

THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Program Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 9, 2011

Superintendent's Conference Room – District Office

3:00 p.m.

Members

Roger Garberg, Chairman

Val Gilman

Kathy Clancy (alternate)

Administration Present

Dr. Richard Safier, Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent Shayne Trubisz

Grant Harris, IT Operations Manager

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Garberg called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m. and stated the mission of the Gloucester Public Schools.

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION

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

B. Community Relations and Communications

1. Status of Website – Grant Harris explained the components of the new website and reported that all information has been transferred to the new site and that outdated information is being purged. He indicated that user accounts for the School Committee members will be configured by next week and that he can provide training if necessary. There was a discussion about who will be responsible for postings on the School Committee website. The recommendation was that Mrs. Gilman, as chairperson of the School Committee, will have that responsibility, with Kathy Clancy as backup and assistance from Stephanie Delisi, if necessary.

Mr. Harris stated that he is working with department heads and administration to collect current applications and forms to be posted on the website. A discussion was held on how to ensure that as much content as possible is posted in the form of embedded rather than scanned documents.

Finally, Mr. Harris noted that there has been a lot of response to the Facebook page and that there have been over 250 requests to subscribe to the news feed.

Mr. Harris left the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

2. Update on Administration Plans to Disseminate MCAS Results from Past Spring
Chairman Garberg expressed concern about the way MCAS results are reported in the press. Dr. Safier indicated that the report will be done by September 15th and will be presented to the School Committee on September 28, 2011. Kathy Clancy suggested scheduling a meeting before that time with whoever is covering this issue for the press. Dr. Safier agreed and suggested that a draft copy of the report be provided to the press after some discussion about strong points and areas where improvement is needed. Mrs. Gilman suggested that this information also be posted on the website and Facebook. There was a discussion about the information presented to the public.

A. Strategy Development

1. Report from Superintendent on Recent or Upcoming Strategic Development Activities, Including Status of Planning of Innovation School – Dr. Safier reviewed the process of preparing the District Improvement Plan for Student Achievement, which is still in draft form, and stated that the leadership team will be reviewing this document on a regular basis to assess how it is being implemented in the classrooms. A discussion was held on evaluating teachers on the results achieved and barriers to achieving those results. Chairman Garberg noted the absence of school cultural goals in the District Improvement Plan. Dr. Safier indicated that his intention was to initially focus on academics. Mrs. Gilman requested that the District Improvement Plan be posted on the website when it is in final form.
2. Draft District Improvement Plan – See Item IIA.1 above.

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

5. Reading Selection, “Doing What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success” – Dr. Safier reviewed the five guiding principles that should govern school improvement, which includes creating high-performance school cultures.

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

3. Draft Data Protocol – Dr. Safier indicated that he is looking to standardize MCAS analysis and that the goal is to have every teacher in grades 3-10 look at the data themselves and identify the strengths and challenges, prioritize the challenges, and come up with areas they want to address with respect to MCAS. There was a discussion about having teachers with the highest test results mentor other teachers at the same level.
4. Information from K12 Insight – Dr. Safier reported that he met with someone from K12 Insight at the Superintendents’ Conference and presented materials from the company. Dr. Safier stated that he will review these materials in more detail and determine whether there are surveys that are worth undertaking. Mrs.

Gilman indicated that the GEF was also interested in K12 Insight and suggested sharing these materials with them. There was a discussion about having these types of surveys done in-house (as was done this past spring) versus having an outsider perform the assessment. Chairman Garberg suggested inviting K12 Insight to make a presentation at a special meeting from 6-7 p.m., before the regularly scheduled September 28th School Committee meeting. Dr. Trubisz recommended inviting the principals to that meeting, as well.

6. Report Other Activity (Results from Cognigraphics in Analysis of Last Spring's Data) – Chairman Garberg indicated that he still owes Dr. Safier raw data from the visioning survey that was done last spring.

7. Assessing Plan for Effective Learning Communities/Neighborhood Schools

Mrs. Gilman stated that this matter was briefly discussed at the joint City Council/School Committee meeting in connection with the discussion of what should be done with Fuller School. She would like to revisit the material that was the basis for the changes made four years ago to close Fuller. She suggested inviting Mayor Kirk to a Program Subcommittee meeting to talk about the Plan for Effective Learning Communities. Chairman Garberg indicated that he will ask her to come to the October 7th meeting.

Kathy Clancy stated that there were educational reasons for closing Fuller School, and she would like to hear the argument and the consequences of reversing that process educationally. She would like to know from the educators how that kind of scenario plays out and what challenges there would be, because we are not losing kids to better schools but to smaller schools.

C. After School Policy

1. Response to Public Input at Hearing, Status of Current Policy – Kathy Clancy summarized her views on the feedback received at the public hearing, i.e. being inclusive of all Gloucester schoolchildren, charging premium fees to non-GPSD students, and being specific about what programs are available to non-GPSD students. Mrs. Gilman's take was that there was not a big push for non-GPSD students to participate in cut sports at O'Maley and that parents of O'Maley students felt very strongly that it would be unfair for an O'Maley student to be cut from the hockey team (or not able to play) in favor of a better player from a different school.

Mrs. Gilman also heard a sizeable amount of feedback on band still being a strong desire and stated that she would support the old policy in terms of cut sports. However, she would look closely at the size of the programs (e.g. field hockey) so that O'Maley kids are not cut in favor of kids from other schools. Also, for after school programs that are not related to our curriculum, O'Maley kids should have first priority. There was a discussion about ensuring that non-GPSD students

have attended school on the day of the program and are in good academic standing. Mrs. Gilman stated that at a future meeting, we would need to come up with the appropriate fees to charge non-GPSD students for after school programs.

Chairman Garberg stated that several people at the public hearing were in support of the policy as approved in June and that the predominant response he has heard from the community is recognition that what was done with the policy was an appropriate response to the situation. But among all the policy compromises, he said he does not think that we should be asking anyone, including non-GPS families – at St. Ann’s, the charter, or elsewhere – to pay a premium for participation. To do so is to make the availability of public educational resources even more closely linked to family income than it is now.

2. New Policy Options – Chairman Garberg presented a policy draft that included a cooperation agreement between the GPSD and other schools. He stated that the policy draft recognizes the idea of exclusive programming that might be adversely impacted by the inclusion of other kids and recognizes the importance of doing everything reasonably possible to ensure first-priority access to after school programming for kids who are in the GPSD.

The subcommittee reviewed Chairman Garberg’s draft policy, which reflects the policy approved in June with changes highlighted in blue. Chairman Garberg stated that this draft suggests that there are programs that are exclusively available to enrolled students and that the list of these programs is up to the discretion of the superintendent, based on his/her assessment of the impact that participation of outside students is likely to have on the opportunities for enrolled students. The subcommittee revised the language of Chairman Garberg’s draft policy, and there was a discussion of premium fees for students outside the GPSD.

Chairman Garberg also drafted a Gloucester Community Cooperation Agreement. The letter asked that non-GPSD schools wishing to offer GPSD programs to their students agree to cooperate with the district and its foundation supporters to continue providing high quality programming during and after school. In particular, it asked them to agree to participate in addressing the causes of financial stress confronting the GPSD. He noted that several speakers in the policy debate indicated they wished to see inter-school cooperation as the basis for after-school policy.

Chairman Garberg noted that committee members had indicated they wanted a policy that would satisfy those who were complaining about the new policy, so the district could move on.

Kathy Clancy believes that we are not giving anything up by letting non-GPSD students participate and that we win by giving them opportunities that they do not have in their schools. Chairman Garberg is concerned that by retreating from our

policy, we are neglecting an important role of the School Committee, which is to educate the public on the needs and the provenance of programs that come in public schools.

Mrs. Gilman, Kathy Clancy and Dr. Safier said that asking schools to sign the Cooperation Agreement is not necessary for those people we believe share our goal of being a community. They do not believe this agreement helps us with the current issue. They would like to avoid another battle and believe it is important to move on. Chairman Garberg stated that he will not support changes made by the subcommittee to the policy that does not call for inter-school cooperation. He believes it is a reasonable request and that it would be a dereliction on the part of the School Committee to neglect to insist on the values of cooperation.

III. ACTION

After discussion, on a motion by Kathy Clancy, seconded by Mrs. Gilman, it was

VOTED: 2 in favor, 1 opposed (Chairman Garberg) to remove from discussion the Gloucester Community Cooperation Agreement as related to the After School Policy.

Mrs. Gilman requested that Mrs. Puglisi make the changes to the draft policy that were discussed during this meeting and email it to the subcommittee members. A special Program Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for Friday, September 16, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. to finalize the policy so that it can be presented for a first reading at the next School Committee meeting.

Chairman Garberg left the meeting at 6:33 p.m. to attend another meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Gilman, seconded by Kathy Clancy, it was

VOTED: 2 in favor zero opposed, to adjourn the Program Sub-Committee Meeting of September 9, 2011 at 6:35 p.m.

*Maria Puglisi
Recording Secretary*