substantially separate special needs programs from Veterans will be relocated to the new building and the primary autism program which is currently located in the Beeman modulars will move to the vacated space at Veterans.

Finally, Ms. Wegmann reported that after the holidays, the preschool will open another integrated classroom and that the main office staff who currently occupy that room are relocating to other available spaces in the district. Ann Marie Jordan has already identified the staff and is in the process of recruiting peer role models for that classroom. Furniture and supplies have been ordered so that the classroom can be assembled during the holiday break.

The committee discussed the following matters:

- Preparation for the Coordinated Program Review
- Conclusions and recommendations of the Walker Report
- Co-teaching model for special needs students
- Expansion of the preschool

**B. Superintendent's Evaluation** – Chairman Pope reviewed the summative evaluation of Dr. Safier by the School Committee. (See attached document containing comments made by committee members.) Ms. Teixeira requested that the editorial from the Gloucester Daily Times be attached to the evaluation. Dr. Safier stated that it has been an honor and a privilege to work with and for the School Committee and with the team that he has assembled and a staff that is on target and wants to make things happen.

**C. Superintendent's Report** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the following matters:

1. Plum Cove Listed by the ESE as a Commendation School – See Item V.
2. Assessment Choice Spring 2016 – Dr. Safier stated that the Commissioner's expectation is that all assessments will be taken online by 2019. Therefore, we need to think about what is necessary to move students forward in that regard.
3. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to Meet – Dr. Safier reported that there has been a proposal by the math program leaders at the high school to expand the computer science program next year. In addition, the technology consultants are working on the final draft of their report, which will be shared with the committee when it is completed. Kathy Clancy reported that last week, students at O'Maley and the high school participated in an hour of coding.
4. Every Student Succeeds Act

5. FY17 Budget Development

6. Calendar

On a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept the Superintendent's Report.

## **IX. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Building & Finance Subcommittee Meeting of December 9, 2015** – Chairperson Clancy reported that the subcommittee discussed the following matters at its meeting of December 9, 2015:

- Review of Athletic Program Financial Controls
- District Expenditures
- Request to Increase Annual Preschool Revolving Expenditure Limit

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to direct the CFO to request that the City Council increase the annual preschool revolving expenditure limit from \$45,000 to \$75,000.

Mr. Gross noted for the record that the need to increase the preschool expenditure limit is a product of the district's success.

*(Ms. Wegmann left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.)*

## **X. ACTION**

**A. Acceptance of Grants**

1. Massachusetts DESE Grants

- (a) 21st Century Community Learning Centers – Continuation Grant in the amount of \$110,228.00

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Gross, seconded by Ms. Teixeira, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept a 21st Century Community Learning Centers – Continuation grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the amount of \$110,228.00.

- (b) Special Education – Program Improvement Grant in the amount of \$27,144.00

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

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept a Special Education – Program Improvement grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the amount of \$27,144.00.

2. Gloucester Education Foundation Grant – \$26,500.00 to support the GHS Technology Integration Professional Development Program

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

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept a grant from the Gloucester Education Foundation in the amount of \$26,500.00 to support the GHS Technology Integration Professional Development Program.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 0 in favor 6 opposed, to reconsider the Committee’s vote to accept the above-referenced GEF grant. The motion failed.

3. Big Yellow School Bus Grants

- (a) \$200.00 to O’Maley Innovation Middle School  
(b) \$200.00 to Veterans’ Memorial Elementary School

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to accept the above-referenced grants from Big Yellow School Bus in the amount of \$200.00 each.

**B. Increase of Preschool Revolving Expenditure Limit – See Item IX.A.**

**(At this time, the agenda was taken out of order.)**

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

- A. MSBA Project Update** – Dr. Safier updated the committee on the progress of construction at the West Parish site, including spreading of the playing field soil, taping in Building B, priming and painting, the general enclosure of the lobby, stair enclosures, installation of ceiling fixtures and sprinkler heads, tile work in bathrooms and corridors, elevator work, testing of the roof, and documentation for LEAD compliance. Mr. Lafleur reported that the site work is ahead of schedule. Chairman Pope stated that he has requested a walk-through of the site in February for new members of the School Committee and City Council, and Mr. Lafleur indicated that the February 11th building committee meeting will be held onsite.
- B. Calendar** – Chairman Pope reminded the committee that the next School Committee will be held at Plum Cove School on January 13, 2016.

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

**VOTED:** By Roll Call Vote

Ms. Teixeira – yes  
Mayor Theken – yes  
Kathy Clancy – yes  
Mr. Gross – yes  
Chairman Pope – yes  
Ms. Sweet – yes

To enter into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining with the GTA and to return to open session.

*(The meeting reconvened at 8:44 p.m.)*

**X. ACTION (Continued)**

- C. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement Between the Gloucester Teachers Association and the Gloucester School Committee for July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016** – After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

**VOTED:** 4 in favor, 1 abstain (Chairman Pope), 1 present (Mayor Theken) to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Gloucester Teachers Association and the Gloucester School Committee as presented. (See attached.)

- D. Individual Employee Contracts – Increased Salary** – Chairman Pope stated that all of the individual contracts, including the Superintendent's, have a clause that links pay increases to the percentage given to the GTA. Ms. Teixeira stated that she believes

increases should be tied to the employee's evaluation, attendance, etc. as opposed to an automatic increase. She assumes that based on the way Dr. Safier runs the district that these employees have been evaluated and there are no issues. However, she would like that language removed from the individual contracts going forward because she does not believe anyone should get an automatic increase.

Dr. Safier indicated that the language was in the contracts when he first came on board and that in the end, removing that language could wind up costing the district more. Ms. Teixeira would like the individual contracts to be reviewed by the Personnel Subcommittee in order to review the contract language as a whole. There was a discussion about the principals' contracts.

After discussion, on a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 1 present (Mayor Theken) to approve the increased salary to individual contracts tied to the GTA increase.

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

**VOTED:** 6 in favor 0 opposed, to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of December 16, 2015 at 8:53 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*

School Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Comments from School Committee Regarding  
Superintendent's Evaluation

**Mayor Romeo Theken** stated that as the mayor, working closely with Dr. Safier has been rewarding because it has been educational for her. They have been working as a team, going through a lot of different challenges in the past year. She thinks they make a very good team and looks forward to the next two years.

**Ms. Teixeira** stated that she vividly remembers Dr. Safier's interview and that he stuck out from the other candidates. She believes there is no doubt that the School Committee made the right decision when they hired him. He clearly brought strength to the district and she is impressed with the improvements the district has made. She is very proud that the district is now at Level 2 and thanked Dr. Safier and all of his staff. She loves the way that he works with his team and how he builds consensus. There is no doubt in her mind that he is a leader that other districts should be observing to learn how to foster that type of environment. She is very proud that Gloucester has a superintendent that is a model for how to improve education.

**Kathy Clancy** stated that being a Level 2 district is quite an accomplishment. She knows the administration has worked hard getting everything in place, and the students are achieving at higher levels. She thinks as we go forward that will continue to be the case. She feels that the culture has shifted to a culture of high expectations, which is very important to having both staff and students feel proud. Clearly, Dr. Safier's empowerment of staff has been a very successful model. Even though there are still places where we need to do better, she totally appreciates that we are transparent about our challenges. She also stated that we are doing a terrific job of being a role model for other districts. She acknowledged all of the accomplishments, awards and changes in status at the high school and Dr. Safier's care and management of the West Parish building project. Dr. Safier's capacity for various things is immense, and that is something that not everybody could do. She also commended him on building such a strong administrative team.

**Ms. Sweet** thanked Dr. Safier for his dedication to the schools. She appreciates everything that he and his staff have done over the last year and in previous years. She congratulated him and everyone else that worked so hard and so diligently to get the district to a Level 2 district. She appreciates Dr. Safier's honesty and integrity and stated that it has been a pleasure to work with him and his staff and that she looks forward to working with them next year.

**Mr. Gross** stated that one of the things that has impressed him most is that Dr. Safier is an educator first, not a politician or an administrator, which is key to his success. He is also impressed with the courage Dr. Safier can bring to make changes, which is not an easy thing in a culture that has been established, and he has done so with consistent movement forward, even while some staff moved on to higher levels. Mr. Gross also noted that Dr. Safier builds from the bottom up, empowering the people

who have to do the work to be part of the entire process from start to finish. The reason the district has achieved success in a very short period of time since Dr. Safier got to the district is due to his direction, and the city cannot thank him enough for that.

**Chairman Pope** stated that an indicator of what Dr. Safier has brought to the district is the quality of applicants that the district is getting that want to work in Gloucester. He thanked Dr. Safier and stated that he looks forward to working with him for a couple more years.

X.C.

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**  
**BETWEEN THE**  
**GLOUCESTER TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**  
**AND THE**  
**GLOUCESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The parties hereby agree to the following changes to the September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2015 agreement:

1. **Article 19, Extended Leaves of Absence, Section D, Maternity Leave, Update** to reflect MGL c 149§105D, Parental Leave as modified in April 2015 and accepted as Committee Policy File GCCA.

2. **Article 19, Extended Leaves of Absence, Section N, Replace** the current language with the following:

“Effective beginning the 2016-2017 school year, teachers on extended leave of absences are required to notify the Superintendent of their intention to return to the District the following school year by February 15 of their leave of absence year. Teachers who fail to notify the Superintendent by February 15 of their leave of absence year of their intention to return shall be designated as voluntarily resigning from the District. Prior to February 15 each year, the Superintendent will provide the Association president with the names of any and all bargaining unit members who are on an extended leave of absence and are subject to the February 15 notification requirement.”

3. **Article 32, 403B, Section A, Replace** the current language with the following:

“The employer will match at 100% of the employee’s contribution to a maximum of \$250. The matching contribution will be paid per pay period for each fiscal year. The School Committee shall forward contributions to a third party administrator designated by the School Committee. The School Committee shall provide the Association with reasonable requests for information in the conducting the business of the 403(b) program.

The School Committee will not be responsible for any administrative costs relating to this program and the only legal responsibility relating to the 403(b) plan will be to transmit the contribution to the appropriate vendor(s).”

4. **Appendix A, Teacher Salary Schedule, Increase** as follows:

“Effective on September 1, 2015, Increase by 1.5%”

5. **Appendix A, Teacher Salary Schedule, Salary Schedule by Responsibility, Section 2, Instructional Positions and Section 3, Extracurricular Positions, Increase** as follows: