

**MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MVU SCHOOL LIBRARY**

**October 1, 2019**

**6:30 PM**

**Present: Board members:** Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard (Highgate), Vice Chair, Don Collins (Swanton), Terri O'Shea (Swanton), Meaghan Conly (*left the meeting at 9:00pm*), Board Clerk, (Swanton), Steve Scott (Highgate), Jen Chevalier (Highgate), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Eric Beauregard, (Franklin), Peter Magnant (Franklin)

**Others Present:** Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Dena St. Amour, Principal of Swanton, Jay Hartman, Principal of MVU, Jen Desorgher, MVU Curriculum Coordinator, Pat Hartnett, Principal of Highgate, Kosha Patel, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Tania Hayes, Director of Student Services, Wendy Culligan, Director of Early Childhood Programs, Robert Gervais, Director of Technology, Jason Butler. Community Members: Jim Sullivan, Jim Daly, Channel 15/16 Cameraperson and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

**Call the Meeting to Order-** Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:45pm.

**Agenda Amendments-** Chris Shepard added discussion of School Policy School Choice, remove from the agenda request of non-resident tuition.

**Correspondence and Public Comments**

**Consent Agenda**

**Approval of the Minutes**

**Action:** Don Collins moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to approve the September 3, 2019 meeting minutes. Revisions-change from Jay commented to Devin on page 3. The board approved the board minutes as revised on a 9-0 vote. Terri O'Shea, seconded by Steve Scott to approve the September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 board minutes. A revision Lora walked to the board on page 3. The board approved the minutes as revised on a 7-0-2 with Devin and Jen abstaining.

**Curriculum Presentation**

Kosha Patel provided an overview of the SBAC Data presentation based on assessment data of the 2018-2019 school year. Kosha noted that the English Language Arts (ELA) scores are at or above the state average. This is an upward trend over previous years. Math is showing positive trends in data where we are

below only a few percentage points. With the Science scores, the Elementary Schools performed as well as the State did. The Continuous Improvement Goals (CIP) continue to improve on student achievement. Kosha completed her report stating that the district is working on the goal of improving academic proficiency by providing targeted and timely interventions, data analysis to monitor student progress, and by continuing to provide teachers with high quality professional development. *(for the full presentation please see 10-1-19 board meeting video on MVSDSchools.org website)* Don commented that he would like to see quicker improvement results on the test scores. He believes that truancy is an issue and the district should look at the attendance data and improve student attendance. Julie Regimbal stated she has asked Jeff Benay to present on truancy at a future board meeting. Steve Scott expressed concerns on the grade nine test scores. Jen Desorgher explained that the SBAC testing was recently moved from a previous grade to grade 9 and so they are working on putting in a lot of support to the students. They have added a grade nine literacy interventionist and added a math coach.

### **MVU Administrators Report**

Jen Desorgher reviewed spirit week taking place from Sept. 16th-20th. On September 20th Missisquoi Valley held its latest Hall of Fame inductions to recognize graduates of MVU for their "leadership, achievement, and service" after graduation. MVU participated in a two-day training with Paul Gorski, National Equity Literacy trainer partnering with their Title IV Abenaki program and Think Kids. Mr. Gorski will return in February to provide additional training in equity literacy. On September 23 and 24, Liz Mirra, a professional developer for science, joined members of our faculty to support their focus on high quality Next Generation Science Standards based instruction. MVU math teachers will receive training on math best practices from Teachers Development Group on October 14th and 15th. On September 28th, the MVU Powder Puff team took the field against BFA under the lights at Collins-Perley. She reviewed the coming events.

Jay Hartman reviewed the discipline referrals and did a comparison from 2018 to 2019. The Middle School referrals went down from 63 last year to 28 in 2019. The High Schools had 76 referrals in 2018 and went up to 105 in 2019. The increase in referrals was largely due to the cell phone during school time ban with 101 referrals. After the first day, there was about three per day referrals attributed to cell phones. The trend is going in the right direction and this cell phone practice is going on around the State.

### **Budget Process Overview**

Julie Regimbal went over the proposed budget process starting with Central Office meetings, Department meetings with Special Education, Facility and Technology. Julie and Lora McAllister will have individual meetings with principals and discussions with the whole administrative teams. They will also discuss staffing and vacancies, looking carefully at each position to see if it is needed, then bring a draft to the board. Don encouraged the board to keep on track with the school building maintenance and progress for students. Julie explained that the health insurance has already come in with a 12 to 14 percent increase.

### **Tractor and Zero Turn Lease Agreement**

Lora McAllister brought a recommendation for a municipal lease to the board for consideration as financing for the purchase of a new tractor and zero turn for the Highgate School. Rates were solicited from three banks. The district budgeted for a new larger tractor, however, the new facilities director recommended a smaller tractor and a zero-turn mower could do the job. This recommendation created a savings in the budget for the district. Lora recommended that the board approve the Gorham Municipal Lease at a 3.26% rate. This was the lowest rate received.

*Action: Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Eric Beauregard to accept the Gorham Municipal Lease at a rate of 3.26% and authorize the board chair to sign. The board approved the lease on a 9-0 vote.*

Don Collins commented that he would like to see the information before the equipment was purchased. Lora and Julie had discussed with the board chair. Chris Shepard stated that he thought it was alright if the district stayed within the budget. The equipment proposal had been reviewed by him and he thought it was ok to move forward with the purchase. Devin Bachelder thinks that if we need to change course about a capital purchase, the board will need to clarify the dollar amount of what needs to be brought to the board. There was a request to obtain Director of Facilities presentations at the board meeting. Julie said she will have future presentations from Building Directors.

### **Real Estate Legal Issue**

Chris Shepard requested a finding for executive session for real estate legal issue. *Action: Steve Scott moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly of a finding for executive session based on a real estate legal issue because premature public knowledge would clearly place the Board or other party at a substantial disadvantage. The board voted 9-0.*

### **Intra District Elementary School Choice**

Julie handed out a draft of the intra-district elementary school choice policy. She reviewed different policies from other districts, and she modeled this draft using the priorities/criteria that the administration and the board have set forth. School choice requests will be guided by needs of students, space availability and existing resources. Transportation will not be provided unless the existing bus route passes the child's residence on the way to or from the choice school and there is sufficient space on the bus. If younger siblings entering school after a child has exercised school choice may attend the same school as his or her sibling, providing there is space available in the grade at the school of choice. Peter Magnant objected to the younger sibling attending only if there is space available. He felt that providing there is space available at the school of choice should be removed. He would like to keep the siblings together. Meaghan Conly felt that space could become an issue and this should be left in to the school choice policy. Chris and Eric agreed with Peter that the siblings should be kept together and objected to the separations of siblings. Terri was concerned about what will happen if there should be six children. Julie said that the approval process will be done in a blind manner. The Administrators expressed concerns about school choice hopping and she suggested that if the board wants, the student may need to apply to return to their school of residence. She will need to check statutes to ensure this is lawful. The Superintendent will make the decision on school choice requests. Devin stated that the Board would only get involved if the families think that the Administration violated or did not follow the policy. Julie pointed out that this is a K-6 policy because Pre-K has their own process guided by the State rules. The other issue to consider is if kids' families move mid-year, could the student remain for the rest of the year in the same school or could the student remain until they complete Grade 6? The family can apply to remain the remainder of the school year. Terry expressed concern that this is an economic equity issue. Devin asked about sending a student from a small class size to another school where there is room. Dena St. Amour said that class sizes and balanced classrooms will need to be reviewed. Julie stated that the school choice policy will need to be discussed further. Next steps will be first reading and survey comments from the board.

### **Negotiations Update**

Julie reported that the Association and the District has exchanged letters to negotiate by the deadline in the master agreement. She would like to determine the strategy with the board as they have a November 15<sup>th</sup> deadline to exchange proposals. She would like to schedule committee meetings.

### **VSBA Membership Discussion**

Chris Shepard explained that from the information provided from the Vermont School Board Alliance indicates that they do not have an organization yet that can

provide services, and so should we vote on whether the board would like to join the VSBA? Don Collins said that they are trying to recruit board representatives with a different perspective. Don stated as a VSBA Board member, he would like to re-cuse himself from voting on joining the VSBA Board. Devin would like to wait until after the October 7<sup>th</sup> VSBA Board regional meeting before making this decision. Some expressed concern that Don is running for re-election and the vote is at the next VSBA Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Chris asked for a straw poll of how many board members wished to wait until after the October 7<sup>th</sup> VSBA Board Regional meeting prior to making a decision. Enough board members expressed a desire to wait so the board will table the vote for the October 15<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

### **Check Warrants**

Steve Scott read the MVSD check warrants totaling \$3,183,575.89 for September 2019 with the totals broken down as follows: accounts payable 1,226,229.44, payroll checks \$56,907.68, payroll other disbursements \$1,407,001.56 and payroll deductions \$493,437.21. They have been reviewed by the finance committee.

*Action: Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to approve the check warrants totaling \$3,183,575.89. The board approved on a 9-0 vote.*

Meaghan Conly expressed her concern that the finance committee process has not been working well because board members are not coming in a timely consistent basis. The board discussed it and the finance committee members will have a discussion to work out their process. Lora McAllister explained that board members can come in to the office every Monday or Tuesday to review the check warrants. Lora has placed a spreadsheet of the re-occurring bills in the board shared drive for the board to review if they wish.

### **Other Business**

#### **Superintendent's and Central Office Updates**

Julie reported that every other week, the MVSD Leadership team meets. They review the board agenda and brainstorm administrative tasks that they may do differently such as buildings and grounds, technology sharing, prioritization and how to build a budget in a merged district. Tania and Julie will do a presentation on Act 173 funding and delivery of Special Education services. The State is not ready with their rules and regulations and many districts have concerns on how they will implement the law.

#### **Curriculum**

Kosha Patel reported that the AOE has released additional information to the public on how schools are implementing the Educational Quality Standards. Based on 2017-2018 data, FNWSU exceeded expectations in Personalization and Safe and Healthy Schools. We did not meet the requirements in high quality staffing which is based on the percentage of teachers, educators and principals we have retained for at least three years. Highgate and Franklin staff are participating in the Lead to Read professional development this year. MVU had a science consultant do a

walkthrough in science classrooms and provide consulting with teachers to plan units. MVU Literacy teachers begun work with Partnerships in literacy and learning to strengthen writing instruction. Highgate math and literacy leaders presented after school workshops for teachers across the district on student engagement and relationships.

### *Technology*

Robert Gervais reported that MVSD Schools are making strides to meet E-911 compliance rules. This is the ability to dial 911 without requiring a prefix to be dialed and have the ability to locate the origin of a call based on the physical classroom where the call is placed. Our providers from Consolidated Communications and the Franklin Telephone Co. will be providing multiple solutions and quotes to assist our schools with MVSD Compliance.

### *Student Services Update*

Tania Hayes reported that currently the state funds about 60% of all special education costs. Beginning in Fiscal year 2022, all districts in Vermont will receive funding based on a calculation of student long term membership and the district's historical spending. Beyond FY 2022, districts will gradually work toward a base rate amount per pupil based on the statewide census and historical spending so that by FY 2025 all schools will receive the same base rate times their ADM. The State provided us with a June memo stating that we needed to shift around our out of district students costs by apportioning general education cost and special education cost. This has been all special education costs in the past. They do not know what this will look like for next year. They are creating the Service Plan due on October 15<sup>th</sup> and will continue to talk about this. This could mean a drastic change in spending in our district.

### *Early Education Update*

Wendy Cunningham reported that students are getting into the swing of the Preschool routine in our classrooms thanks to the high quality Early Multi-Tiered Systems of Support practices and the support of our families. She provided a pyramid model showing the multi-tiered levels of support with Tier 1 nurturing and responsive relationships, to Tier 2 targeted social emotional supports to Tier 3 intensive intervention.

### *Business Update*

Lora reported that this week was audit week with RHR Smith. She is proud of the office staff for being so well prepared for the audit and working really hard through the transition to MVSD which is ongoing.

Don suggested that he would like to have the Central Office presentations earlier in the agenda.

**Future Agenda Items**

Truancy, Policies, Negotiations planning

**Next Meeting Date**

The board's next meeting is on October 15th in Swanton at 6:30pm.

**Anticipated Executive Session:**

Eric Beauregard moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to enter executive session at 9:10pm for the purpose of a real estate issue inviting Julie Regimbal and Jason Butler into the executive session. The board exited executive session at 9:35pm. No Action was taken

**Adjournment**

*Action: Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Jen Chevalier to adjourn at 9:35pm. The board approved 8-0 vote.*

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary