



Superintendent's Corner

Gary S. Reese, Ed.D.

Superintendent

November 23, 2016

Highlights from Monday's School Committee Meeting...

AFT Paraprofessionals, AFT Multi-Purpose Facility Technicians, and AFSCME Cafeteria Workers– Contract Ratifications: The personnel subcommittee of the school committee recently reached a tentative agreement on successor contracts for paraprofessionals, multipurpose facility technicians, and cafeteria workers lasting from September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2019. The vote to ratify the contracts was unanimous by the school committee, with Gretchen Marinopoulos and Nick Wheeler not present for the vote. In addition to some revised contract language, the salary increases include:

Paraprofessionals/Multi-Purpose Facility Technicians

FY 17:	1%
FY 18:	1% on day one 1% on day 91
FY 19:	creation of a new super step at 2.5% above the top step 1% on day one 1% on day 91

Cafeteria Workers:

FY 17:	2%
FY 18:	2%
FY 19:	2%

Policy Approval

BEDB-E: Agenda Format – Last Fall, the agenda format was adjusted slightly. The Presentations and Reports section were combined. There is a school committee policy which identifies the structure of the meetings. Additionally, it was felt that the press conference item should be removed, as there is very rarely a need for the press conference. This was the second reading for the policy and the changes were approved unanimously.

JJE – Student Activity Accounts – Director of Finance and Operations Joan Liporto reviewed the current student activities policy, along with reviewing the recommendations from the MASBO report. Ms. Liporto developed an updated policy that reflects changes as recommended in the MASBO report and constitutes best practice for maintaining student activity accounts. These changes were voted on and approved unanimously.

BEC – Executive Session – The executive session policy, as written, called for a quarterly review of executive session minutes. A proposal was made by the policy subcommittee to alter the timeline to an annual review. Because of the minimal nature of the change, there was a vote to waive the first reading of the policy and to take an immediate vote for approval. Both the vote for the immediate review and the vote for the change were approved unanimously.

Review of School Committee Goals – Public Relations Goal #1: The school committee is continuing to review the goals that were established earlier in the year to ensure progress. During this meeting, the committee discussed public relations goal #1. This goal states:

The Amesbury School Committee will continue to strengthen its relationship with the Amesbury City Council. Through cooperative dialogue, both parties can be better informed and prepared to find solutions to our funding challenges.

a. Ongoing. Continue to participate in the Joint Education Subcommittee with representatives from the Amesbury City Council. This group will meet at least quarterly to discuss local educational issues raised and to pave the way for successful annual and long term budget development.

It was discussed that the committee is meeting this goal, as there are regularly scheduled meeting of the Joint Education Committee (City Council and School Committee representation). The next meeting will be held on November 30, 2016.

Presentation by Cashman School: The Cashman School Council attended the school committee meeting to highlight the various activities coordinated throughout the year by the student council. Their presentation was impressive, as each student took a turn at the podium to highlight one of the activities. While visiting the schools on Tuesday, I had an opportunity to see first-hand, one of the student council’s events – the annual food drive. I **am proud of our student council and of all the students for their commitment to helping those**

in need.



Presentation by Ms. Jacques, Director of Teaching and Learning

Ms. Lyn Jacques, Director of Teaching and Learning, along with a team of staff from the Amesbury Public Schools, were present to describe the multi-year curriculum effort. Ms. Jacques described briefly the context of why there is a need for a curriculum review, which included MCAS data, along with information about changes in curriculum frameworks and standards. Ms. Jacques explained the lens through which the curriculum work was being driven. This process is called Understanding by Design. The district has contracted with a consultant from the developer of this curriculum review approach. In addition, Ms. Jacques, along with Ms. Eryn Maguire (principal of the Amesbury Innovation High School) defined social emotional learning and its importance to meeting the needs of all students. At the conclusion of the presentation, it was shared how innovative the work is in Amesbury – the team was invited to present at the National Association for Curriculum Development (ASCD) Conference, as well as the annual DESE Title I Conference. There is a lot of interest from people outside of Amesbury about how we are infusing social emotional learning directly into curriculum development across all content areas. For more information about UbD or Social Emotional Learning, check out the following websites:

UbD: <http://jaymctighe.com/>
Social Emotional Learning: www.casel.org

School Visits:

This week, I took the opportunity to spend some time at Cashman Elementary for some of their special events. First, I attended the kindergarten’s Friendship Feast. At this event, students enjoyed some special snacks and then performed both songs and dance in celebration of the upcoming thanksgiving holiday. As I walked around the room, I was impressed with the manners of our students! Way to go kindergarten!



Also at Cashman, I was transported back a couple of centuries with our fourth grade students, as we learned about what it was like to be an immigrant entering into Ellis Island. The students experienced all aspects of the journey and challenges that immigrants faced as they came into America.

In the picture to the right, fourth grade students are checked in at Ellis Island.

I also peeked my head into the gym to observe Mr. Ted Flaherty working with students on a team-building activity. Projected on the overhead was the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) wheel that identifies the five competencies of SEL. Mr. Flaherty had identified how the activity that the students were participating in addressed the various SEL competencies. It was exciting to see first-hand how teachers are incorporating these competencies into their instruction. Mr. Flaherty explained to me that at the conclusion of the lesson he would discuss with the students what they learned and how their learning addressed SEL. Way to go Mr. Flaherty!

This morning, I joined the high school students and staff for the thanksgiving rally. During this event, grade-levels compete in various challenges and also have to present a skit in order to determine the winning class for school spirit. It is always a fun event, where students and staff alike show their enthusiasm for our school.





An Evening with the Superintendent

Strategic Plan Work Session

It is my pleasure as the Superintendent of Schools to welcome parents, teachers and community members to a city-wide meeting in order to receive input regarding the development of the district's strategic plan. It is my goal to utilize structured activities/protocols to review the draft strategic plan to ensure:

- that the document is clear and easy to understand/follow
- we have identified the appropriate key objectives and action steps for the next five years
- we have a sufficient balance of short- and long-term action steps that will help us achieve our objectives
- that all constituents have had an opportunity to analyze the document and provide feedback

I look forward to working with you to improve learning opportunities that will enable our students to be successful in the Amesbury Public Schools and beyond!

Gary Reese, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Date: Wednesday, December 7, 2016
Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Location: Amesbury High School
RSVP: Heather McGhee,
978-388-0507
mcgheeh@amesburyma.gov





Be well and have a great LONG weekend! Enjoy the thanksgiving break with your families! It is hard to believe that next week will mark the beginning of December! Where has this year gone?

Gary