

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: March 12, 2019

Location: 155 Aspley Street

Members present: Glenn Maston, Steven Smith, Elizabeth Hallsworth, Adam Tracy, Nina Ryan, Matthew McDowell, and Michele Tousignant Dufour

Members absent: none

Others present: Dr. Marco C. Rodrigues, Superintendent
Annamarie O'Donnell, Recording Secretary
Ben Carme, Student Representative
Emily Figueiredo, Student Representative

I. Call the Meeting to Order: 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Glenn Maston.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting: February 26, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2019 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

III. Public Participation:

Beth Langlois, a parent of students at Forest Ave. expressed the following concerns:

2019-2020 Calendar: There is no PD day on election day. She has concerns about safety issues including traffic and adults without a CORI check entering the schools while students are there.

Transportation: The recommendation of a fifteen minute later start for the elementary schools will put a burden on families.

IV. Reports:

Report of the Superintendent

Graduation /dropout rates

Dr. Rodrigues stated the DOE has released the graduation and dropout rates for 2018. The district monitors these rates as part of our accountability plan. It is important to understand that there are different cohorts of students. This year has a graduation rate of 88% for the four year cohort which is much better than the 79% last year. For this cohort, the dropout

rate is 1.5% compared to 2.6% last year. Even though the results are better than 2017, there are gaps in some subgroups that need to be monitored. One important factor in the graduation rate is the size of our graduation classes. Because of our small class sizes, a few students can make a big difference in the percentages.

Discussion ensued about the dynamic of the students dropping out. Higher number of ELL's and special education students is a component.

Mr. Tracy commented that 2017 is an anomaly when looking at the three year dropout rate. He questioned whether there have been systems put in place over the last eighteen months to contribute to this. Dr. Rodrigues stated that there is a mechanism in the District Improvement Plan to create systems to support all students.

Discussion ensued about how the dropout rate is calculated and how the different groups of students are segregated in the data.

Ms. Hallsworth stated that in the past when there was the risk of a student dropping out we knew who they were. She asked if this has changed, as a result of having an interim principal. Dr. Rodrigues stated that nothing has changed. There is a lot of infrastructure at each school, particularly at the high school to help students. The guidance department monitors this.

Dr. Rodrigues spoke about the lack of a credit recovery system. The district can improve on creating mechanisms to help students that fail a class.

Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee

Mr. Maston reported that there has not been another Budget subcommittee meeting.

Policy Subcommittee

Mr. Smith reported that the Policy subcommittee had met earlier that evening. There will be some J and G policies for review in the next packet.

Strategic Goals Subcommittee

Mr. Maston reported that the Strategic Goals subcommittee had not met again, but the committee was in the process of implementing the elements of the communication plan.

Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

The Superintendent's Evaluation subcommittee has not met again.

Student Report

Emily Figueiredo, Hudson High School student, gave the following student report:

- Community Council had Green Hudson come in to the high school to speak about how the cafeteria can reduce waste through recycling, composting etc.
- There has been positive feedback on the implementation of the ARC program
- Started Crayola color cycle- a project to recycle old markers.

- Recently the high school completed its stress free weekend initiative. This was a pilot with the ultimate goal to implement it over winter break. As a pilot, it was a little tough with the snow day. The council may look at another trial day. The plan is to have a more formal set of rules. There will be a survey coming out to see if this initiative achieved the desired results.

V. **Matters for Discussion:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business

1. **Student Activities Report period ending December 31,2018**

Dr. Rodrigues presented the quarterly Student Activities Account update to the committee.

2. **Transportation Request for Quote**

Ms. Patricia Lange, Executive Director of Finance and Operations gave an update of the findings of the Transportation Committee and the status of the RFQ. She noted that some timelines needed to be met in order to make sure we have transportation in place for 2019-2020.

In preparation for the Request For Quote for the new transportation contract, a diverse committee was formed to look at our current transportation issues and make recommendations for the Request for Quote. The committee included Principals, district transportation coordinator, transportation secretaries, administrative staff, Hudson Department of Public Works, a School Committee Member, and a parent.

The committee looked at the following:

1. Current District Policy states that students will be eligible for transportation at more than:

Kindergarten	0.5 miles
Elementary	1.0 miles
Middle	1.5 miles
High School	1.5 miles

She stated that in practice we are providing transportation for students according to the following parameters:

Kindergarten	0.5 miles
Elementary	1.0 miles
Middle	1.0 miles
High School	1.0 miles

The committee investigated the possibility of eliminating one bus. The committee found that if Kindergarten eligibility was put to 1.0 mile, and the 1.5 mile policy requirement was enforced at the middle and high school levels, the district would be able to go from 12 busses to 11.

There were the following concerns with this:

Enforcing the 1.5 mile walk zone would put a burden on our families.

The DPW would have additional sidewalks to plow. This would take longer, and could impact delays vs. closures in the event of snow. The school department could save money, but another town department would have increased costs.

Based on these factors, the recommendation is to change policy to bring Kindergarten to 1.0 mile and rewrite the policy for Quinn and the High School to reflect the 1.0 policy that is currently being followed. This would keep the number of busses at 12.

2. The second issue the committee looked at was the bell times. Currently, there are issues with the busses being late particularly to the elementary schools in the afternoon. This is requiring our teachers to stay beyond their contract times to provide supervision until the busses arrive. Ms. Lange pointed out that because we are able to drop students off at the high school at 7 a.m. we do not experience this problem in the morning. She went on to say that in the afternoon, the drivers have 32 minutes from the time they leave the high school to do their route and get to Quinn. They then have 15 minutes to run their Quinn route and get to the elementary school.

The proposal is to modify the start time of the elementary schools to 8:45 a.m. This would allow drop off at 8:30 a.m. Dismissal time would be 3:05 and this would give the drivers 30 minutes to do their Quinn run and get to the elementary schools.

Discussion ensued about how often busses were arriving to the elementary schools between 3:00 p.m and 3:05 p.m. Ms. Lange noted we have been looking at this data all year. Generally, it is the same busses arriving late due to their specific routes. About 5 or 6 of the busses arrive late consistently. Most recently, we looked at the first week of March. Quinn had two days that week with early dismissal. On those days, the busses arrived at the elementary schools earlier due to the fact there was no Quinn run.

Dr. Rodrigues pointed out that there are areas in the city that do not have sidewalks so there are kids being bussed that are in the walk zone. This results in many stops. Some busses are also required to go to the town border with Stow. This cannot be done in the time currently allowed. The new contract has a clause that holds the bus

company accountable, but we cannot enforce this unless we give them ample time to run the routes. If we keep the same routes, the same gap of time, and the same number of busses we will continue to have late busses.

Discussion ensued about the asymmetry in the times of the school days and the amount of time required in the teacher contracts.

Ms. Ryan asked if thought has been given to the before school programs that families may need. Dr. Rodrigues confirmed that Chaps would be able to accommodate families needing care. Ms. Hallsworth asked if we have thought about other creative solutions in the morning to help them with the fifteen minutes. Discussion ensued about the need to change the time but trying to come up with creative solutions to help parents that are affected negatively.

Ms. Hallsworth stated that we have talked about a later start time for the High School and a possible flip of start times with the Elementary Schools. Mr. Maston stated that this should be looked into, but could not happen in time for this contract.

Discussion ensued about the length of school day, contractual obligations with the teachers, and time on learning requirements.

Mr. Smith asked if the bus company could make the times work as is and what the cost would be. Dr. Rodrigues responded that this was not explored, because it would increase cost and the committee was looking to cut costs. Mr. Tracy shared that the cost to add busses is significant and would give us excess capacity.

Discussion ensued about the difference in supervision needed at the elementary levels and the possibility of extending the teacher day at the elementary level.

Mr. Tracy stated that the actual in practice drop off would be consistent with the proposed time shift. It was noted that the concern is with the shift in the change in the time at the beginning of the day.

Discussion ensued about the service of the current provider and the regional nature of the providers.

Dr. Rodrigues expressed concerns about the budget for transportation for the coming year. He outlined some of the challenges that transportation providers have to managing their costs. Mr. Tracy added that the committee did not recommend charging bus fees.

Discussion ensued about the work the transportation committee did with Safe Routes to Schools. Safe Routes to Schools will be supplying a comprehensive report on our walking zones. They will also do an analysis of our arrival and dismissal procedures and give suggestions if needed to improve traffic flow and safety.

Discussion ensued on how the mileage is calculated.

Mr. Smith asked for clarification on the accountability piece in the RFP.

Mr. Maston stated that a policy change to change the mileage would need to be done through the policy subcommittee and then brought to the full committee. Mr. Maston requested that the transportation committee create a report. Mr. Smith asked what happens if we wait for the report to be ready before making a decision. Dr. Rodrigues responded that the outcome would be delayed. Currently we are projecting to have a new contract the first week in May. If we delay decisions until the next School Committee meeting we will expect to have the contract at the end of May or the beginning of June. Discussion ensued about if waiting would put us in any danger. Ms. Lange responded that the danger is that if we get a new vendor they may not be able to obtain the needed busses in time for the start of the school year.

Discussion ensued about the potential problems with putting out the RFP with the current parameters or with incorrect parameters. The problems include:

Busses will continue to be late
Teachers needing to stay later than the contractually required times and potential grievances
Not being able to put an accountability clause in

Discussion ensued about the late bus.

Dr. Rodrigues spoke to the opt out clause. He stated that the efficiency of the routes is dependent on the parameters we set. Having more information on who is actually riding the bus and where these students are transported to will help us to dictate to the bus company what our needs are.

Discussion ensued about the reality of when the busses are actually getting to the elementary schools.

Mr. Tracy suggested that there is a fork and we can either keep things the same, send out an RFP with no accountability and live

with that contract, or we can adjust, which would be an inconvenience to some families but we would get a contract with accountability.

Discussion ensued about the effect of the late busses on the parent pick up lines.

Discussion ensued about the possibility of changing the contract during the term of the contract.

Discussion ensued about the next steps. Mr. Tracy spoke to the risk of extending the process and which could reduce the selection pool of potential bidders. To get the most competitive bid, time is of the essence. There is also a risk that there is no bidder if we wait too long.

A motion to table the decision until the next full committee meeting was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 5-2, the motion passed.

Discussion ensued about sending out the RFP before the vote. Dr. Rodrigues recommended that we hold off on the RFP if the wish of the committee is to table this item.

Mr. Maston reported that the Superintendent's Listening Session on March 20, 2019 would be a School Committee Listening Session as well. The focus will be on budget and transportation issues.

VI. Matters for Action:

a) Old Business

1. **Second Reading and Approval of Proposed School Committee Policies-Section G**

Dr. Rodrigues and Mr. Smith stated that there had been no feedback on these policies. A motion to approve the proposed School Committee policies Section G was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

b) New Business

1. **Approval of 2019-2020 School Calendar**

Ms. Ryan asked about election days and why those days cannot be Professional Development days.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that we have confirmed with the town clerk that there is no election in November. There is the town election in May of 2020, and historically there is very low turnout. He provided an overview of how many voters have voted in each precinct. He stated that we are looking at the possibilities for different entrances and/or locations in the schools.

Discussion ensued about traffic patterns and locations. Mr. Maston shared that he had spoken with town clerk, Joan Wordell. She informed him that the Selectmen set the polling locations and by laws state the voting locations have to be within the precinct. Additionally, the voting machines are currently stored at the schools.

Early voting can be held at one location

A motion to approve the 2019-2020 School Calendar was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

2. **Approval to sponsor School related Town Warrant articles 8,9,11,17**
Dr. Rodrigues stated that the Town of Hudson Executive Assistant, Mr. Moses had asked if the School Department would like to sponsor articles 8, 9,11, and 17 on the town warrant in May.

Discussion ensued about the air conditioning articles and the potential increase in cost of electricity.

A motion to approve sponsoring school related town warrant articles 8,9,11 and 17 was made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

3. **Approval of FY19 Innovation Education Grant**
A motion to approve the FY19 Innovation Grant in the amount of \$2000.00 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Hallsworth. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.
4. **Approval of FY19 MA DOE**
A motion to approve the FY19 MA DOE- Hurricane Evacuees PR or VI Grant in the amount of \$3141.44 was made by MS. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.
5. **Approval of Thomas and Myra Ryan Memorial Scholarship**
A motion to approve the Thomas and Myra Ryan Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$2000.00 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.
6. **Approval of Reclassification of Funds**
A motion to approve the reclassification of funds as presented was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Hallsworth. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

VII. **Items of Interest to the School Committee**

Approved

Ms. Ryan reported that she was invited to the Massachusetts Amazing Emerging Artists in Boston. Ms. Ryan stated that she was extremely impressed by the number of artists there from Quinn and the High School. The district had two middle school students win awards. One was an award for grades 5-8 for the entire state and another award for a seventh grader. She congratulated the students and their teacher.

Ms. Smith stated that he had gone to the performance of Mary Poppins and is very impressed with the level of skill in the shows put on at the High School.

VIII. Executive Session

At 9:21 p.m. Committee Chair, Glenn Maston, noted that Executive Session was needed for the following reasons:

- a) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation with union personnel (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Local Council 93, Hudson Public Schools Custodians Local) because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the Committee.

Vote by roll call:

Mr. Maston	Yes
Mr. Smith	Yes
Ms. Hallsworth	Yes
Mr. Tracy	Yes
Ms. Ryan	Yes
Mr. McDowell	Yes
Ms. Tousignant Dufour	Yes

IX. Adjournment

At 9:22 p.m. Committee Chair, Glenn Maston, announced that the Committee would enter Executive Session and not return to Public Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hallsworth, Secretary
Hudson School Committee