

MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BRAINTREE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, July 11, 2016

7:00 PM

Colbert Administration Building

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School Committee Present: Cyril Chafe/Thomas Devin/Lisa Fiske Heger/George Kokoros/Kate Naughton/David Ringius/Mayor Joseph Sullivan

Administration: Superintendent of Schools – Dr. Frank Hackett  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools – Ms. Jennifer Fay-Beers  
Business Manager – Mr. Ed Cronin

Student Representative: None

Recorder: Mary Ann Cuddahy

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Fiske Heger called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Consideration of Approval of Minutes: Open Session June 13, 2016

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to approve the minutes for the Open Session of June 13, 2016.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

B. Commendations

Dr. Hackett noted a number of commendations:

- Voya Financial Volunteers, BPS Parent Jim Lynch & Skinner Overlook – Ross School Grounds Clean up and Beautification
- Matthew Sawtelle – South Middle School Music Teacher
- Parent recognition of MSKC Teacher – Jean D'Angelo
- Parent Abby Young – Mural @ Monatiquot School Kindergarten Center
- Dental Health Program; Dr. Richard Struzziero, Dr. Jennifer Allen, Dr. Phillip Struzziero, Dr. John Viveiros, Dr. Charlene Pirner

C. Communications and Commendations:

Dr. Hackett announced that sadly, in their packets, was a resignation letter from the School Committee Recorder, Diane Intravaia. Diane has been appointed the new administrative assistant for the Ross School effective with the 2016/2017 school year. At this time, Mary Ann Cuddahy will be filling in this position this evening and we will figure out how we will proceed next year.

- i. Administrative Workshops – August 23<sup>rd</sup> (Principals Only) and August 30<sup>th</sup> for all administrators
- ii. New Teacher Welcome & Orientation: August 31, 2016 & September 1st
- iii. Teacher Workshop, Opening Day: September 6, 2016

Dr. Hackett announced the summer workshops for the administrators and new teachers. Ms. Fay-Beer briefly outlined the new teacher orientation program. Ms. Fay-Beer invited the School Committee members to join them at the orientation at BHS in the media center if their schedule permits. As well, the opening day meeting will be held at East Middle School and the School Committee is invited to attend.

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C. Gifts to Schools -Approvals

Highlands Elementary School

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to accept as a gift to schools a check in the amount of \$154.56 from the Highlands PTO as a gifts to schools to be used to purchases licenses for Chromebooks.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Highlands Elementary School

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros and seconded by Mr. Devin to accept a check in the amount of \$117.50, a check in the amount of \$114.54 (penny fundraiser) and a check in the amount of \$68.77 from the Highlands PTO, totaling \$300.81 as a gifts to schools to be used as needed in supporting the educational needs at Highlands School.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

East Middle School Donation

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to accept a check in the amount of \$709.00 from donations from the Dodgeball Tournament made in honor of Mary Tantillo as a gifts to schools to be used as needed in support of the mission and vision of East Middle School and to honor Mary Tantillo.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

East Middle School Donation

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros and seconded by Mr. Devin to accept a check in the amount of \$100.00 from donations made in honor of Mary Tantillo as a gifts to schools to be used as needed in support of the mission and vision of East Middle School and to honor Mary Tantillo

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

South Middle School Donation

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to accept a Checks in the following amounts: \$6.75, \$7.00, \$14.20, \$15.00, \$15.99, \$16.98, \$20.92, \$22.00, \$24.00, \$26.80, \$27.00, \$30.00 and \$47.44 totaling \$274.08 from the South Middle School Scholastic Book fair as a gifts to schools.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

South Middle School Donation

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros and seconded by Mr. Devin to accept a check in the amount of \$38.75 from Bay State Textiles, Inc. as a gifts to schools to be used as needed in support of the mission and vision of South Middle School.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Monatiquot School Kindergarten Center

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to accept a check and cash totaling \$1,375.19 from the participation in the Bay State Textile Program, A+ Rewards Program and Sale of Cookbooks, stickers, pads and pens as a gifts to schools to be used for the MSKC.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Braintree Music Department Donation

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros and seconded by Mr. Devin to accept a check in the amount of \$1,000.00 from the Braintree's Veteran Council as a gifts to schools to be used at the Music Department's discretion.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Ross Elementary School Donation

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to accept a check in the amount of \$593.23 from the Ross PTO as a gifts to schools to be used to pay for K- 2 supplies for the 2016/2017 school year.

ROLL CALL: AYES -- 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

III. FROM SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF

A. Profile – Class of 2016

Dr. Hackett spoke on behalf of Mr. Garofalo who was not asked to be at this meeting. Dr. Hackett highlighted that there are assessment data that we are still waiting to arrive. We are still waiting on SAT and ACT results. Preliminary AP data had just come in. Also received preliminary PARCC results today for the schools and this has not been released to the public. Dr. Hackett explained that they will work on the data over the summer and will present it to the School Committee in the fall.

Dr. Hackett referred to page 1 of the profile noting that 91% of students in the class of 2016 went on to higher education. In the aggregate this is up to a level that has not been seen since 2012. The next page shows a 62 year history of BPS graduates. In Dr. Hackett's history as a superintendent, he has never seen such history presented before, going back to 1955, which is amazing and interesting to see

historically how the numbers have changed regarding not only those going on to continuing education, but the shift from work to higher education, as well as the class sizes.

Dr. Hackett spoke of the history of scholarship amounts since 2000 with this year being \$186,100 which is a great help to students and their families. Also included in the report is the breakdown of the institutions that students will be attending, and the information for military enrollment.

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Mayor Sullivan asked Mr. Lee what the national aggregate for students going onto higher education is and Mr. Lee reports it to be 23% of the population of the graduate classes.

Ms. Heger asked about the trades (electricians, plumber) where do those students fall and was told that it is under the non-degree listing.

#### B. Braintree Community Continuing Adult Education – Annual Report 2015/2016

Dr. Hackett mentioned that Mr. Caruso was not requested to be in attendance but referred to the high level overview provided by Director Caruso. There is a historical breakdown of the program, total enrollment and the SAT program. Dr. Hackett commented on the strong enrollment in the SAT program. Dr. Hackett and Mr. Lee also discussed that the students (juniors) have access to the SAT program during the school day.

Mayor Sullivan was glad to see that the enrollment had increased. Ms. Heger commended Mr. Caruso for doing a fine job.

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Consideration of Approval of BHS Student Handbook Changes for 2016/2017 SY

Dr. Hackett introduced both Mr. Lee and Ms. Moynihan to present a high level overview of the changes. Mr. Lee stated that all of the proposed changes had been run through School Council and are now brought to School Committee for their approval.

Academic Integrity Policy. This was brought to the School Committee last year and significant changes were made. During the 15/16 SY, the three Housemasters tracked every incident to see how the new guidelines worked. After a review, they felt there were a few changes that needed to be made.

The Housemasters looked at 5 major issues.

- First was the layout, separating homework from test/quizzes and projects/papers/assignments as opposed to grouping all as one. This way they could be specific as to what we were looking at.
- Second was the process. At the bottom of the page is the process, which spells out how incidents of academic integrity are investigated.
- Third piece is homework. The way it was worded last year, homework was being treated almost equally to a major paper/assessment. BHS administration felt it was unequitable and that it was very heavy handed and becoming punitive and not a learning experience. They separated out homework from the red tier so it is no longer a severe violation.
- Fourth was the wording of “willful” and “deceitful.” It is very difficult to prove a student is being willful or deceitful and both create a negative tone so the language was changed to “intentional.” It is

easier to determine intentional vs. accidental. BHS administration believes these language changes will make it easier to evaluate infractions.

- Fifth was the online translator for foreign language classes, which were a red violation, resulting in an automatic zero on the assignment. This has been changed to allow for use of translators for 20% of the assignment; over 20% is an automatic zero.

Mr. Lee described the process to create the policy, which involved bringing teachers from every core subject area together for review. The same group of teachers were brought back for this update.

Homework Policy – This was approved in January and will replace the old policy with the new policy.

Rename In-School Suspension to Extended Day Detention – In-school suspension goes from 2:15 to 5:00 pm and because the student does not miss any class time, it is not technically considered a suspension. All suspensions have to be reported to the state. It has been renamed it to Extended Day Detention, which would be different from an office detention.

New Tardy Policy– With the elimination of homeroom with the new schedule, and because BHS had two tardy policies; one if you were tardy to homeroom and one if you were tardy after home room, it needed to be condensed into one. Additionally, the consequences for being tardy have been broken down to 3, 5, 7 and 9, as follows:

- 3 Tardies: warning
- 5 Tardies: Office Detention
- 7 Tardies: Extended Day Detention
- 9 Tardies: Saturday School Suspension

If a student misses 20 minutes of class, he or she will be considered absent for the day for that class.

Attendance Policy and Procedures – Ms. Moynihan pointed out that there is an attachment for this. She also provided that Phil Krall, history teacher at BHS who is doing an administrative internship, pulled a group of teachers together to look at the attendance policy and procedures. In general, they changed formatting, cleaned up language, clarified the difference between legitimate absences versus what are considered excused absences. Nothing major was changed but made it more user friendly for parents and students.

The one change being proposed is that BHS currently allows 5 absences per term from a class before being penalized in any way, totaling 20 days per year. In addition, BHS allows for 5 family vacation days without penalty. The State, under Chapter 222, requires schools to notify parents after 5 absences and ask them to meet to discuss the attendance issues. BHS is proposing embedding the 5 family vacation days into the 5 days per term, thus reducing the days to a total of 20 days that a student can be absent. BHS would still be above the state recommendation, but it brings the school closer which is a good first step.

Mayor Sullivan asked how many kids are on the cusp of 20 misses a year. Mr. Lee reports quite a few. Some students every term lose credit for class or classes: average daily attendance, however, is very good at approximately 95%. Individual students are in jeopardy because of attendance. Mayor Sullivan asked if it is any particular grade. Mr. Lee reported that it is across the board and due mostly to home and health issues.

Make up work policy – one issue with family vacations are long-term assignments and their due dates. Under current policy students get the number of days out plus one to make up any work. Example given, a teacher came to Ms. Moynihan reporting her class had been working on a project for two weeks in class and a student was leaving on family vacation that she had known about for quite some time and the assignment

was due while the student was gone. Because of the policy, the student wasn't working on the assignment during class and then got the 5 days out plus 1 to complete it upon return. Essentially, the student got an extra week and a half to do the assignment because of the policy. This has an effect on teachers not being able to return tests when a student is on a family vacation because the student has not taken it yet. The proposal would be, if a student is aware of an absence coming up and an assignment is assigned four days before the student leaves on the family vacation and that assignment has a deadline while the student is away, it would be expected that the assignment would be passed in upon return.

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Dr. Hackett asked what happens if this overlaps a semester, do the grades get held? Mr. Lee reports that they would receive an incomplete.

Ms. Heger asked if this is for all absences. Ms. Moynihan reports it is only for a planned time out/vacation, not for a student out due to illness.

Mr. Devin asked about the plagiarizing section on of the handbook proposal. Mr. Devin believes there are many different degrees of it. He gave an example that if a student cuts and pastes that becomes a red violation. He asked if a student cites it in the bibliography but forgets to put parentheses on it, how is that handled; is this intent to deceive? Mr. Lee responded there is also the question of whether it was intentional. It becomes a yellow violation, allowing for the teacher to have discretion not to take away any points. There needs to be some penalty if there is plagiarism. Previously, there was nothing allowed and a student would get a zero. Ms. Moynihan responded if it is more than 20% of paper, it is intentional, less than 20% may not be intentional and this gives the teacher discretion to grade.

Ms. Moynihan stated that the teacher, curriculum director and housemaster take this very seriously. Mr. Lee stressed that they do take it very seriously and since instituted this past year, the change it is reaping benefits in terms of the student's awareness of the issues.

Search and Seizure Policy – If there is reasonable suspicion to search a student for something, for example, illegal; drugs, weapons and the student refuses to allow the search, there currently is no language as to what results. Typically, it gets handed over to the Braintree Police because in some cases it raises more suspicion. Searches are very low scale, non-invasive. The administration wants the student to face disciplinary consequences for insubordination for not allowing the search.

Mayor Sullivan, read the language that is being added, “Any student who refuses a reasonable search on the part of the administration will be referred to the Braintree Police and will face school disciplinary consequences under/for insubordination.” In having this language, this is coming from the reasonable suspicion we already have and this is previously noted in the handbook. Mayor Sullivan, in trying to define the word reasonable, and Ms. Moynihan and Mr. Lee knowing the school and students, while not questioning their judgment, would like to figure out the balance needed to allowing a student to walk through a hallway with a backpack and not having an administrator saying they want to see the backpack without having some type of explanation.

Ms. Moynihan responded that students are never randomly searched, there are reasons. For example, if a teacher or an adult comes to administration saying a student smells of marijuana the Housemaster gets the student out of the classroom and walks them to the office. The Housemaster then looks for signs of suspicious behavior, or other indications of the student being under the influence of substances (e.g., do their eyes look red/blood shot). If there is suspicion, administrators will bring them to the nurse to have their vital signs checked. All of this happens before administration decides if a search is warranted.

Subsequent to the search, administration calls the parents to inform them. Administration is only allowed to do the search. Mr. Lee reports that searches are not done alone as adult witness is present. Discussion regarding searching the student cars was brought up and Mr. Lee commented that it is done similarly to a locker search. The car is on school property so it is on school grounds. If they come across something illegal in the search, the police are notified; however, it does not usually get to that level.

Discipline Code – Language Updated. Working with Assistant Superintendent Fay, Chapter 37 H, 37 H ½ and Chapter 37 ¾ have been inserted in their entirety.

Mayor Sullivan had a follow-up question to the Homework Policy regarding the homework assignment itself. He believes that homework is about effort and referred to the sliding scale of 5 – 15%. Mayor Sullivan asked if it is per student or per class. Mr. Lee said it is by class. Mayor Sullivan asked why can't the teacher who knows if the student is making the effort have latitude in scoring. Mr. Lee responded that teachers have latitude in terms of how they want to assess student progress in their class. For example, if the teacher knows the student is better verbally than written, the student might take the same test in an oral format but content will be exactly the same. In terms of how much each part of the content of the course counts, we have to be consistent so that they are all graded the same. We report to schools, parents and to the child where they stand and we need to be honest about that. Mayor Sullivan would like, for next year, to have a conversation with teachers about looking at a student's performance and being able to have to a subjective view on the student who does better on homework because students leave differently. Mr. Lee, in answer, said that today we have a variety of ways of assessing student's ability to learn material; presentations, extensive research papers, kids writing computer programs - test and quiz is not all we do anymore. We give kids multiple ways to demonstrate the proficiency we want to see from them, understanding students do learn differently but we need to know in the end that they know the content. The administration, teachers and the district have put a lot of effort into making sure the teachers are assessing progress in a variety of ways that reach each student.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros and seconded by Mr. Devin to approve the requested revisions to the 2016-2017 Braintree High School Handbook.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/

Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

#### B. Budget Subcommittee

Mr. Kokoros reported that the Budget Subcommittee met at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the work being done to close out FY16. Mr. Kokoros reported the good news that additional funding from the State for FY17 has been approved. Because of this, the Budget Subcommittee voted and is recommending that the School Committee add one full time social studies teacher at South Middle School which was one of their priority items, as well as approve a 0.4 Physical Education and Health Teacher at South Middle School.

#### C. Consideration of Addition of Identified High Priorities to FY17 Budget (Pending Additional State Funding)

Dr. Hackett stated that we are fortunate the state came back with additional Chapter 70 funding. We did have priority lists and adding the South Social Studies teacher is really about numbers and this will bring the class sizes in Social Studies to more reasonable sizes. The 0.4 add for the PE position at South actually affects East as well and came out of Mr. Ringius' subcommittee on Opioids to find more staffing to be able to have a more comprehensive health program.

Ms. Fay commended Ms. Bennett for hiring PE teachers also certified in health and stated that we are committed to working this summer on the curriculum for this new position. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade position would allow every 3<sup>rd</sup> day to be a health class. It will expand on the current curriculum in place. Every student will now leave middle school with having had health classes.

Mayor Sullivan thanked the Governor and administration and added that this additional funding will take what is a strong budget and make it stronger. Mayor Sullivan wants to make sure this is sustainable each and every year and build upon what we are doing.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to approve the recommended additional funding and teaching positions.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/

Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

#### V. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Mayor Sullivan expressed public appreciation to Mr. Devin for attending the ZBA meeting on the Peterson Pool meeting and offering the schools' perspective at that meeting.

#### VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Heger announced (at approximately 8:00 p.m.) that the Committee would be moving into Executive Session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3), to discuss strategy for the negotiation of Collective Bargaining contracts as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair, and will return to public session in approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Ms. Naughton and seconded by Mr. Devin to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy for the negotiation of Collective Bargaining.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/ Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/

Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

#### VII. CONTRACT RATIFICATION

Ms. Heger announced that the School Committee meeting is back in session (approximately 8:20 p.m.). Dr. Hackett spoke about the Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) process that was used to negotiate a successor bargaining agreement between the Braintree Education Association and the Braintree School Committee. It was a process that generated options and Dr. Hackett was pleased with how the it. The Negotiations Subcommittee was recognized by the School Committee for their work. As an overview, the successor agreement is a 3 year agreement from September 1, 2016 through June of 2019. For all units within the bargaining association, the increases would be as follows:

- 2016/2017 School Year – 2% increase
- 2017/2018 School Year – 2.5% increase
- 2018/2019 School Year – 2.5% increase



With that, Dr. Hackett would recommend ratification of the agreement.

Mayor Sullivan expressed appreciation to Chairman Heger and the negotiating committee for the effort and deliberations, as well as to the Superintendent, as this is his first contract with Braintree and negotiating with the union and from all that he had heard, it was a very respectful and successful conversation. He would note that this 7% pay adjustment is affordable for the town and recognizes the value that we place in our teachers.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros seconded by Mr. Devin to accept and ratify the recommended contract.

ROLL CALL: AYES - 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/ Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Ms. Heger announced that the next meeting would be held on August 15, 2016.

VIII. ADJOURN

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin seconded by Mr. Kokoros to adjourn.

ROLL CALL: AYES - 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/ Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Time: 8:29 P.M.

George Kokoros  
Recording Secretary



