

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Amended Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 20, 2012

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

9:45 a.m.

Members Present

Val Gilman, Chairperson
Roger Garberg, Vice Chairman (9:55)
Kathy Clancy

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent Shayne Trubisz
Principal Gregg Bach
Ann-Marie Jordan, Health Coordinator (10:05)

Others Present

Dr. Joe Buckley
Cindy Juncker, Nurse Leader

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilman called the meeting to order at 9:47 a.m., welcomed Dr. Joe Buckley, Dr. Safier's mentor in the MASS governance project, Gregg Bach, and Cindy Juncker, and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION

At this time, the Agenda was taken out of order.

- E. FY 2012/2013 School Improvement Plans and Legislative Requirements Governing School Committee Oversight and Accountability of School Councils** – Chairperson Gilman went through last year's process of reviewing school improvement plans (SIPs) and noted that there was a lack of integration into the budget process. She presented a memorandum describing the issues she would like the subcommittee to discuss and make recommendations to the full committee. She also reviewed the brochure from MASC regarding School Committee/School Council Roles.

Dr. Safier expressed the need for a unified and coherent system with respect to SIPs and the district improvement plan (DIP). He anticipates the DIP will be completed by the end of February vacation, in time for the schools to use it in preparation of their SIPs. He reviewed a sample district improvement plan to give the committee a sense of what it will look like and how it will translate into the SIPs. Finally, he indicated that the DIP will also be presented in an executive summary form.

In terms of the budget process, Dr. Safier indicated that he has lists from the administration as to what their needs are in terms of adequate resources (i.e. lab tables, media specialists, overhead projectors, ELMOs, SMART boards, adjustment counselors, etc.).

Kathy Clancy expressed concern about the timing of the School Committee's discussions with school councils. Chairperson Gilman would like the school councils to work in parallel with the principals so that they feel listened to and involved with the process. Mr. Bach stated that preparation of SIPS by school councils and principals has been a very frustrating exercise because for six years in a row, very little or nothing of what was asked for in the SIP was granted because the School Committee was not in a position to do so. This is a real detractor in getting people to feel invested in the process.

Mr. Bach would like to see a completed district improvement plan which is limited in scope so that the schools have a chance of achieving the crucial goals. He would also like to see school improvement plans that, in this year at least, focus on those core elements and very little else, because then the principals will have the best chance of working together with the school councils in a short period of time on some big pieces. In successive years, he would like to begin to include some smart goals and see individual school flavor begin to come out.

Chairperson Gilman suggested that the committee go to a site-based meeting at the schools this spring to have an open dialog, and the principal can lead a conversation about what the most important needs are from a budget standpoint. Kathy Clancy suggested having a forum in the spring and encouraging the school councils to attend and then have meetings with individual schools in the fall. Mr. Bach recommended focusing on what is happening in math and reading district-wide instead of focusing on the needs of individual schools that they may not get. He suggested meeting with each school in the fall to see what their year looks like, which will jumpstart the school council process.

Chairperson Gilman suggested holding an educational forum on teaching and learning in April to engage people on the district improvement plan and require the site-based teams to attend.

After discussion, on a motion by Chairperson Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend to the full School Committee that we engage in our first spring educational forum during which the superintendent and his team will present a "State of the Schools"/district improvement plan and school improvement plans.

Mr. Bach left the meeting at 10:37 a.m. to attend another meeting.

Chairperson Gilman requested that, at a later time, Dr. Safier work with the principals on how the SIPs should look as a derivation of the district plan. Dr. Safier indicated that he will update the subcommittee on the process in February and March. Chairperson Gilman also requested that he survey the schools and find out how often they are meeting and to make sure that the meetings are open, that the minutes are posted, and that the tenure of the committee is clear.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairperson Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend to the full School Committee that we support attending and participating in a two-way dialog with the site-based councils beginning in the early fall.

A. Head Injuries and Concussion Policy – First Reading – Cindy Juncker reported to the subcommittee on the recent legislation passed regarding head injuries and concussion for MIAA sports. She stated that there is already an awareness of this policy at the high school and that 26 head injuries have been reported so far this year. Ann-Marie Jordan reported on how the policy was drafted. The subcommittee read through the policy and the following matters were discussed:

- Whether the training requirement for volunteers will deter people from volunteering
- Stages of recovery from concussion
- Requirements for students to return to sports after a head injury/concussion

The subcommittee recommended the following changes to the policy:

- Delete the reference to “school marching band” under “Training Program” on page 1.
- Add “and/or guardians” after the word “parents” in all instances in the policy.
- Add “or practice” to paragraph 3a on page 2.
- Add a disclaimer clause on the Head Injury Notification form.

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

VOTED: To approve the first reading of the Head Injuries and Concussion Policy, File JJIF.

Chairperson Gilman stated that this policy should apply to all school sports sponsored by GPS.

Ms. Jordan and Ms. Juncker left the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

B. Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Update (Teachers/Principals and Superintendent) – Dr. Safier reviewed the components of the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation and highlights of the model system guides. He stated he has not yet seen the model collective bargaining contract language.

Dr. Safier also reviewed the District Decision Matrix provided by the DESE, which indicates that the options are to adopt, adapt or revise the model system, and the key requirements. Shayne Trubisz stated that the preferred way to go is to adopt the model system and possibly adapt it in the future.

Dr. Safier reviewed the strategies and suggestions for observations and stated that there is a very distinct emphasis on frequent, unannounced observations. There was a discussion about teachers' goals.

The subcommittee reviewed and discussed the standards, indicators and elements in the model rubric for teachers and school-level administrators, as well as excerpts from M.G.L. Chapter 71, section 38 regarding collective bargaining. Chairperson Gilman suggested putting the collective bargaining language on the Personnel Subcommittee agenda for review, if the chair of that subcommittee agrees.

Dr. Trubisz reviewed the preliminary timetable of the next steps. She stated that the leadership team will be meeting on February 9th and that the district evaluation team will be meeting on February 8th or 9th to review the components of the evaluation system. Professional development must be scheduled by December. There was a discussion about classroom walkthroughs. Chairperson Gilman suggested adding another heading of "Personnel Subcommittee" to the timetable, with bullet points of "Inform and receive feedback" and "Focus on collective bargaining."

C. Next Step Fuller School Decision

1. Educational Merits of Small vs. Larger Schools – History of Plan for Effective Learning Communities – Chairperson Gilman indicated that she found all of the information from 2007 on the Plan for Effective Learning Communities.

Dr. Safier went over the literature and reports he reviewed, which were based on several years of study, and stated that it would be inconsistent for the district to alter the intense work and decisions that were made not that long ago. He recommended that the district "stay the course" with our smaller neighborhood schools, which can serve as "the glue that brings generations together."

There was a discussion about the pros and cons of all of the fifth grade classes being at Fuller School. Dr. Safier pointed out that regardless of the size of the building, it was a "small school" with only 250 students. Given the research, Kathy Clancy believes it would be counterintuitive to now have a much larger school with less ability for the principal to know the students.

Chairperson Gilman made a motion, seconded by Kathy Clancy, to recommend to the full School Committee that we reaffirm our commitment to smaller neighborhood schools in recognition of the moderate and consistent results in student achievement and consistent with the charge established by the Plan for Effective Learning Communities. After a lengthy discussion, the committee tabled the motion until receipt of data from the K-12 Insight survey. Since the motion appeared to endorse a conclusion that was still subject to investigation in the K12 Insight survey, the subcommittee did not want to prejudge the results of that activity.

2. Outreach Committee/Community Engagement – Tabled.
3. Engagement of K-12 Insight to Survey Parent/Guardians and School Community – Next Step – Dr. Safier recommended engaging K-12 Insight to inform the public and to proceed with a survey of parents/guardians and the school community.

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Chairperson Gilman, it was unanimously

VOTED: To recommend to the full School Committee that we proceed with engagement of K-12 Insight to survey parents/guardians and the school community.

A discussion was held on whether school partners such as Pathways should be included in the survey. The consensus of the subcommittee was that it should only include staff and parents/guardians. Mr. Garberg stated that it is imperative that we close the loop with the community on the survey, making sure that they have ready access to the results and making it very clear what action the School Committee was and was not going to take as a result of the feedback.

There was a discussion about inviting Jesse Lieb from K-12 Insight to the next meeting to discuss the content of the survey. Dr. Safier does not believe that a School Committee meeting is necessary and prefers a less formal atmosphere to include a couple of invested community members and one, possibly two members of the committee.

The February 3rd Program Subcommittee meeting was rescheduled to Tuesday, February 7, 2012 at 8:30 a.m. in the superintendent's conference room.

- D. Professional Development Update Report** – Tabled until next meeting.
- F. Owner/Process of Updating New School Committee Website and Discussion of the “Look” for the School Committee Home Page** – Chairperson Gilman requested that the new members of the School Committee and subcommittees be posted on the website. She also requested that Mr. Garberg investigate some best practices of what a good school committee website looks like. This agenda item will be discussed further at the next meeting.
- G. School Choice Survey Results** – Dr. Safier reviewed the spreadsheets representing data received from the school choice surveys of students who left the district in 2010 and 2011. He stated that the response rate was low and that the largest gap between GPS and

their current school was in the physical condition of the buildings. Mr. Garberg distributed and reviewed his analysis of the data. This agenda item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

III. ACTION – None

IV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Kathy Clancy, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Program Subcommittee Meeting of January 20, 2012 at 12:57 p.m.

Maria Puglisi, Recording Secretary