

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: February 10, 2015

Location: Administration Building
155 Apsley Street

Members present: Jennifer O'Brien, Lynn Valcourt, Michele Tousignant Dufour,
Allyson Hay and Glenn Maston

Members absent: George Luoto
Brian Davis

Others present: Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Superintendent
Julia M. Pisegna, Recording Secretary
Alex Schley, Student Representative

I. Call the Meeting to Order – 7:05 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Jennifer O'Brien.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting – January 13, 2014: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Maston and seconded by Mrs. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 4-0-1, with Ms. Valcourt abstaining, the motion passed.

III. Reports:

Student Representative Report

Student Representative, Alex Schley, asked Dr. Fortuna and Committee members whether any decisions have been made regarding makeup for the number of snow days used so far.

Dr. Fortuna shared that there have been no discussions relative to snow days.

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Jodi Fortuna

Mid-Year Update:

Dr. Fortuna reported on the first 90 days of the school year and the first 100 days in her role as Superintendent and focused on highlighting some of the happenings in the District:

- Our high school offers our students an innovative approach to learning in the Humanities making strong connections between Literature, World History, United States History and the major themes of life.
- Our World Language Program connects directly with the content of our Social Studies Program and students use other languages to learn content.
- We have pathways identified in our Technology and Engineering, including media and finance strands.
- We have a nationally recognized and Certified Engineering Program.
- We have national mathematics expert, Dr. Andrew Chen, working with all of our math teachers in grades 5-12. The District is pursuing an exciting grant opportunity to continue this partnership over the next several years.
- We have redesigned the 8th grade experience so that our rising 8th graders will have next year with the purpose of creating a smoother transition from grade 8 to grade 9 for our students.
- We have evaluated our math sequence and more closely aligned it with the common core standards.
- Our elementary math teachers participate in regular common planning sessions with math specialists to design and implement high quality math instruction for our students.
- We have started a Schedule Study Committee at Quinn to look at ways to provide students with a well-rounded middle school experience, as well as the academic and social support that they may need. We held our first District-wide conversation between all teachers in the District about what they believe is impacting student achievement. These ideas are helpful in guiding our strategic direction.
- Elementary teachers are working with their Principals to identify factors that may be impeding students from achieving at the highest levels. They have designed task forces to develop and implement building-based strategies to address these issues.
- A Superintendent's Parent Advisory Team has been established to openly and honestly discuss the issues that our students and families are facing. This is an opportunity for us to share with parents what we are doing to address the issues facing our students.
- Our administrators have recorded 539 classroom observations in Teachpoint and have participated in numerous others that have resulted in dialogue about teaching and learning

- We have developed a budget and budget presentation that is based in research and requests that are predicated on measureable outcomes.
- I have had the opportunity to speak to several community organizations to share with people who may not be parents the wonderful work that the Hudson Public Schools do every day.
- The School Committee and I have engaged in facilitated professional learning to form a strong working relationship to best serve the needs of Hudson students, their families and the community.
- Frequent, regular, and open communication exists between the Superintendent and School Committee Chair.
- The dependence on District's legal counsel has decreased. We have spent \$52,202.04 less this year than we had through the same timeframe last.
- We have settled several grievances and potential arbitrations in a manner that was satisfactory to all involved.
- We participated in Interest-Based Bargaining Training with two bargaining units and are moving forward with at least one to the next step.

Curriculum and Instruction Update

DDMs

Dr. Fortuna reported that the District came to agreement regarding the contractual language regarding District Determined Measures (DDM) and have begun to identify with teachers what should be amplified to DDM status in regards to the education evaluation system.

Dr. Fortuna was proud that the District approached it from the viewpoint of best practice to meet the needs of students, as opposed to a compliance standpoint in order to meet arbitrary DESE deadlines.

School Visits

Dr. Fortuna updated the Committee on her professional practice goals of spending one half day a week at each of the schools and this past week visited Hudson High School, Quinn Middle School and Farley Elementary schools.

Snow

Dr. Fortuna shared with the Committee that after a recent snow event, a parent reached out and asked why there was never any explanation as to how and why the decision regarding weather related closings are made and Dr. Fortuna felt it was important to spend some time explaining some of the process.

Approved

Weather related closings of school are never decisions that are made lightly or in a vacuum. Dr. Fortuna consults with other area Superintendents, Hudson DPW, Hudson Public School's Facilities Department, and personally drives to each school at least once.

Dr. Fortuna also continually monitors the forecast from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

Schools will not open without some sense of assurance that, with caution and common sense, students could arrive to school safely. Student safety is the most important thing and the primary criteria in making these decisions, as well as an obligation to educate students. The reasoning to hold school, from an educational standpoint, is that more effective learning occurs now than it does when days are added to the end of the school year, and decisions are never made in relation to summer vacations, making days up, or convenience.

Dr. Fortuna shared that she feels personally responsibility for the safety and education of 2,879 students every day and that responsibility is at the core of all decisions, even the unpopular ones.

Emergency Management Team Meeting

On Monday, January 26, 2015, Dr. Fortuna participated in the Town's emergency response planning meeting for the Blizzard of 2015. The meeting took place in the Emergency Operations Center at the fire station where each Town department head was present and able to articulate and plan out his/her role in keeping the citizens of Hudson safe. The Farley Elementary School was stocked and prepared to open as an emergency shelter if need be.

Dr. Fortuna expressed her continued appreciation for the communication with Mr. Marques and Chief Stephens throughout the storm.

Internal Traffic Control Meeting

Dr. Fortuna, Quinn Middle School Principal Jason Webster and Director of Facilities Len Belli attended the Internal Traffic Committee Meeting on January 30th, 2015. Their attendance was requested due to concerns with morning drop-off and pick up at Quinn Middle School.

Options were discussed for rerouting traffic that were ultimately determined to be impracticable. The main issue remains the lack of compliance with the directives of school staff combined with the volume of cars.

Dr. Fortuna, Mr. Webster and Mr. Belli will meet with Chief Stephens. Lt. DiPersio, and Detective Crogan to develop a plan of action with the police supporting school officials in enforcing the traffic pattern. The ITC will also be requesting signage from the Town that limits legal parking on Stratton Road to one side of the street during school hours.

In the meantime, Dr. Fortuna again urged people to carpool and use bus transportation if it is available and she will continue to update the Committee on any ongoing issues and solutions.

Parent and Community Groups:

Parent Advisory Council Meeting

Dr. Fortuna held a Parent Advisory Council meeting on January 13th where they discussed parent concerns around inconsistencies in their student's experiences within the Hudson Public School System. The discussion provided data points that triangulated issues that had previously been identified.

Dr. Fortuna provided the parents with the District's strategic objectives and discussed how strategic initiatives would address some of the concerns that they brought forth.

Personnel and Celebrations:

Outstanding Teaching

Dr. Fortuna observed an elementary physical education class where the teacher was showing students a brief clip of hurdlers on the computer. The students had just completed an activity where they were jumping over hurdles, which was a terrific tie in and use of media to reinforce a physical education lesson. Students then began to play a Star Wars themed game designed to strengthen their throwing skills. The classical score to Star Wars was playing in the background as students were actively engaged in the activity. Students clearly knew the routines and their roles in the gymnasium and the integration of media and classical music provided stimulation for the visual and auditory learners while they were strengthening their kinesthetic skills.

IV. **Subcommittee Reports:**

None.

V. **Public Participation:**

None.

VI. **Matters for Discussion:**

1. S-BIRT Opt-In

Hudson's Board of Health Dr. Sam Wong and Katelyn Flaherty updated their findings on the SBIRT Screening: Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment process to support students' healthy choices and to get assistance for students at risk for substance abuse. The brief screening is conducted by a team of two school counselors and the school nurse. The screening process is supported by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition.

Dr. Fortuna and Committee members thanked Dr. Wong and Ms. Flaherty for their continued efforts with substance abuse in Hudson.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to change the S-BIRT protocol opt-option for families was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

2. Nurse Leader Position:

Director of Health, Safety and Wellness

Dr. Fortuna shared with the Committee a job description received from Dr. Sam Wong and the Hudson Board of Health for the Director of School Health Services position.

Dr. Wong explained to the Committee that the School Department and the Town would cost-share the school nurse leader position 60/40. The position would fall under the Board of Health.

Dr. Fortuna shared that developing a plan to replace the Director of Health, Nursing, and Safety has been difficult, as any departure that happens in the middle of the year and that some aspects of the Director of Health, Nursing, and Safety position have been delegated to other administrators:

- Len Belli is in charge of building safety
- Cathy Kilcoyne is in charge of McKinney-Vento
- The Office of Student Services will be administratively responsible for nurses

Dr. Fortuna and Dr. Wong feel it is a win/win for all parties involved.

Dr. Fortuna expressed her appreciation and value for the work that the nurses do in the health office each and every day.

Nurse Christie Vaillancourt read a statement to the Committee members.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to approve the position of Director of School Health Services with the caveat that it is contingent upon the grant piece not being affected was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mrs. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

VII. **Matters for Action:**

1. Approval of May 2015 Town Warrant:

Dr. Fortuna recommended that the Committee approve the May 2015 Town Warrant.

A motion to approve the May 2015 Town Warrant was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mrs. Hay. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

2. First Reading of Proposed School Committee Policy EFDA –
Meal Charge

Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange, presented to the Committee a summary of the proposed School Committee Policy EFDA – *Meal Charge*.

Discussion ensued.

3. Second Reading and Approval of Proposed School Committee Policy JIBAA –
High School Student Governance

Dr. Fortuna recommended that the Committee approve the proposed School Committee Policy JIBAA – *High School Student Governance*.

A motion to approve proposed School Committee Policy JIBAA – *High School Student Governance* was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mrs. Hay. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

4. Second Reading and Approval of Proposed School Committee Policy JHBB –
High School Course Attendance Requirements

Dr. Fortuna recommended that the Committee approve the proposed School Committee Policy JHBB – *High School Course Attendance Requirements*.

A motion to approve proposed School Committee Policy JHBB – *High School Course Attendance Requirements* was made by Mrs. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mrs. Hay. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Approved

5. Second Reading of Proposed School Committee Policy IHCA – Summer School Policy

Dr. Fortuna recommended that the proposed School Committee Policy IHCA – *Summer School Policy*.

A motion to approve proposed School Committee Policy IHCA – *Summer School Policy* was made by Mrs. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mrs. Hay. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

6. Approval for Out-of-State Travel for Ana Pimental, World Language Curriculum Coordinator, to Maryland June 22-25, 2015

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval for out-of-state travel for Ana Pimental, World Language Curriculum Coordinator, to Maryland June 22-25, 2015.

A motion to approve for out-of-state travel for Ana Pimental, World Language Curriculum Coordinator, to Maryland June 22-25, 2015 was made by Mrs. Hay and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

VIII. Reclassifications

None.

IX. Items of Interest

Mrs. Hay inquired about the snow on the school roofs.

Dr. Fortuna responded that Len Belli and the Facilities Department continue to monitor the snow on each of the buildings.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Maston asked when the next school calendar would be presented.

Dr. Fortuna reported the 2015-2016 school calendar will be presented to the School Committee at their next meeting scheduled on February 24th.

Discussion ensued.

Approved

X. Executive Session/Adjournment

At 8:20 p.m., Committee Chair Jennifer O'Brien noted that there was no need for Executive Session.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Valcourt and seconded by Mrs. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tousignant Dufour, Secretary
Hudson School Committee