

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: June 13, 2017

Location: Administration Building
155 Apsley Street

Members present: Michele Tousignant Dufour, Allyson Hay, George Luoto, Glenn Maston, Steven Smith, Adam Tracy and Elizabeth Hallsworth

Members absent: Ben Carme, Student Representative

Others present: Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Superintendent
Julia M. Pisegna, Recording Secretary

I. Call the Meeting to Order – 7:02 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour.

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour began the meeting with a moment of silence to remember former Hudson School Committee member Rev. Dean E. Benedict.

1. Recognition of Retirees: Dr. Fortuna and School Committee members congratulated the following retirees and thanked them for their years of service with Hudson Public Schools.

Jose Andrade	16 years
Artur Chaves	15 years
Laurie Curley	23 years
Paul D’Alessandro	33 years
Paula Davis	29 years
Jose Luz	20 years
Karen Martin	5 years
Joseph Mishley	30 years
Leslie Williams	21 years

II. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting: April 11, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes of April 11, 2017 was made by Mr. Luoto and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 5-0-1, with Mr. Tracy abstaining, the motion passed.

Regular Meeting: April 25, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes of April 25, 2017 was made by Mr. Maston and seconded by Ms. Hallsworth. On a vote of 5-0-1, with Mr. Tracy abstaining, the motion passed.

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Regular Meeting: May 2, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes of May 2, 2017 was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Luoto. On a vote of 5-0-1, with Mr. Tracy abstaining, the motion passed.

Regular Meeting: May 9, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes of May 9, 2017 was made by Mr. Maston and seconded by Mr. Tracy. On a vote of 5-0-1, with Ms. Hallsworth abstaining, the motion passed.

III. **Public Participation:**

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour reminded the audience of the rules regarding public participation with civility as the guiding rule, and using a civil tone, yelling and personal attacks will not be tolerated, and a time limit of two minutes will be enforced.

Ms. Tousignant Dufour stated that it is her obligation and duty as the Chair to enforce all rules and anyone violating these rules will be declared out of order and will be asked to no longer speak.

Student Keegan Concannon asked the Committee to consider his request to allow VGO in his classroom and thanked the Committee for their consideration.

Parent Laura Concannon thanked the Committee for their time and reiterated her request that her son be inclusive in school by using the VGO system, and she explained that it is a nonintrusive robot that offers many wonderful components, which the school district would control, and would allow Keegan to be considered present every day. The VGO keeps data so the school could log in and verify that Keegan is present.

Ms. Concannon asked that the Committee consider reconvening in July when Dr. Rodrigues arrives to readdress this request. Ms. Concannon also asked that Senator Eldridge and Representative Hogan be involved in this issue, as Keegan is at a critical age with his social and emotional development and stated that he is already behind in some of those developments, and that not having access to his teachers and peers continues to make him further behind.

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour reminded Ms. Concannon of the two-minute time limit.

Ms. Concannon again thanked the Committee members for their time and consideration.

(Ms. Hay entered the meeting at 7:14 p.m.)

Parent Tom McAuliffe stated that Dr. Fortuna requested that Ms. Concannon seek legal counsel to pursue this issue and file a complaint, but also suggested that the District has a legal basis for denying the technology, and Mr. McAuliffe asked Committee members to elaborate on the legality or reasons for not allowing it.

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Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour stated that later in the session, the Committee will speak to the process that families would follow for a 504 or special education issue.

Mr. Gary Bloomenthal, the Concannon family advocate, thanked the Committee for taking the time to look at this issue and asked that the Committee carefully review the email which was sent over the weekend by Ms. Concannon in response to the Superintendent's suggestion that this should proceed as a legal matter. The Concannon family is suggesting that we take a breather and step back and wait for the new Superintendent to come on board.

Mr. Bloomenthal stated that there has been some suggestion that the School Committee has no ability to intervene in this situation, and with regard to what is happening here, there was a May 3rd team meeting that was promised to Keegan and the team had an opportunity to review the issues of using the VGO system, however, none of the team members were made aware of that topic - -

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour reminded Mr. Bloomenthal of the two-minute time limit - -

Mr. Bloomenthal shared that there has not been any rational, reason or explanation provided to the family for declining the VGO system, and requested that on behalf of the family, we take a breather and wait for the new Superintendent, who has expertise in special education procedures, and with regards to how this matter has been handled, it is a good idea to step back and review it one more time and that the family and the District need not expend dollars seeking reviews or attorneys, that is why the meeting with Dr. Fortuna, Mr. Webster, the family and the District, had agreed that there would be a May 3rd meeting without attorneys present to review the matter, and that meeting never happened, the team was not advised, and we look forward to meeting and talking with the new Superintendent.

Parent Jorge Teixeira, present on behalf of the Concannon family, stated that Dr. Fortuna was very quick to post statements on the District website about how parents can address their issue by taking them to the BSEA, PQA, OCR, and so on, and that is very true, that is an excellent option, however, Mr. Teixeira reminded the folks that another mention on the District website, which one should be proud of, does not stand by Dr. Fortuna's word, what he sees on that is discrimination and retaliation - - -

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour reminded Mr. Teixeira of the need to be respectful - -

Mr. Teixeira stated he was being very respectful because he was talking about what is published, so the reality is the mission makes it very clear that the District works with parents. That is not what is going on here. The District does not work with parents. There is no supervision, there is nothing - -

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour stated that the District does work with parents and asked Mr. Teixeira to speak without attacking - -

Approved

Mr. Teixeira stated that he was not attacking, but that he can show up here with tons of parents that will state very clearly that the District is not working with parents. There is no supervision, there is nothing - -

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour stated that the District does work with parents and thanked Mr. Teixeira for his comments.

Mr. Teixeira responded that Ms. Tousignant Dufour should open up her eyes to what she is doing.

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour also shared for the viewing public that Ms. Concannon has been informed that the Committee has no jurisdiction over any student's educational plan as they are considered a third party and are not privileged to the information.

The Committee has oversight and control over the budget, policy and the evaluation of the Superintendent, however, they cannot instruct the Superintendent or any other administrator to change any student's educational plan.

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour thanked all those in attendance for coming to the meeting.

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour thanked Dr. Fortuna for her service to the District over the past ten years, as she has served the District in a number of capacities as Principal, Director of Elementary Education, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent.

During that time, Dr. Fortuna has been involved in the implementation of new literacy and math curriculums, the new Quinn Middle School, and established the District's full-day kindergarten program, as well as many other programs that have benefited both students and staff and wished Dr. Fortuna well in her future endeavors.

IV. **Reports:**

Student Representative Report:

None.

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Jodi Fortuna:

1. Dr. Fortuna responded to some of the items which have been on many social and popular media sites over the past week regarding issues that were addressed during Public Participation and read the following statement:

“Thank you to all who have taken an interest in our District procedures and for the opportunity to review our State and federal disability laws as they pertain to dispute resolution which is what we now have before us.

The focus of services and accommodations for students is based on student needs. The school district is required to provide what the student needs to access the curriculum and make

educational progress. We, as educators, care deeply about all of our students. Student issues deeply impact educators at our core, however, all determinations of services and accommodations must be fair and balanced, and based on this legal standard of what the student needs to learn and make progress and to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Sometimes parents and school districts disagree about what the student needs in order to learn, and this dispute cannot be resolved at the team, school or district level, despite the positive intentions of those involved. In these cases, parents are informed of where to go for dispute resolution, again, as mandated by state and federal disabilities law. This is not done as a retaliatory action. It is done as a genuine attempt to resolve the situation in the best interest of the student.

There are not a variety of choices of where to go to appeal a school district's decision of what a child needs for services or accommodations. There is one State agency identified by our laws which is established to assist us with dispute resolution. That State agency is the Bureau of Special Education Appeals located in Boston. There is no fee to access the BSEA. There is no requirement to have a lawyer or advocate when proceeding to the BSEA. There is a website easily found by looking up Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals which, in plain terms, explains the process for filing a hearing request with the BSEA.

Dr. Fortuna encouraged all to look up and to see how straight forward it is to utilize this free Massachusetts agency. There are good reasons to consider going to the BSEA for dispute resolution, other than the important fact that this is the one agency identified by State and federal law for this purpose. The process is fair, quick, impartial and effective.

The District informs parents every time we have a meeting with them of their right to proceed to the BSEA if they have a dispute with the team's determination of what a child with disabilities need to access his or her education.

We encourage families to access this system, not as a retaliatory measure, but rather to find the quickest, easiest and most effective way to solve the problem. What we discourage is dispute resolution through the court of public opinion. By this, I refer to complaining on social media and the mass media, on blogs, through elected officials, and through complaints to the School Committee, not because we want to isolate parents or because the District is concerned with negative publicity, but because these venues are not able to provide a forum for legal and effective dispute resolutions. These venues and outlets involve third parties who cannot obtain from the school district confidential student information which is central to understanding the needs of the individual child.

Also, accessing these venues and outlets, instead of the BSEA, invites the inevitable temptation to make decisions based not on law and fairness, but on public pressure and intimidation. We reject such invitations.

School districts do not hide behind laws. Laws are in place and school districts follow them to ensure fair and impartial treatment for all of the students we care so much about. We encourage all parents, citizens and officials with questions about the legal and effective dispute resolution process to discuss them either with us or directly with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Approved

I have brought parent rights information, including legal references and BSEA contact information, and will be glad to provide that to you and anyone here interested in learning more about the process.

2. For the final Superintendent Report, Dr. Fortuna read the following statement:

“Thank you to everyone that I have encountered on this journey. You each have taught me something new and I leave with important lessons learned.

The opportunity to be a leader in a District with such talented, passionate and committed professionals was the realization of a dream. I enjoyed my decade of learning and growing along with our passionate and talented educators and students.

This is a District where every educator is a student’s champion. We let our students know that we believe that they will succeed by not lowering the standard but supporting students in reaching it. We do not judge the worth of a student by his or her grades or a family by their background. We believe that we can change the world and our relationships with students matter.

To quote a verse from the song “For Good” in the musical *Wicked*:

I’ve heard it said,
That people come into our lives
For a reason
Bringing something we must learn
And we are led to those
Who help us most to grow if we let them
And we help them in return
Well, I don’t know if I believe that’s true
But I know I’m who I am today
Because I knew you

Thank you to all of you that have been a part of my life for the past ten years. I am who I am today because I know you.”

Subcommittee Reports

None.

v. Matters for Discussion:

1. Discussion of 2017-2018 School Improvement Plans – Principals:

The elementary school Principals presented their School Improvement Plans:

Approved

- Discussion of School Improvement Plan – Forest Avenue Elementary School – Principal David Champigny presented the *School Improvement Plan* for Forest Avenue Elementary School
- Discussion of School Improvement Plan – C.A. Farley Elementary School – Principal Melissa Provost presented the *School Improvement Plan* for C.A. Farley Elementary School.
- Discussion of School Improvement Plan – J.L. Mulready Elementary School – Principal Kelly Sardella presented the *School Improvement Plan* for the J.L. Mulready Elementary School.
- Discussion of School Improvement Plan – Quinn Middle School: Principal Jason Webster presented the *School Improvement Plan* for Quinn Middle School.
- Discussion of School Improvement Plan – Hudson High School - Principal Dr. Brian Reagan presented the *School Improvement Plan* for Hudson High School.

Discussion ensued.

Committee members thanked the Principals for their presentation.

2. Whitsons Culinary Group Study – Scott Berry and April Laskey

Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange, shared that Mr. Berry was invited back to further discuss the issues brought up at the last School Committee meeting.

District Manager Scott Berry presented to the Committee statistics of the Food Services Department for the school year and noted the participation rate comparison from May 2013 to May 2017. The non-participation report from August 2016 through May 2017 indicating a total eligible as of May 2017 of 852, which included a total of 762 free meals and a total of 91 reduced meals, and a meals per labor hour comparison.

Mr. Berry also noted the break even, the meals needed by schools. Based on current non-participation, the data reflects that the District needs a total meals of 236 per day, which would result in \$137,171 added revenue for the District.

Discussion ensued.

Director of School Nutrition, April Laskey, of the Billerica Public Schools, presented to the Committee the School Nutrition Program study which highlighted some short-term and long-term recommendations including:

Labor

Improve the management of the USDA food purchases;
Conduct a full analysis of sales vs. labor hours per school;
Set meals per labor hours per school and review on a monthly basis;

Approved

Set up a process to budget, review and approve additional labor costs not associated with school nutrition, such as catering; and
Hire additional substitutes.

Professional Development

Set up a professional development plan for the school;
Monitor and track by employee according to USDA standards;
Provide training in meal components, customer service for hourly employees;
Director to attend training in School Nutrition regulations;
Take advantage of the recommended summer John Stalker Institute training; and
Provide additional training in recipe use, production records preparation and use and USDA meal components and requirements.

Menus

Remove the a la carte mention option at the high school;
Develop a menu cycle to include consideration of current participation, USDA food allocation, bid priced items, and customer preferences that meets the Districts food cost percentage;
Create a dialogue with students to find out what they like;
Offer free samples;
Improve the menus on the website;
Make the menus easier to read; and
Improve the accuracy of the menus to reflect the actual offerings each day.

Operations

Use the production records as a tool;
Improve the labeling of food items in the cafeteria;
Improve the serving area to be more appealing; and
Utilize the smarter lunchrooms scorecards to identify low cost strategies to increase participation.

Marketing and Community Outreach

Take advantage of the marketing resources in the Whitsons contract, develop the marketing program for the upcoming school year; and
Monitor the program monthly and evaluate the effectiveness.

Long Term Recommendation

Develop a plan to transit to a self-op program for the school year 2018-2019 with the goal to be successful in one to three years; and
Minimum of 2 to 4 celebrations per month for all schools

Discussion ensued.

Approved

Committee members thanked Ms. Lasky for her presentation and looks forward to future presentations.

3: Discussion of 1:1 Technology Rollout – Ellen Schuck

Director of Technology, Ellen Schuck, presented to the Committee the timeline for implementation of the 1:1 initiative timeline, meetings with administrators and staff, letters to parents, as well as continued work on the roll out process.

Discussion ensued.

Committee members thanked Ms. Schuck for her presentation.

4. Discussion of Subcommittee Assignments:

Committee Chair Michele Tousignant Dufour emailed members information regarding the subcommittee. Mr. Smith had inquired about the Strategic Goals Subcommittee which is involved with any long-term projects that the District is involved in.

Discussion ensued.

VI. Matters for Action:

1. Approval of contract with Konica Minolta in the Amount of \$240,601.92 for Replacement of Two Copy Center Machines at Hudson High School

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the contract with Konica Minolta in the amount of \$240,601.92 for replacement of two copy center machines at Hudson High School.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to approve the contract with Konica Minolta in the amount of \$240,601.92 for replacement of two copy center machines at Hudson High School was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

2. Approval of Ceiling Installation at the J.L. Mulready Elementary School Under Warrant Article and Change Order No. 1

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the ceiling installation at the J.L. Mulready Elementary School under Warrant Article and Change Order No. 1.

A motion to approve the ceiling installation at the J.L. Mulready Elementary School under Warrant Article and Change Order No. 1 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Hay. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Approved

3. Approval for Contract for Administration Building Envelope Review in the Amount of \$18,000.00

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of contract for Administration Building envelope review in the amount of \$18,000.00.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to approve the contract for Administration Building envelope review in the amount of \$18,000.00 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

4. Approval of Contract for J.L. Mulready Elementary School Fire Alarm Under Authorized Warrant

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the contract for the J.L. Mulready Elementary School Fire Alarm under Authorized Warrant.

A motion to approve the contract for the J.L. Mulready Elementary School Fire Alarm under Authorized Warrant was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

5. Approval of Contract for Forest Avenue Elementary School Fire Alarm Under Authorized Warrant and Facilities Department Approved Building Projects

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the contract for Forest Avenue Elementary School Fire Alarm under Warrant and Facilities Department approved building projects.

A motion to approve the contract for the Forest Avenue Elementary School Fire Alarm under Authorized Warrants and Facilities Department approved building projects was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

6. Approval of FY18 Budget

Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange, presented to the Committee the FY18 budget for vote.

A motion to approve the recommended FY18 School Budget personnel line of \$31,882,508.43 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Hay. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to approve the recommended FY18 School Budget general expense line of \$7,839,282.53 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to approve the recommended FY18 School Budget transportation line of \$2,047,516.02 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

7. Approval of Contract with Whitsons Culinary Group

Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange, presented to the Committee the contract for the Whitsons Culinary Group, pending State review of the contract.

A motion to approve the extension of the contract with Whitson Culinary Group for the 2017-2018 school year in the amount of \$89,440.00, pending State approval, was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Hay. On a vote of 5-2, the motion passed.

Discussion ensued.

8. Approval of the Quinn Middle School Active Student Activity Funds

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the Quinn Middle School Active Student Activities Fund.

A motion to authorize the list of active Quinn Middle School Student Activity accounts, as presented, for the 2017-2018 school year was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to authorize a \$9,000.00 maximum balance in the Student Activity Checking Account at the Quinn Middle School for the 2017-2018 school year was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

9. Approval of the Hudson High School Active Student Activity Funds

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the Hudson High School Active Student Activities Fund.

A motion to authorize the list of active Hudson High School Student Activity accounts, as presented, for the 2017-2018 school year was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to transfer \$653.66 of the inactive student activity funds to the Student Activities General Fund was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Maston. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to transfer \$2,507.24 of the inactive Student Activity funds to the Student Activities Athletic General Fund was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Hay. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to authorize a \$75,000.00 maximum balance in the Student Activity Checking Account at Hudson High School for the 2017-2018 school year was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Hay. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Approved

10. Approval of Contract for the Position of Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange

Dr. Fortuna recommended approval of the contract for the position of Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange.

A motion to approve the 3-year employment contract, as presented, for the position of Executive Director of Finance and Operations, Patty Lange, commencing July 1, 2017 and ending on June 30, 2020 with a salary of \$148,722.92 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Reclassifications:

A motion to approve the reclassifications of funds, as presented, was made by Mr. Luoto and seconded by Ms. Hay. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Items of Interest to the School Committee:

Ms. Hay shared that the ELL end of year celebration was a great event and thanked all those involved in putting together such a wonderful ceremony.

VII. Executive Session/Adjournment

At 9:43 p.m., Committee Chair, Michele Tousignant Dufour, noted that Executive Session was needed for the following reasons:

1. To discuss strategy to preparation for contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Administrator) and;
2. To discuss strategy to preparation for contract negotiations with union personnel (Secretary) because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the Committee.

A motion to enter into Executive Session was made by Ms. Hay and seconded by Mr. Maston.

Vote by roll call:

Ms. Tousignant Dufour – yes
Ms. Hay - yes
Mr. Luoto – yes
Mr. Maston – yes
Mr. Smith – yes
Ms. Hallsworth - yes
Mr. Tracy – yes

Approved

Committee Chair, Michele Tousignant Dufour, announced that the Committee would enter Executive Session and not return to public session.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hallsworth, Secretary
Hudson School Committee