

Attleboro Public Schools
Attleboro, Massachusetts
School Committee Meeting
Monday, September 12, 2011 @ 7:04 p.m.
School Committee Conference Room – Attleboro High School

Present: Raymond DiCiaccio (At Large), Chairman; Melissa Cook (Ward I), Vice-Chairperson; James Stors (Ward II), Secretary; Bob Hill (Ward III), Brenda Furtado (Ward IV); Frances Zito (Ward V); Michael Levinson (Ward VI), and Helen Johnson (At Large)

Absent: Teri Enegren (At Large),

Also Present: Pia Durkin, Ph.D., Superintendent, Nancy Sprague, Director for Teaching & Learning Excellence, Marc Furtado, Business Manager, and Judy Nelson, Recording Secretary.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Salute to the Flag: Mr. DiCiaccio led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Notice of Electronic Recording: Chairman DiCiaccio noted the meeting was being electronically recorded.

Moment of Silence:

A moment of silence was held for Mary Ann Cuce an Elementary School Teacher who worked in Attleboro Public Schools for 15 years: Dr. Durkin spoke very highly of Ms. Cuce noting she would be sorely missed. She noted how difficult the opening of school was this year for the Thacher Elementary School. Her condolences went to the family, friends, and staff.

Mr. DiCiaccio noted this was a weekend of reflection. Mr. DiCiaccio commended the Attleboro students/staff members for their work on Project 9/11. He stated Ms. Richard and about 75 students worked very hard on this community project. He commended Ms. Richard for all her hard work over the years. Mr. DiCiaccio recognized the volunteers and all involved in this day of giving back to the community. Mr. DiCiaccio asked for a moment of silence to reflect on the 10-year anniversary of the 9/11 tragedies.

Introduction: Mr. DiCiaccio welcomed Student Representative, Taylor Beland to her first official meeting.

Mr. DiCiaccio explained the Attleboro Youth Basketball program. He noted the registration would take place again tomorrow night in the high school lobby. He encouraged those who did not sign up last night to take advantage of this program.

Consent Agenda:

Request from Willett Elementary School to declare the attached list of books as surplus available for disposition as the books are antiquated/not applicable: Mr. DiCiaccio noted the list was not provided. He inquired as to the nature of the request. Principal Zinni stated the books were outdated.

Motion was made to declare the books as surplus (a list attached hereto and therefore made a part hereof) for disposition:

Discussion: None: Vote: 8-0

Mr. DiCiaccio stated there were some special guests here this evening from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. He moved this item forward on the Agenda to allow people who traveled a great distance to present.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Attleboro Public Schools: Review of District Systems and Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of Low-Income Students (attached hereto and therefore made a part hereof): Lynda Foisy, Senior Associate Commissioner who works very hard with many schools across the state in terms of their practices and in particular practices that are reputable for what good things are happening for kids, teachers, and how they can be spread throughout the state so that all can know about them. Eva Mitchell, Director, Center for District & School Accountability who has worked diligently on managing the team of individuals who were here in May for a short period of time, but incredibly in depth in working with the Brennan Middle School. Ms. Saltzman and Mr. Connor are here representing Brennan. This review was to look at our district systems and practices that address the needs of our low income students because of the success Brennan has had with closing that achievement gap between low income and non-low income students. She noted they spent a great deal of time and Ms. Foisy and Ms. will address that this evening. Dr. Durkin also acknowledged Dr. Joan Connolly from Teachers21.

Dr. Connolly has been working with Attleboro on the Teachers21 grant which involves the seven levers Dr. Durkin discussed at the previous meeting. Dr. Connolly is a coherence coach and critical eye to ensure our work with the seven levers aligns with the district's mission and vision. Dr. Durkin thanked everyone for taking time to attend this evening's meeting. Ms. Foisy represents Commissioner Chester this evening.

Ms. Foisy stated that tonight they were here on behalf of Commissioner Chester who wants to thank you for welcoming us to your district. She noted they were here tonight to share information specifically in the form of the Attleboro Public Schools District Review Report (attached hereto and therefore made a part hereof). Ms. Foisy stated their message tonight is pretty straight forward. This report highlights many successful programs in your schools and in your district. Part of the reason tonight was to encourage Attleboro to stay the course in the areas where you are showing improvement, think carefully about the ways in which you might spread these practices throughout your district and across the schools. Ms. Foisy stated they wished to share information collected by the review team that points out areas where challenges remain. Places where improved practices can provide more support and have a more significant, positive impact on the qualities of improved education. She noted there is always room for improvement. The department conducts anywhere from 30 to 40 accountability reviews in Massachusetts school districts every year looking at the ways our districts develop, implement, and evaluate the basic support systems that must be in place if students and teachers in classrooms in every school and at every level are to be supported and held accountable for improving performance. Based on state law the Department selects some districts where achievement is relatively low, some districts where achievement is relatively high, and some are selected randomly. What brought the department to Attleboro last May was the relatively high achievement noted at the Brennan Middle School. The Department was very interested in understanding two things: what the school level practices and strategies that have allowed this school to significantly narrow the achievement gap for students who are considered to be low income and secondly the Department was interested in understanding what the district systems of support were that contributed to this school's relative success. The Department has a protocol that is based on six district standards. The Department invites a team to a district to take a look at those areas to help the Department understand what systems the Central Office has put in place in each of those six areas.

The standards particularly in the area of leadership and governance help the Department assess how effectively district leaders provide guidance, make policy decisions, develop and manage school resources, and maintain a strong focus on student achievement. The Department has learned through experience that where district and school leaders carefully review the findings and recommendations set out in their report and use that information to reflect on their programs, practices, and strategies, and refine the improvement planning as a result of this analysis, these are the district where the Department's accountability work adds value to and supports a proactive forward-thinking culture. Ms. Foisy stated that they hoped that Superintendent Durkin working in collaboration with the Committee and other leaders in this district find the information in this report helpful and that the Committee will use it to inform the Committee's decisions and planning for continued improvement.

Ms. Foisy stated that Ava Mitchell is the Director of Departments Office of District Accountability. Ms. Mitchell will review the specific findings and recommendations.

Ms. Mitchell began by giving an overview of how the Department conducts the review process. Ms. Mitchell noted that everyone present participated on some level with the review process. She noted all were reviewed by the review team. Ms. Mitchell thanked the committee for their time to help the review understand what the practices were in the Attleboro district. Ms. Mitchell explained what took place before, during, and after the visit that was conducted between May 3rd and May 6th. She stated this was the standard process followed for all reviews. A six (6) member team of independent consultants was sent with experience in each one of the standards that were being investigated. Collectively the team had over 150 years of collective experience in public education. The team spent two (2) days before coming to the district reviewing documents requested from the district and some data analysis that were conducted internally. This consisted of approximately 44 documents in data analysis. This was the basis by which the team formulated questions they had for the review. Some of the documents entailed curriculum documents, a professional development program, student support programs, a list of assessments, approximately six months of video tapes of school committee meetings, and written minutes. This information helped the team formulate some of the questions they asked the committee. While onsite, the team spent approximately 35 hours interviewing 40 stakeholders including school committee members (eight out of the nine), the city auditor, Attleboro Education Association leadership, the six (6) district leaders that work in the central office, school leaders, principals, teachers, and review personnel evaluations, all of the administration evaluation, and a representative of teacher evaluations. The team visited six of the nine district schools, conducted 43 classroom observations which was approximately 860 minutes of instructional time in which they saw 800 incidences of student learning. After the site visit, the team reviewed all the collected information. There was a two day process to glean out the written findings and their initial recommendations that we represented to the Department for review.

When the Department reviews this information, they do their own fact checking. Once the Draft Report is ready, it is sent to the Superintendent for factual corrections. There are strict guidelines that dictate that factual review. Once this is done, the Department publishes the Report.

Ms. Mitchell stated going back to the big picture, the Department was here to review why Brennan Middle School was one of the only 28 Title I schools in the state in only 18 districts that narrowed the achievement gap in a significant way for students in poverty. As Ms. Foisy mentioned, we wanted to know what was going on at the Brennan Middle School and at the district level to support that work. The Department has learned that schools are most successful when supported by district practices.

The first key question of the review was to what extent are these certain conditions for school effectiveness in place at Brennan. The Department looked at school leadership, curriculum, instruction, learning time, and tiered instruction, and social and emotional support. The team found that the Brennan principal and leadership team have built a well-developed model of distributed leadership and collaborative school culture. Brennan has implemented a consistent core academic program based on the state frameworks. Brennan leaders, coaches, and teachers are continuously improving the taught curriculum through a collaborative data driven improvement process. The teaching at Brennan can largely be characterized by engaging well placed tiered lessons. Meaning that students are taught to the levels that will get them to the next point in their learning, and it was noted this was not an easy thing to do. The coaches at Brennan played a significant role by collaborating with teachers in developing and adapting the curriculum, modeling instruction to meet the needs of different students, and providing teachers with imbedded professional development to support their practice. The Department found a very flexible tiered instructional model that provides adequate time for targeted instruction interventions. She explained what this means is that Brennan developed a weekly schedule that allowed students to receive leveled instruction so that if a student had certain needs, these were met in a way that the classes were organized to teach the student to their level so that they could gain access to the core curriculum and also specific instructions at the levels that they needed. Brennan has a "whole child" approach that supports each student in addressing their impediments. Ms. Mitchell noted that these are unusually startling findings to have this level of coherence across systems in a school. The Department was pleased and felt they had found what they were looking for when they saw the data.

The Department also looked at how the district supported that school. When the Department looks at how a district supports a school, it is looked at in a very broad way because the Department sees the district as a school system not as a system of individual schools. This was done by looking at the lens of the six (6) district standards. Ms. Mitchell noted this was how the Report was organized.

The first standard is leadership and governance. It was found that the Superintendent has provided highly effective leadership and established systems to enhance teaching, learning, and student achievement. There was a level of coherence and coordination between division, the structure set up within the district to support that, the roles of staff, the programs, and the expectations that were understood at all different levels. It was found that the pieces were in place to support this and to hold staff accountable. She noted a real accountability that people held themselves accountable. She noted this would be explained by reviewing the other systems in place. It was also found under the leadership governance and standards that school committee meetings did not consistently address urgent district matters or school committee priorities identified on the agenda. It was found that some school committee decisions have been made without clear educational rationale and are perceived as having a negative impact on the educational progress in the district. It was found that the behavior of some members have been perceived as intimidating and a distraction educational improvement. This is a tough finding. This came from a significant amount of research, interviews, and review of minutes, and data. The Department carefully thought about how they could craft some recommendations. The review team did this and this will be discussed through recommendations.

Under the area of curriculum, the found that the district taught curriculum is consistently delivered and continuously improved through constructive collaboration among district leaders and school-based coaches. Currently the document of curriculum is incomplete as it does limit standardization and formal systematic curriculum review and revision, but at the same time it is a district goal that preceded the review to develop a standards-based curriculum documents in all areas. The work was found to be ongoing when the team entered the district for the review.

Under the area of assessment, the Department found an assessment program that supported the district schools in a very strong way in collecting data, disseminating data to the relevant staff, and analyzing it to inform instruction, to make sure students were on track with their learning, and to make decisions at the school in the classroom level target specific learning needs of students. It was found that the commitment to analyze multiple sources of data such as looking attendance data and graduation data, as well as a formative data such as data that shows how students are gaining mastery of the material during the course of the year and diagnosing their needs as well as looking at the results and reflecting on how they could do better with something that was a real strength in the district. This happened in the whole group way and also looking at the needs of a particular group of students. Breaking this down in very creative ways looking at student subgroups in terms of who speak English and those that do not, students with different levels of proficiency, and different levels of need, and also looking how to challenge the more advanced students and get them to the next level. That was a particular strength in the district. .

In the area of human resources and professional development, the Department found that the learning walks and the teacher evaluation instrument that was adopted two (2) years ago provided teachers with constructive feedback. The evaluations that

were reviewed for administrators were similarly constructed and comprehensive. Administrators were held to SMART Goals and there was a real analysis of their performance and there was a buy-in from the staff to make improvements. There was a widespread understanding that those accountability practices for all staff had led to greater responsiveness and buy-in for administrators and teachers in their personal goals. The Department found a professional development program that was quite coherent meaning that it was based on a vision and that there was structure professional development that allowed teachers and instructional learning assistants to support the goals of the district and the learning of the students.

In the area of student support, it was found that support services were aligned horizontally (across grades) and vertically (through the grades) so that there was a safety net whether students were in one school and or another of as they moved up the grades. The support services were largely credited for the increase in the graduation rate and the decrease in the dropout rate for all students, particularly those from a low income family.

The Department found some budget development practices that were unique. There was a practice of matching resources to student needs on a school-by-school basis. Ms. Mitchell emphasized that the findings that the Department saw at the district level were unusually exemplary that this level of coherence across different systems in the district is something that the Department does not typically encounter during review and the Department really wanted to come tonight to celebrate these findings and find out what the Department could learn from this.

Ms. Mitchell moved to the three recommendations: The first recommendation that the district should continue to build upon the foundation it has laid in the area of curriculum and instruction. As it documents the curriculum and as it evolves, maintain the coaching model as it is currently implemented in the district, a standards based Pre-K through Grade 12 curriculum for all subject areas, to continue to support tiered instruction, and ensure adequate learning time and also increase the social and emotional support because those programs have been effective by implementing a district wide model of service provision to students similar to the one that was found at Brennan. Continue to collect, disseminate, and analyze data for students to improve programs, to continue to provide teachers and instructional learning assistants with this high quality professional development that was found in the schools, and to continue to allocate resources to schools based on enrollment projection and subgroup needs. Ms. Mitchell stated it is unusual for the Department to have continue recommendations in the report, but we have learned that when there are exemplary practices in a district the Department needs to emphasize what should be kept, not just what should be changed.

The second recommendation concerns the personnel evaluation model. Ms. Mitchell noted that Attleboro was selected to be one of the early Adopters by the Commonwealth of the new Educator Evaluation System. As the district moves towards this, there should be attempts to ensure that the exemplary practices in the area of evaluation that have already been established are preserved as the move is made to the new system.

The third recommendation (the brief version – a more detailed version is in the report) states that Attleboro needs a School Committee whose members hold each other accountable for focusing on the priorities identified for the district, making decisions, and setting policy with a clear educational rationale, and working with each other, the staff, and the public cooperatively and respectfully. In other words, it needs a School Committee whose members understand their roles and responsibilities and those of the Superintendent.

Ms. Mitchell stated the presentation tonight was a “snapshot” of the Report.

Ms. Foisy highlighted a few high level points to be made relative to the Report and the review. Ms. Foisy recognized Chairman DiCiaccio in particular and the School Committee for taking the initiative last January to seek assistance in building better more productive school committee relations both between school committee members themselves and in working with the Superintendent. That was a very critical step and speaks well of the Committee’s commitment to improve the governance process. She noted serving as School Committee Chairperson is never easy and the fact that you chose to shine a light on this need and found some help to improve the committee’s work is very laudable. Secondly, after the review was conducted, the Department understands that six (6) unions in the district worked hard to negotiate concessions that led to an approximate million dollar savings in the budget, balancing that budget through a culture of collaboration and a focus on improving conditions for teaching and learning, that is the first time in Ms. Foisy’s 14-years at the Department that she had heard of something like that. Thirdly it is obvious that the review acknowledges the hard work of staff in Attleboro’s schools and across the district in establishing solid practices in improving the educational conditions for all students. Ms. Foisy commended the School Committee, the Superintendent, and staff. The last point made by Ms. Foisy stressed how critically important it is for the school committee to continue the work that has already begun to develop positive and productive working relationships. This point cannot be stressed enough that together as a group of people sitting on a governing board who want to support improvement in all schools because you care about what happens here in the district. In working collaboratively with the Chief Educational Officer and others in key leadership roles and as in engaging in meaningful conversations with the public whom the committee is elected to represent and Ms. Foisy noted the Committee’s leadership is felt across the district. She noted as the school

committee, they have both the authority and responsibility to work with the Superintendent to set policy, to hire and evaluate the Superintendent, and to establish and oversee the district's budget. Ms. Foisy stated these were the broad governance responsibilities that lay the foundation for the work to be carried out by the staff here in the district. As a governing body, the committee can either support a rapid sense of improvement by staying squarely focused on the important educational challenges the district faces or the committee can hinder progress by being a distraction to the work. Ms. Foisy stated the committee's job was not an easy one. There are not simple answers to be found and hard decisions have to be made and collaboration is a critical key to sound decision making. Keep the focus on the things that have made a difference at the Brennan and in the district, keep thinking very reflectively about the role that the committee serves here and the way in which you conduct your business, and just keep moving forward because the Attleboro Public Schools are on the right tract.

Mr. DiCiaccio thanked the department for their work. He stated the need to celebrate the accomplishments of Ms. Saltzman and the administration. Mr. DiCiaccio stated there are great things happening in Attleboro. He stated how difficult this job was and noted what was being said tonight was an encouraging way for the committee to become better. Mr. DiCiaccio stated we encourage our kids every day to try to be better. We are encouraging our Superintendent and administrators to try to be better. He noted as a Committee we too should try to be better and more focused. He noted this is happening. Mr. DiCiaccio views the Report as a challenge for the Committee to be a better Committee and remain focused on why they were here. He again thanked the department for their work.

Mr. Stors stated when it comes to the Evaluation Tool which was one of the documents reviewed, how close Attleboro in meeting the requirements of what is expected to be the requirements.

Ms. Foisy noted she is not actively involved in the process, but from what she is aware of the new requirements that are stated in the new law, Attleboro is probably one of the very few (no more than 3 or 4) districts in the state who began thinking about what that work should look like. How to use evaluation as a supportive process which part of it can be, how to use it for the purpose for which it is designed, which is to hold every educator accountable, and noted she believed Attleboro was close. Ms. Foisy noted in the role as one of the Early Adopters, Attleboro will have the opportunity to reflect on what the current system is and how it needs to be tweaked, but in her humble opinion given what she knows about it, Attleboro is closer to tweaking than to completely re-inventing a process.

Ms. Mitchell stated specifically there are two components where Attleboro is further along. One has to do with the a widespread understanding of student assessment data, what it looks like, and how that is attributable to practices in the classrooms and the other place is using the evaluation system as a part of a cycle of continuous improvement, as opposed to a lot of districts where we are still at the point where there is an evaluation and it is put away in a drawer and it is not done as thoughtfully.

Mr. Levinson thanked the Department for coming to the District and for the recommendations. He stated he was hopeful that recommendations of the committee's conduct are taken by all nine (9) members so that the committee would be able to see some kind of improvement so these recommendations will not have to be repeated in the future. Mr. Levinson referenced page 21 of the Report. Mr. Levinson was very impressed under the first key finding that broke down the social and emotional support that was evident at Brennan. He noted it was not just the academic piece, but that the social and emotional supports were in place where some students might go astray. He asked if this was common to the extent that was seen at Brennan compared to other districts. He asked if Attleboro was "raising the bar".

Ms. Mitchell noted from her vantage point looking at districts across Massachusetts through the review process, she would say yes. Ms. Mitchell stated they have seen schools who have worked toward a whole child model, some schools have adopted programs that help children, but it is unusual to have a coherent approach that merges programs, the whole child approach in the classroom, and data analysis to make sure that student needs are met.

Ms. Cook thanked the Department for coming this evening. She noted two comments. Ms. Cook stated she did not think of this when reading the Report, but when the Department presented the Brennan Middle School findings, she felt from what she knows from what the Superintendent tells the Committee at all the meetings, that these findings would be representative of all three of our middle schools. Ms. Cook noted from a data perspective her mind was saying might lead to additional questions. She stated an answer was not necessary, she was stated a thought.

Ms. Mitchell stated this was a fair statement because it was found under the student support section of the district portion of the review, that there was a cohesive approach to student support across the district.

Ms. noted then why would the data be different when the structures are the same.

Ms. Mitchell stated that was the reason we were all here, to figure these answers out.

Ms. Cook noted secondly she personally liked seeing the whole coaching model highlighted, but noted she struggled with the budget landscape. She stated when we are faced with budget constraints and limited budgets, what is a district to do. Ms. Cook stated it is great to hear continue doing these things, but when the funding is not there, what does a district do.

Ms. Foisy reiterated that this is why it was stated that this is a hard job. She stated that by paying very close attention to what the data is telling you, school-to-school, grade-to-grade, and try to understand the impact of coaching, and its connection to student performance. It is sometimes fairly obvious and other times a little harder to fair out. Ms. Foisy stated they appear before school committees all the time who state they had some very hard decisions to make and coaching had to be eliminated. She stated these are decisions only you as a school committee can make, but the degree to which you make it on an informed basis because you have asked the right questions, your Superintendent has provided the right data and helped you think through as to whether there is a strong connection between the coaching and a rising profile in student performance could help you make a decision.

Ms. Cook stated that on the "flipside" what she was hoping is that people in the position at the Department will inform the people who distribute the money, that we need this funding in order to keep our schools where they are and continue to improve them.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the Attleboro district has a good foundation because of the way that the budget is developed. Instead of looking at what is being spent and what might be cut, the way that the budget has been developed from what the team found at the business office level, there is a real analysis of how and what instructional spending looks like and analyzing the needs by student as opposed to by building. This is an approach the Department is encouraging districts to take so that you can really make thoughtful decisions about what is working and what needs to be continued. Ms. Mitchell reiterated that it was a good foundation to begin with.

Ms. Johnson stated this Report should be celebrated, but so should our leadership team and our staff. She noted as for the negotiations, Ms. Johnson commended the Business Manager, Marc Furtado who worked tirelessly to get our unions to agree with the contracts. Ms. Johnson again thanked Mr. Furtado and she also thanked the principals and teachers noting how wonderful they were.

Mr. DiCiaccio stated he thanked all the unions for their efforts. He stated all the unions worked collaboratively to make this happen. He thanked Mr. Furtado for spearheading this process.

Mrs. Zito stated Attleboro was very lucky to have dedicated teachers and staff in our schools. She noted everyone works together on all levels the clerks, custodians, teachers, etc. Attleboro is very fortunate. Mrs. Zito stated this makes the committee's job a lot easier.

Ms. Foisy stated there was evidence in the Report that Attleboro has their act together.

Mr. DiCiaccio again thanked the Department for coming and presenting.

Dr. Durkin noted the staff has appreciated reading the Report and being validated. She stated the principals and teachers who were watching at home have been reading it and talking about the findings. Dr. Durkin stated it was a great affirmation. She again thanked the Department. Dr. Durkin stated she has been through many reviews. Sometimes they come in and it feels like an examination, this was much more in depth and the Department spent real key time listening to us. Dr. Durkin thanked the team for spending the time to learn about Attleboro before coming to conclusions and really making sure that the Department knew who we were and what we represented. She thanked the team and Department for endorsing all that we do here in Attleboro.

Ms. Foisy asked for another moment of the Committee's time. She asked the committee to weigh in on the idea of a presentation being prepared. The Department would come out to a School Committee before the review process is performed. This would explain the process, talk about the timeline, help people understand what would come next. Ms. Foisy asked if this would be helpful to the Committee.

Mr. DiCiaccio stated he believed this would be helpful.

Ms. Cook noted her interviewer explained the process to her.

Mr. Levinson agreed, his interviewer explained the steps, but noted it was when you were on site for the interview. He stated it would have been nice to have an overview

Minutes:

Mr. DiCiaccio noted there were Minutes from May 11th and May 23rd that needed to be approved.

Mr. Stors noted he had not received any feedback on the May 11th Minutes and asked to address this first.

Motion was made to approve the Minutes from the May 11th Meeting. Discussion: Ms. Johnson abstained as she was not present for that meeting. Vote: 7-0-1 (Johnson)

Mr. Stors noted the Draft Minutes from May 23rd were next. He asked members to turn to page 6. Ms. Cook provided feedback and requested that the sentence be added that she had distributed the input documents regarding the evaluation and on the final page, page 7, under timelines for the evaluations, it was actually Ms. Cook who presented the guidelines and expectations, the second from the last sentence in that paragraph should read, Ms. Cook presented the guidelines and expectations.

Ms. Cook noted one more comment. At the beginning on page one, it has Ms. Enegren listed as present and absent, she was absent.

Motion was made to approve the May 23rd Minutes with the above-referenced corrections: Vote: 8-0

Unfinished Business:

MSBA – Marc Furtado, Business Manager (Administration Report): Mr. Furtado noted the work at the high school has been completed. The punch list has been completed. It is considered a completed project both legally and formally. The work is still being done at the building especially at Studley. Mr. Furtado stated with the storm that was encountered, we lost approximately four days of work. That being the bad news; and the good news is that we had a significant test of the roof's integrity. There is minor work to be done, but that should be done this week. He noted as he had reported before we have some aluminum ladders and sky lights that will be installed over the course of the next three to four weeks as they are delivered. None of this work will be interrupting the school day. The work will be done off-hours.

Coelho Roof – Marc Furtado, Business Manager (Administration Report): The work was done at the termination point, as he noted before where the installation was not as it should have been. He noted that during the storm there were no new leaks. He noted to do the entire roof would be a significant amount of money. A quote will be acquired, but again noted it would be a significant amount of money. He will keep the committee apprised.

X2 Implementation – Marc Furtado, Business Manager (Administration Report): Mr. Furtado noted the implementation has had a few areas that need to be clarified. On sight training will be available over the next few weeks for one-on-one assistance in the buildings. The questions will be addressed. He stated the need to get the clerical staff to feel comfortable with the program.

Mr. DiCiaccio commented that the most effective way to train is one-one-on questioning. He questioned when the ed-line information would be available to parents.

Mr. Furtado noted Rediker has not been eliminated. This information can be accessed through that program. If there is a problem at the school they can go in.

Mr. DiCiaccio asked his would work in terms of a teacher having a comparison point of how a student did last year. Ed line provided this information to teachers. He asked if hard copies were kept of this information. He asked if teachers needed this information how they would be able to access last year's information.

Ms. Sprague stated there were a small group of teachers that were trained. These teachers will be working with teachers this week and next to do the training around grading in the X2 system. Those folks will most likely be able to answer the question. Ms. Sprague will investigate that. She noted the teacher that spoke with Mr. DiCiaccio most likely had not received that training at this point.

Mr. Levinson noted the few issues that have been seen with X2 and if it has been mostly the people using the system need training or are there actually glitches with the functionality of the software.

Mr. Furtado stated both. He explained once you get into a system that tells you that it can do "x, y, and z" and you want it to do x-prime and you want it do x-prime. He noted there have been some blind spots in the system, not a lot, but some unique aspects to X2 that we would not anticipate, but on the whole spectrum of things, this is probably 20% of the problems, the other 80% is just getting the program to do what we want in the way that we want. Some of that is the training not being carried forward. He stated some of it involves simple formatting of items. This is what led us to bring support who will sit with the clerks individually

while they are working to help with the questions. Mr. Furtado noted going forward a committee has been formed to act as a clearing house to problems. This will allow for communication across the district.

Dr. Durkin noted this includes teachers, clerks, as well as principals to really hear from the ground up.

Mr. DiCiaccio stated in his experience this is a normal process and will take a little time.

High School Parking Lot – Marc Furtado, Business Manager (Administration Report): Mr. Furtado explained this topic will be discussed during the next Finance Committee Meeting. Unfortunately, the storm slowed down the process. He will continue to keep the committee updated.

Pipe Repair Contract for Attleboro High School – Marc Furtado, Business Manager (Administration Report): Mr. Furtado explained that there was a main failure. It is located in a very difficult area. It is in a tunnel which does not have a lot of space for the work to be done in. There were two bidders: a plumbing company out of Seekonk and Process Engineering out of Cranston. He noted Process did the holding tanks last year. They did a great job and were the low bidder by \$15,000. He noted when Process came in and re-examined the work, they too were nervous because again this is a very difficult job.

Mr. Stors asked where the funds would be coming from.

Mr. Furtado stated the funds would come from Use of Buildings. It is an unanticipated capital expense.

Mr. Stors questioned the need for the Mayor's signature on the contract.

Mr. Furtado stated that is a standard practice that precedes him. He did not change this. He stated that all the signatures have been historically on projects like this one.

Mr. Stors asked if the Mayor was aware of this.

Mr. Furtado confirmed he was.

Mr. DiCiaccio noted it sounded good that we are working with someone who we have had good history with and that they were the low bidder.

Motion was made to approve the pipe repair between Attleboro Public Schools and Process Engineers and Constructions, Inc. for structures incorporated in the documents dated August 19, 2011: Discussion: Mr. Stors noted that the committee was giving permission for Mr. DiCiaccio to sign as the Chairman: Vote: 8-0

New Business

School Opening Report – Pia Durkin, Ph.D., Superintendent (Administration Report): Dr. Durkin noted there was a strong start to the school year. She commented on the three days lost to the district due to the power outage. Dr. Durkin commended the departments for their work to ensure everything was up and running for the opening. Dr. Durkin informed the committee that as in the past she visited all the schools. She briefed the committee on the success of the opening and the focus moving forward. The opening was a huge success. Dr. Durkin noted a few key notes such as the kindergarten ELL class which the committee approved opened at Hyman Fine with 23 kids with 11 languages being spoken. In Grades one through four Ms. White informs us that there are four other languages, in that school alone, we have 15 languages operating. It is amazing. Dr. Durkin noted a huge difference because the ELL classroom is all day. She observed in the morning the students were quiet and reserved, she noted by afternoon it was United Nations and the teacher was a marvel. Families were very happy that their children are in a situation where they can learn English.

Special Education: Dr. Durkin noted there was a Special Education query that she wanted to address. She wanted to clarify it publicly for families with children with disabilities. There was some miscommunication that we have only one speech pathologist in the district. She noted that is incorrect. Dr. Durkin explained we generally have one, 2½, and three and four in larger schools. She explained we have 13 speech and language pathologists and two assistants throughout the district. We have six occupational therapists, and one OT assistant. We have three physical therapists. There are 6.5 psychologists and 11.5 adjustment counselors. There are four applied behavioral analyst therapists which the committee knows deals with our children on the autistic spectrum. She noted we have one behavioral specialist who is working to coordinate those efforts which the committee approved last year. Dr. Durkin encouraged parents to contact the principal or the Special Education Director with questions and clarifications regarding the needs of our students. If in doubt contact the Superintendent's Office. There was some

type of miscommunication where we saw a contagion factor where families were worried their child would not receive services. The district is in full compliance. All children are being served according to their needs of IEPs.

Anti-Bullying Discussions: This was discussed in all schools and part of the Convocation message this year. Dr. Durkin noted this year the district will be explaining the power of the bystander and how this voice can make a difference. There will be a real focus to educate the bystanders. This is an important part of eliminating bullying.

High School: Dr. Durkin stated at the beginning of each year Principal Newman visits all the classrooms to address the students. Today she toured some of the classrooms along with Mr. Newman. It is a great way for the students to see the principal up front and ask questions about new rules, cell phone policies, and any other queries. Dr. Durkin gave examples of what Mr. Newman addresses with the students. This is an important connection for the students.

Transportation: Dr. Durkin noted that an update was sent to members, but she wanted the public to be informed. Mr. Furtado and his are working diligently. Dr. Durkin noted that some parents believe that when they pay fee for service this is an automatic process. This is simply untrue. Transportation is working to process these requests. Dr. Durkin noted for the first three weeks we pick up all students until the process is finalized. The total calls to Superintendent's office have not been as great as in the past years. She explained the three (3) phases to transportation and how the process works. Phase One is to make sure that everyone assigned to a bus gets on a bus. Phase Two is how to make sure that routes and ridership are optimized assuring that the bus fleet is being deployed as well as possible. What this means is changes are made where necessary. Phase I takes approximately one to two weeks. The route process takes another two weeks. Once Phase I and II are complete, Phase III allows staff to concentrate on those families who have paid fee for service. Dr. Durkin stated the hope is that Phase III will be complete by mid to late October at the latest.

Dr. Durkin explained that Principal Zinni is the contact between buildings. She forwards any complaints or concerns to Mr. Furtado. This voice eliminates a lot of repetitive processes. Dr. Durkin stated due to the torrential rain on Thursday the district did experience some late buses. Dr. Durkin encouraged parents to call the principal/school with any issues. She asked parents to be patient and allow the process to take its course. She for patience and noted the committee would continue to be updated. Dr. Durkin stated it was felt this year we have been able to clean up a number of issues.

Mr. Furtado stated Phase I should be complete this week. The routes will then be rationalized. He noted this would take approximately three to four days. Mr. Furtado stated transportation should be able to address the fee for service this month rather than October. Transportation has been working weekends. Mr. Furtado stated this work is not easy, but felt it has gone smoother than in the past.

Mr. Stors some constituents have asked about the duration of the bus routes. He told them usually give it a few weeks and let things work their way through. Mr. Stors asked when we reach this point what is the maximal acceptable duration.

Mr. Furtado noted if you look at the school start times, they are separated by 45 to 50 minutes which is less than the time allowed which is 60 minutes. He noted state law allows for up to 60 minutes. We most likely will not have students on the bus for 60 minutes, but noted parents should be aware that by law you are allowed to have up to a 60 minute bus ride.

Mr. Stors noted that parents understand that at this time there might be a delay, but again asked how long this might last.

Mr. Furtado noted again, the first week into today and tomorrow, we pick up every student at a bus stop. This does not mean that those students belong on that bus. This adds to the ride time.

Dr. Durkin stated time needs to be given to work out the glitches. She thanked parents for their patience. Dr. Durkin noted we want our students to get to school in a timely manner so that we can start instruction.

School Sponsored Events: Dr. Durkin welcomed Taylor. Taylor updated the committee on the school sponsored events. Dr. Durkin noted the Hyman Fine Elementary Open House is September 27th not the 17th. She asked parents to please not that date.

Personnel Report: Nancy Sprague, Director for Teaching and Learning Excellence (Administration Report): Ms. Sprague reported one retirement, six (6) resignations; and 29 appointments (see attached School Committee Personnel Report attached hereto and therefore made a part hereof).

Labor Agreements: Approval of tentative labor agreements with the following bargaining units - Marc Furtado, Business Manager (Administration Report): The Attleboro Custodians Association and The Attleboro School Department Building Trades Maintenance Mechanics' Association: Mr. Furtado explained these are the last two labor agreements. He stated as with the previous agreements there are no cost of living increases for the period of these agreements. Mr. Furtado thanked the union

leaders and acknowledged their hard work to provide the solutions necessary to finalize these agreements. Mr. Furtado recommended the agreements be approved.

Motion was made to approve the Chairman to sign the two Memorandum of Agreements between the Attleboro Custodians Association and the Attleboro School Department Building Trades Maintenance Mechanics' Association agreements: Discussion; None: Vote: 8-0

Mr. DiCiaccio thanked Mr. Furtado and all the unions for their work along with the administration.

Open Forum: Mr. DiCiaccio explained the guidelines for Open Forum. There were no participants

Committee Reports

Finance, Facilities and Procurement Sub-Committee

Notification of Bills and Warrants:

5BS006 – 08-17-11 - \$104,757.84

5BS007 – 08-24-11 - \$145,733.28

The next meeting will be held on 09-21-11 @ 6:30 p.m.

Curriculum and Instruction Sub-Committee:

The next meeting will be held on 09-15-11 @ 6:00 p.m. He noted that no information was received in the packets. This meeting is a dry run for the MCAS data presentation for formatting purposes. Mr. Levinson asked that this information be included in the packet that goes out this Friday. Dr. Durkin clarified that it is not the data, but the structure of the presentation as the data has not been released and is still embargoed. The date for release has not been set at this time.

Policy Sub-Committee

The next meeting will be held on 09-19-11 @ 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Stors, Secretary

Attachments:

1. Agenda dated 09-12-11
2. School Sponsored Events – 09-12-11
3. Willett Discard of Books: 09-06-11
4. Draft Minutes dated 05-11-11
5. Draft Minutes dated 05-23-11
6. School Committee Personnel Report 09-12-11
7. Memorandum dated 09-08-11 – Maintenance and Custodial Union MOA's
8. Process Engineering and Constructors, Inc Contract
9. MA DESE Attleboro Public Schools – Review of District Systems & Practices Addressing the Differentiated Needs of Low-Income Students – September 2011
10. Warrant: 5BS006 – Pay Date 08-17-11
11. Warrant: 5BS007 – Pay Date 08-24-11