

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)

MEETING MINUTES

HIGHGATE SCHOOL LIBRARY

December 17, 2019

6:30 PM

Present: Board members: Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard (Highgate), Vice Chair, Don Collins (Swanton), Steve Scott (Highgate), Jen Chevalier (Highgate), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Peter Magnant (Franklin),
Absent From the Meeting: Terri O'Shea (Swanton), Meaghan Conly (Swanton), Eric Beauregard (Franklin)

Others Present: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Robert Gervais, MVSD Director of Technology, Dena St. Amour, Principal of Swanton, Dan Palmer, Principal of MVU, Joyce Hakey, Principal of Franklin, Patrick Hartnett, Principal of Highgate, Chris Palmer Assistant Principal from Highgate, Directors of Buildings and Grounds Paul Gregoire, (MVU), Scott Martin (Highgate), Steve Ballard (Franklin), Jason Butler (Swanton), Highgate Teachers Jennifer Hubbard, Kirsten Hughes, Michelle Patnode, Channel 15/16 Cameraperson and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

Agenda Amendments- Chris requested an agenda revision to allow the Highgate Sixth Grade Math Practice presentation to go before the Stormwater Design Presentation

Correspondence and Public Comments

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Action: *Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Don Collins to approve the December 3rd and 5th, 2019 meeting minutes with revisions. The board approved the revised minutes on a 6-0 vote.*

Presentation Information

Highgate Math Practices Presentation

Jen Hubbard explained that the Highgate Elementary School observed a decline in their math scores. Jen along with Kirsten Hughes, Michelle Patnode and other team members started brainstorming about the current model, how they could better meet the math needs of the students, which students are struggling in math, and how could they help students improve their mathematical understanding.

Their plan included the following: Flexible grouping for math class, each classroom teacher, special educator, interventionist and paraeducator have targeted instructional groups,

Group 1: Focus on high leverage concepts for the standards being taught; use of manipulatives; co-taught with special educator; structured small group support for math practice, Group 2: Refresh and reteach high leverage concepts on a regular basis; adjust pacing as needed; co-taught with math interventionist; structured small group support for math practice, Group 3: Taught at a slightly faster pace focuses on depth beyond the standard; opportunities for concept extensions; taught by classroom teacher. They noted the following benefits: Increased math talk in all classrooms, students feel safe to share ideas, reduced math anxiety, students more engaged in math, increase scores on Unit Assessments for all groups. Increased SBAC performance scores (25% proficient in 5th grade to 49% proficient in 6th grade). Everyone of the 6th grade students except one increased their SBAC score in 2019. *(The teachers left at 7:15pm)*

Stormwater Design Presentation

Amanda Holland from The Northeast Regional Planning Commission of Vermont explained that the purpose of the Natural Resources Grant is to improve water quality and address the stormwater issues. She said it addresses the needs of the parking lot in Highgate when resurfacing. Andres Torizzo from Watershed Consulting provided an overview of the project. He showed where the catch basin allows water on the surface to go to the bottom where there is an infiltration system under the parking lot. This is the cheapest way to get the most benefit. It will improve the longevity of the parking lot and reduces the infrastructure required with very little piping. The water that comes out of the catch basin will flow to the grass to dissipate. This project is designed to meet the requirements of a stormwater permit if needed. It is designed to handle quite a bit of rainfall, with approximately 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches of rainfall. The water will go to permeable surfaces. There is a small amount of maintenance required where the winter sand will accumulate over time and will need to be removed. Amanda Holland stated that we can apply for grant funding in January 2020 through the Clean Water Block Grant where there is no match required. It is expected to announce the award in early March which should align with the summer paving schedule. It is a high priority project. Andres states that the project would take a couple of weeks to complete. *(Amanda and Andres left at 7:30pm)*.

Performance Contracting Presentation

Tom Seekers, representative from Siemens Performance Contracting, explained that Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) is a budget-neutral approach to make building improvements that reduce energy and water use and increase operational efficiency. By partnering with an energy service company (ESCO), a facility owner can use an ESPC to pay for today's facility upgrades with tomorrow's energy savings—without tapping into capital budgets. Unless designated

by School District, capital isn't required, and payments are made within the current budget and spread out through the desired finance period. To help offset the total project cost, incentives, grants etc. are heavily sought after by the ESCO the district chooses to partner with. The typical method of financing the total project is a Tax Exempt Lease Purchase (TELP). The State of VT allows 20 years, and the ESCO guarantees energy savings for term selected. Some of the benefits of performance contracting are: Improved facility Infrastructure, Lowered operating costs, Self-funded modernization of infrastructure, Guaranteed cost reductions, Reduced financial risk, Improved operating efficiencies, Improved student and staff satisfaction and comfort. There are also opportunities to build STEM into the project, bring the energy efficiency improvements into the classroom along with next gen and Common Core standards alignment. If the school district would like to pick a performance contractor, then next steps will be to do a competitive RFQ, choose performance contractors that closely meets with our goals and then interview three companies to select. It usually takes about 90-150 days to get a qualified full study of the project, takes 10-12 months to implement and the credit institution/bank allows you a whole year to do this. Julie thanked Jen Hubbard, Kirsten Hughes and Michelle Patnode for coming to do the presentation. (The presentation ended at 8:25pm.)

Update from Elementary School Principals

Joyce Hakey handed out the school reporting information to the board. She does this annually. It is an overview of Franklin School from the year before with sample questions from SBAC Science Assessment.

Dena St. Amour reported that Swanton is using a new supervision and evaluation tool. Swanton completed 60 professional goal setting conferences. The Grade Six team of teachers and students pick out their favorite books and read to the younger kids. It encourages kids to be good role models. Jason Butler has done a great job with the results of the lead testing. Sue Larocque will be filling in a long term substitute position for a maternity leave.

Chris Palmer reported that the Puppets in Education program who perform shows having to do with themes of cultural significance, social emotional learning, and physical and wellbeing. They will perform shows on feelings, cultural diversity and bullying prevention at no cost to us. Our first year teachers along with other MVSD Schools are attending a New Teacher Classroom Management series offered by Amy Irish. This has been very beneficial to first year teachers. The Maker Space is working to increase participation in technology integration and project based/maker learning in Highgate. They have started the SBAC practice assessments early and it has gone well.

New Business

Facility Directors

The directors have been meeting together as a MVSD faculty team. They are strategizing how to meet the maintenance budgets and tackling larger and smaller scale projects. Paul Gregoire stated that most of the schools have similar projects just at different scales. He thinks that performance contracting could help finance the efficiency upgrades that are needed. Perhaps we could start with one school. Jason Butler reported that Swanton needs a lighting upgrade, roof maintenance, HVAC Upgrade, electrical panel upgrades and parking lot improvements. How do we pay for all of this? It is a five to ten year plan. Scott Martin stated that Highgate could really benefit from lighting upgrades, boiler controls, roofing maintenance etc. Can they do their projects together with other schools to reduce costs? Highgate has a lot of efficiencies that can be realized. Lora McAllister reported that there is opportunity in all of the buildings. Obtaining a lease to extend and ensure that all of these projects can get done. Lora is concerned about not having a bond be an option. This would be an opportunity to use the funds to get as much bang for our dollar as possible. Steve Ballard thinks that performance contracting is a good thing and should be looked at. There is no cost up front to have them look at the buildings. Lora explained that any revenues that come in will come off the top. There is a scale of issues that need to be addressed. There is \$725,000 in repair and maintenance in the budget and raised concerns that in the next few years, over one million has been identified in the next year that needs to be completed. There needs to be some flexibility because of the scale of the MVSD Budget. *(The facility directors left at 9pm)*

Internal Financial Controls

Lora McAllister explained that they have an internal control document that the board needs to consider prior to December 31st. This ensures that we are following best practices, that not the same people are making deposits, issuing checks and reconciling the accounts. She stated that they are doing a lot of cross training and they will work on getting written procedures. They have changed their practices on student activities funds but with volunteers taking in cash at fundraisers, they will continue to work on improving the process.

Action: *Don Collins moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to authorize the board chair to sign the internal financial controls document. The board approved on a 6-0 vote.*

Old Business

Second Reading and Adoption Policy In-District Elementary Transfer

Action: *Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to approve the intra district elementary school choice policy. The board approved it on a 6-0 vote.*

Julie Regimbal stated that there seems to be interest in the school choice policy. She feels it would be a challenge to do a school choice process in January for this

year and to do it again in March. Don thought that a release should be announced that this policy is adopted and March is the deadline to apply. Julie said she will put it out with a timeline.

Principal Search Update

Julie Regimbal reported that they are moving forward with the principal search. They are planning on having interested teachers from Highgate, parent members and at least one board member on the interview committee. They will post the position, screen applicants, interview, survey parents and community on what is the most important attributes in a principal. The finalist will meet the faculty at the school and the board will meet the principal. They want a well-balanced committee. Julie will reach out to see who will be interested to represent the board on the committee.

Future Agenda Items

Truancy, Policies, Negotiations, Budget, Northwest Technical Center

Next Meeting Date

The board's next meeting is on January 7th at the Missisquoi Valley School Library at 6:30pm. January 14th, 28th and February 11^h are scheduled for Professional Negotiations. There is a board only professional negotiations committee meeting on January 9th at the Superintendent's Office. They are working on scheduling Support Staff Negotiations' Meetings.

Other Business

Peter Magnant proposed putting the school board on the warning in Franklin. The warning will be finalized on January 23rd. They would discuss the report only, no voting. Highgate would have it later in the morning and Swanton usually has it on Monday evening. Julie explained that this would have to be in addition to the budget informational meeting. It will be important to answer questions however there is a town budget which is separate from a much larger town school budget. The board will discuss further at the next meeting.

Anticipated Executive Session:

None

Adjournment

Action: Steve Scott moved, seconded by Jen Chevalier to adjourn at 9:16pm. *The board approved the vote unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary