

**North Andover Public Schools
School Committee Meeting**

DATE: June 26, 2007

PLACE: NAHS Lecture Hall

PRESENT: Members Allen, Kelly, Ormsby, Pybus and Whidden. Also present were Acting Superintendent Bergeron and Business Manager Fortado.

Call to Order

Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Bergeron stated that all schools reported a smooth closing. Dr. Bergeron thanked staff and administrators for a successful year.

Dr. Bergeron informed the Committee that open positions have been advertised, resumes are arriving and administrators are beginning the interview process. He stated that approximately 30 resumes a day are arriving at the central office.

Dr. Bergeron distributed a list of all positions that were supported by the School Committee for the override expenditure.

Ms. Allen asked what department she should refer people to who are inquiring about open positions.

Dr. Bergeron informed her that inquiries should be referred to either the Director of Human Resources at 43 High Street or the building principal.

Old Business

FY07 Budget Transfer

Mr. Fortado distributed a memorandum regarding the FY07 projected end of the year balances. He stated that the overall ending balance would be approximately \$273,000. Mr. Fortado recommended that the School Committee, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, pre-pay special education tuition up to three months. Mr. Fortado stated that he thought pre-paying special education tuition would be prudent in light of the fact that special education tuition for FY08 was level funded.

In response to a request by Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Fortado stated that he would present an update on the food services account at the next School Committee meeting.

Ms. Whidden moved to transfer \$31,700 from the expense account to the salary account to cover the deficit. Dr. Ormsby seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes.

Ms. Whidden moved to authorize the Director of Special Education and/or Business Manager to pre-pay up to \$252,000 in out of district tuition. Mr. Pybus seconded the motion. Dr. Ormsby amended the motion to authorize up to \$273,700 subject to meeting obligations of any outstanding bills. Mr. Pybus seconded the amendment.

Ms. Whidden requested that Mr. Fortado send the memorandum regarding the FY07 budget and motion regarding the prepayment of tuition to the Finance Committee.

In response to a question from Dr. Ormsby Mr. Fortado confirmed that if a student leaves the district the tuition money would be refunded.

Ms. Whidden asked that the Director of Special Education come to the next School Committee meeting to update the Committee on the needs of special education.

The vote on the motion as amended was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes

Bradstreet School

Chair Kelly reviewed the matter of the Bradstreet School. He stated that Town Meeting had approved the first step in approving financing for a police station at the Bradstreet School. He stated that Town Meeting knew at the time of the vote, the prior School Committee vote on the release of the Bradstreet School was not technically correct. He stated that the School Committee must revisit the vote on the release of the Bradstreet School. He discussed the proposal made by the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager for a preschool facility.

Mr. Pybus moved, pursuant to General Laws Chapter 40, Section 15A, and to satisfy the requirements of the vote of Article 22 of the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, that the School Committee determine, and report to the Board of Selectmen, that the land and building at the Bradstreet School is no longer needed for school purposes, and that the School Committee recommends transferring the care, custody and control of said land and building to the Board of Selectmen for purposes of a Police Station. Ms. Allen seconded the motion.

Dr. Ormsby stated his concern that this vote was premature and alternatives had not been sufficiently investigated. He stated that his analysis showed the cost of this proposal would be equal to approximately 12 teachers. He discussed different alternatives to the proposed recommendation for the police station at Bradstreet School site.

Ms. Allen stated that she was very pleased that the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager had put together an alternative for more classroom space via a Pre-School building for the benefit of the school department. She noted that the Facilities Review

Committee anticipates having a complete report for the School Committee in the next month or two. However, committee member Tracy Watson has already reported to the SC that that Bradstreet is not a viable option for classroom space.

Ms. Whidden stated that 2/3 of town meeting voted to proceed with the first step in pursuing the Bradstreet School site for a police station. She stated that she had met with the building inspector, the Chairman of the School Building Committee and Tim Pybus to discuss options other than the Bradstreet School to solve the lack of classroom space at the elementary level. Ms. Whidden noted the need for both short-term and long-term solutions to this issue.

Mr. Pybus stated that the voters have spoken on the issue of the police station and he believes the estimate of \$2 million to \$10 million to renovate the Bradstreet School back to a useable school would be closer to \$10 million. He noted that the School Committee does not control town-wide expenditures and should not get into a discussion regarding the police station. The Committee needs to limit the discussion and the focus to the needs of the school department.

Dr. Ormsby stated that he agreed the status quo at the elementary level is not acceptable. He stated that he wanted information from the subcommittee on different options such as grade shuffling. He stated that he believed the subcommittee would be overrun by this vote.

Mr. Pybus stated that the motion only involved the Bradstreet School. He stated that talk of a preschool might be premature before the report of the subcommittee is presented.

Ms. Whidden stated that she will be presenting her idea regarding the preschool building at the July 16th meeting. She stated that if the subcommittee comes up with different options, we can and should discuss those options as well.

Chair Kelly stated that Bradstreet School was closed to reduce operating costs and also it was deemed the most educationally beneficial thing to do is to send kindergarten students to the same school as 1-5. He stated that 98% of districts have the K-5 model. He stated that even if the Building Inspector threw out the rule book and we were able to return to the Bradstreet, the building would be very costly to operate.

The vote was 4-1 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes, Dr. Ormsby voted no.

New Business

Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Bergeron introduced Dr. Kevin Hutchinson. He gave an overview of Dr. Hutchinson's qualifications and experience.

Chair Kelly welcomed Dr. Hutchinson and stated that he anticipated the interview would last approximately 45 minutes with each School Committee member asking a question of Dr. Hutchinson.

Ms. Allen asked Dr. Hutchinson to describe his style and about how he measures results beyond MCAS results.

Dr. Hutchinson described his style, beliefs, values and philosophy on learning. He stated that he does not like to use the word testing but prefers assessment. He stated that with effective assessment, MCAS scores should not be a surprise to us. He noted that the district needs to have a clear vision of what we want students to know, how we will properly assess what students know and how we will intervene to assist students that are struggling.

Ms. Whidden asked once an assessment is completed what would be the best way to communicate that information to parents so they are able to address any concerns at home.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that it is not about comparing one student to another it is about comparing how students are achieving towards standards. We must provide student examples of work at all levels, rubrics and descriptors.

Chair Kelly asked Dr. Hutchinson to give more details on his background.

Dr. Hutchinson shared his background with the Committee.

Mr. Pybus noted that a large part of Dr. Hutchinson's career had been as a principal at a middle school. He asked for examples of reforms he had made during his tenure.

Dr. Hutchinson described how the high level of collaborative practice of focusing on students' work was achieved at his middle school

Dr. Ormsby stated that he was impressed during his prior meeting with Dr. Hutchinson, particularly the discussion regarding standards. He asked that Dr. Hutchinson expound on expectations.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that a good way of heightening expectations is to have educators clearly indicate what types of assessments they value. For example, if we believe in students speaking to portfolios then we need to give them opportunities to do so. He stated that typically the first time students are given the opportunity for a public performance they will throw something together at the last minute, but once they realize that this will be a regular occurrence, they will be better prepared each time. If children are pushed in a supportive way, they will perform at a higher level. We have to be able to celebrate performances other than MCAS and give students an audience.

Ms. Whidden asked how he would address curriculum weaknesses when we do not have an adequate budget to support curriculum.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that a shortage of money is also a great opportunity to create a better prioritized focus. He stated that the lack of funds does create limits and we can't expect teachers to do something and not give them the resources. He stated that a long-term plan must be in place and that as an administrative group we must be able to focus in on where the greatest need is and find ways to get there with or without funds. He stated that it is about relentless focus.

Ms. Whidden asked what students should know at middle school, what should be the goal.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that we must look K-12. It is important that students coming from elementary school into middle school have a united transition. He noted that high school teachers usually want research and writing skills and we will need to focus on general skills as well as subject matter.

Ms. Whidden asked how Dr. Hutchinson would work with the special education director.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that he worked closely with the Director of Special Education in Arlington around teacher assistance team development. He noted that standards should be the same for all students. Goals on IEPs should be linked to standards.

Chair Kelly stated that he believes it is critical that at-risk readers are identified early and remediation brought in as quickly as possible. He asked Dr. Hutchinson how we could tie all elementary school together when we could not budget the ELA curriculum.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that identifying the needs of early readers is critical. He noted that we must create clearly articulated benchmarks for performance. He discussed the positive impact of what was recently done in Arlington, 14 reading teachers assigned to seven elementary schools and the focus was on K-2.

Ms. Allen asked about his feeling on efforts to preserve art and music in schools.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that in tight fiscal situations the worse thing that can be done is to water down programs. He stated that the community must decide what its values are and set priorities and make choices.

Ms. Whidden moved to suspend the rules for the purpose of voting to appoint an Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Ormsby seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden.

Ms. Whidden moved to appoint Dr. Kevin Hutchinson to the position of Assistant Superintendent subject to successful contract negotiations between the schools and Dr. Hutchinson. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden.

Dr. Hutchinson discussed the impressive exit plan put together by Dr. Bergeron and thanked him for his assistance.

Other Business

Chair Kelly distributed an article regarding a high school in Maine. The Committee discussed the need to focus on what we want to do to see that our students are really prepared to succeed.

Ms. Whidden suggested that in the fall presentations be given to the School Committee by elementary, middle and high school administrators indicating what they will be doing to focus on student achievement.

Chair Kelly stated that he has given thought to changing the agenda from Old Business to Education Business. He noted that we need to make the statement that we are here for the students.

Dr. Ormsby stated that this is something that we can all get behind and we need to set high standards and convince our students that they can do it.

The Committee wished Dr. Bergeron well in his new position at Conval.

AJDOURN

Ms. Whidden made a motion to adjourn into executive session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation, not to return to regular session. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden.