

**THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

## **Special Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

6:00 p.m.

### **Members Present**

Michelle Sweet, Chairperson

Melissa Teixeira, Vice Chairperson

### **Administration Present**

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Gregg Bach, Asst. Superintendent

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**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairperson Sweet called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

### **II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION**

- A. 2014-15 School Calendar** – Dr. Safier outlined the need for professional development early release days at the elementary schools and the importance of teacher collaboration. He reminded the committee that the high school was in academic warning in the spring of 2011 because of insufficient formal opportunities for professional learning communities (PLCs). Subsequently, in May of 2012, NEASC commended GHS for providing more time for teacher collaboration. Dr. Safier stated that the issue is no less important for the elementary schools, which are in session for a half hour less each day than the high school.

Dr. Safier reviewed the fundamental values and disciplines of PLCs and some uses of PLC time, including evaluation, District-Determined Measures, review of a proposed standards-based report card, literacy program, and the proposed math program. He noted that the principals are acting as instructional leaders. Dr. Safier also reported that time on learning is not an issue since the district is over the required 900 hours according to the Department of Education.

The committee discussed attendance on early release days. Mr. Bach stated that there was no impact on attendance on the Friday early release day this year. However, it was in September when attendance is generally not a problem. He stated that the issue is that negotiated staff meetings take place on Tuesdays, and staff meetings are typically combined with half days so the schools can get together. He believes it would be okay to have up to two Friday early release days that would remain building based so teachers would not have to travel. With respect to staff attendance at Friday professional development days, Mr. Bach stated that he cannot access that information but that the business office could run an attendance report through Unifund.

Mr. Bach noted that one professional development day has been moved from Election Day (November 4th) to September 2nd, with a prep day on September 3rd and that students will start school on September 4th.

Mr. Bach stated that there will be three extra K-5 early release days next year, one of which will be moved to Election Day (November 4th). Ms. Teixeira expressed safety concerns with having voters in the elementary schools, and Chairperson Sweet expressed concern with having two early release days in the same week (November 4 and 6). The committee discussed combining those two half days into a full day off on Election Day, with professional development in the morning and parent conferences in the afternoon. After some discussion, Dr. Safier realized that this would be in violation of the teachers' contract since it would increase the number of days that they are required to work. Mr. Bach stated that he will ask the principals of East Gloucester, Beeman and Veterans how they feel about security on Election Day, and Dr. Safier suggested asking for police details for that day.

Dr. Safier and the committee expressed concern with having Good Friday as a day off from school since the district does not recognize other religious holidays. It was the consensus of the committee to change Good Friday to a full day of school and move the last day of school up to June 16, 2015.

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

**VOTED:** 2 in favor zero opposed, to recommend to the full School Committee that we approve the 2014-15 School Calendar as presented, with the following exceptions:

- (a) The Nov. 4 professional development PreK-12 early release day will be moved to Dec. 9.
- (b) The Nov. 6 parent conference PreK-8 early release day will be moved to Nov. 4.
- (c) April 3 will be a full day of school.
- (d) The last day for students will be on June 16, subject to snow days.

Dr. Safier pointed out that December 22nd is a full day of school, December 23rd is a half day, and January 2nd is a vacation day. Mr. Bach reported that Andrea Pretzler stated that teachers would love to have two full weeks off at Christmas and she believes that parents will take their children out of school for that day-and-a-half. However, Mr. Bach noted that parents have expressed concerns in the past about having to provide extended child care. Dr. Safier suggested conducting a community survey to find out how people feel about having two full weeks off at Christmas.

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

**VOTED:** 2 in favor zero opposed, to recommend to the full School Committee that we make December 22 and 23, 2014 vacation days and move the last day for students to June 18, 2015, subject to snow days, pending the outcome of a community survey.

**B. Implementation of Audio and Video Recording of Meetings** – Dr. Safier stated that Patty Wegmann is still considering whether or not to ask the subcommittee to go forward with this policy. Therefore, he requested that this matter be tabled.

**III. ACTION** – See Item II.A.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT** – On a motion by Ms. Teixeira, seconded by Ms. Sweet, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** 2 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the Special Program Subcommittee Meeting of March 18, 2014 at 7:20 p.m.

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

*Maria Puglisi  
Recording Secretary*