

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: January 7, 2014

Location: Administration Building
155 Apsley Street

Members present: Susan Dunnell, Lynn Valcourt, Jennifer O'Brien, Brian Davis,
George Luoto and Benjamin Hoell

Members absent: Lorraine Nelson
Alex Schley, Student Representative

Others present: Dr. Kevin M. Lyons, Superintendent
Julia M. Pisegna, Recording Secretary

I. Call the Meeting to Order – 7:04 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Susan Dunnell.

II. Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting – December 10, 2013: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Luoto, and seconded by Mrs. O'Brien. On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Kevin Lyons

III.

Snow Days – January 2nd and 3rd:

January started with the first two “no school” days of the school year due to snow. The 2013-2014 School Calendar includes five days in excess of the required 180 days of attendance. If there are no more school cancellations, Thursday, June 19th will be the last day of school.

Dr. Lyons noted that January 2nd was also the first day for our new bus company, North Reading Transportation, and added that any parent with a concern regarding busses should complete a form found on the District website. All inquiries are addressed.

Budget Update:

The Budget Subcommittee is scheduled to meet on January 8th and January 13th to deal with some difficult budget recommendations. The School Committee Budget Workshop scheduled for January 15th will discuss the preliminary 2014-2015 school budget, along with a Budget Hearing scheduled for January 21st when School Committee members will vote on a preliminary budget. On Tuesday, January 28th, at 6:30 p.m., a Public Forum on the budget will be held in the High School Mini-Theater. Dr. Lyons invited members of the community to the public budget presentation and discussion.

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Discussion ensued.

Hudson High School Exam Dates:

Hudson High School exam dates will be announced to parents over the coming weeks for midterms and finals with the following exam dates:

January 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th

June 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th

Assabet Valley Education Collaborative Quarterly Report:

In compliance with the new laws and regulations concerning education collaboratives, members received a copy of the FY13 Financial Audit Report and the FY13 AVC Annual Report. Dr. Lyons noted that the Collaborative is currently in a very positive financial position.

School Health & Safety Advisory Council:

The School Health and Safety Advisory Council meeting was held on December 13th and discussed a number of issues. The Council includes staff, students, parents, public safety representatives and others who work collaboratively with the Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Coalition and the Hudson Health Department to coordinate efforts and provide mutual support.

Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition:

The Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition meeting was held on December 18th. Dr. Lyons noted that while attendance was low, progress on the initiatives continues. Former Boston Celtic player, Chris Herren, will be visiting in April and this is a highly anticipated event.

Hour of Coding:

The Hudson Public Schools participated in “An Hour of Coding”, a global event intended to create enthusiasm for computer languages among students of all ages. Hudson teachers and students joined the effort with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Technology Director Ellen Schuck described the program for Committee members. The District goal was to have 315 students participate. In the end, over 800 students participated and took advantage of this opportunity. The program included numerous games, mazes and apps for students to learn coding, both individually and in groups. The program was a huge success for both students and teachers.

Committee members thanked Ms. Schuck for her efforts and for such a wonderful event.

Committee Chair Susan Dunnell noted that the Agenda would be taken out of order.

VI. Community Comments

Committee Chair Susan Dunnell opened the Community Comments session acknowledging that the public was here to discuss the Athletic Director position. Ms. Dunnell thanked audience members for being so engaged in the budget and explained that the Committee looks at every item in the budget, every single item, and that while there was no plan to bring the Athletic Director's position to a half-time position, the Budget Subcommittee does consider all items.

Committee member, Mr. Hoell, suggested the possibility that sporting fees/dues be increased to raise additional funds.

Committee Chair Susan Dunnell invited the audience to speak.

Parent Steven Snow acknowledged the huge demanding role that the Athletic Director in Hudson has due to the number of team sports and athletes. Mr. Snow expressed concern that a person doing that job in a half-time position could not do what is needed to run the program.

Parent Debbie Campbell suggested that we look at area towns to see what they are doing and feels that it is a very challenging job which would be impossible for a part-time person to do. Ms. Campbell also feels that the possibility of raising fees is a good idea, but that we should not exclude any player due to their lack of ability to pay athletic fees.

Mr. Reagan stated that no student would be turned down the opportunity to play sports due to lack of ability to pay. His concern is for students who do not come forward to request help.

Parent Mary Young feels we have a very strong athletic program which provides valuable motivation to students and believes raising fees would be a good possibility.

Parent Rick Carlton feels very strongly that the role of Athletic Director would be impossible to do part-time and that the extra-curricular activities students participate in is very important to colleges. Mr. Carlton also noted that School Choice would also be affected if we did not offer a strong athletic program and asked members to reconsider making the position part-time.

Discussion ensued.

Committee Chair Susan Dunnell thanked the speakers for their interest and noted that it is very important to keep the dialogue open.

V. Special Reports and Presentations

1. Elementary Literacy Program – Karen Martin:

Director of Elementary Education, Karen Martin, presented a slideshow on students' work in elementary literacy. Due to the snow days, it was not possible to have the children attend the meeting, so Ms. Martin presented a booklet of drawings and writings from the students. The project began with a trip to Plymouth where the students compared children today to children in the 16th century. They worked on their research notebooks, utilized the “compare and contrast” method of critical thinking, writing and illustrations. Teachers were impressed with how engaged the students were.

Dr. Lyons shared that parents often comment on the volume of reading and writing taking place with current students versus older students. Committee members thanked Ms. Martin for a wonderful job and look forward to another presentation.

Pupil Services Update:

Director of Pupil Services Catherine Kilcoyne thanked Committee members for the opportunity to share with them her insights since joining the District in August.

Ms. Kilcoyne has spent time getting acquainted with the District, attended Open Houses at the elementary schools, middle school and High School, as well as SEPAC meetings. On Professional Development days, training has been held for identified areas of need for the entire Pupil Services Department.

Ms. Kilcoyne notes one of the strengths of Pupil Services Department is the dedicated, hardworking staff who strive to do what is right for students. The staff is eager to learn more in their profession to provide students with instruction with grade level peers. There is also a strong, collaborative, collegial approach to solving problems and instruction among the principals, curriculum directors and Central Office administrators.

One of Ms. Kilcoyne's noted areas for improvement is transition. Transition from building to building has been identified as an area of frustration for staff at each level. Also, teachers require additional training and support in handling difficult meetings and to develop a deeper understanding of regulations.

The Pupil Services Department is currently participating in the Self-Assessment Phase of the Web-based Monitoring System for the Coordinated Program Review (CPR). The self-assessment phase allows the District to gather the required information, review student records, and make corrections in areas identified as an issue prior to the second phase of the Web-based Monitoring System of the CPR which is the site visit during the 2014-2015 school year.

Also, over the next few months, the District will be participating in the Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey which is an online survey designed for all parents in the District.

Ms. Kilcoyne continues to check and reassess her understanding of what is happening in the Department with teachers, team chairs, principals and staff.

Discussion ensued.

Committee members thanked Ms. Kilcoyne for her thoughts and look forward to an update.

VI.

Old Business

None.

VII.

New Business

1. Approval of Contract with North Reading Transportation (NRT):

Dr. Lyons presented a copy of the new Transportation Contract to Committee members and Finance Director, Patty Lange, highlighted some of the changes from the previous contract.

Committee members thanked Ms. Lange for an amazing job resolving the bussing crisis.

Dr. Lyons recommended approval of the Contract with North Reading Transportation.

A motion to approve the Contract with North Reading Transportation, as presented, was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mr. Luoto. On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

2. Approval of Hudson High School 2014-2015 Program of Studies:

Principal Brian Reagan and Director of Guidance Angie Wilcox presented an outline focusing on the additional courses and proposed changes for the 2014-2015 school year that reflect course selection trends, program development, fiscal resources, and current data on college, and career readiness. The changes strengthen the High School's overall program by increasing academic rigor and expectations for all students.

Mr. Reagan and Ms. Wilcox highlighted the new course offerings in the English Department, Social Studies Department, Mathematics Department, Science Department, Family & Consumer Science Department, Technology Department, World Language Department, Performing Arts Department, Visual Arts Department, English as a Second Language Department and the Special Education Department.

Committee members thanked Mr. Reagan and Ms. Wilcox for their presentation and for the innovative course selection and opportunities available for students at the High School.

Dr. Lyons recommended approval of the Hudson High School 2014-2015 Program of Studies.

Approved

A motion to approve the Hudson High School 2014-2015 Program of Studies, as presented, was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mrs. O'Brien. On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

VII. Reclassifications

None.

VIII. Subcommittee and Building Committee Liaison Reports

Dr. Lyons noted that the JFK Building Committee met on January 7th. There are only approximately 20 items left on the punch list, 4 of which are significant.

Mrs. O'Brien mentioned that the Policy Subcommittee met on January 6th and continues working on the first draft of the Social Media Policy and that the first reading of the Staff Conduct Policy will be on January 21st.

IX. Executive Session/Adjournment

At 8:50 p.m., Committee Chair Susan Dunnell noted that there was no need for Executive Session. A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. O'Brien and seconded by Ms. Valcourt. On a vote of 6-0, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Valcourt, Secretary
Hudson School Committee

Documents Source and Location

School Committee Minutes of January 7, 2014	School Committee	Superintendent's Office
Superintendent's Report	Superintendent	Superintendent's Office
Assabet Valley Collaborative Annual Report 2012-2013	Assabet Valley Collaborative	Superintendent's Office
Assabet Valley Collaborative Financial Statements Year Ended June 30, 2013	Assabet Valley Collaborative	Superintendent's Office
School Health & Safety Advisory Council Minutes of December 13, 2013	Jenny Gormley	Superintendent's Office
Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition Minutes of December 18, 2013	Jenny Gormley	Superintendent's Office
An Evening with Chris Herren Flyer	Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition	Superintendent's Office
'Wampanog's and Me' Project Work	Karen Martin	Superintendent's Office
Transportation Contract – North Reading Transportation	Finance Department	Superintendent's Office
Hudson High School 2014-2015 Program of Studies	Brian K. Reagan	Superintendent's Office
Reclassifications (none)	Finance Department	Superintendent's Office