

WELLFLEET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Present for the School Committee: Jan Plaue, Betsy Pontius, Jill Putnam, Martha Gordon, Mort Inger
Present for the Administration: Tom Conrad, Superintendent, Giovanna Venditti, Director of Finance and Operations and Mary Beth Rodman, Principal

CALL TO ORDER/AGENDA CHANGES – Chair Plaue called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

CITIZENS SPEAKS – none

CHAIR’S REPORT – none

MEMBERS SPEAK – Martha Gordon invited members to attend the substance abuse awareness presentation, “Substance Abuse Addiction as a Disease,” on February 6th from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Preservation Hall. The entire community is invited and it will be a collaborative, problem-solving event.

PRIORITY BUSINESS

A. Beth Foerster, Director of the Wellfleet Montessori preschool requested permission to continue to use classroom space at Wellfleet Elementary School for the 2016-2017 school year. Chair Plaue stated that this space may not be available every year.

Motion: On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously (5 yeas) to provide the space for the Wellfleet Montessori Preschool for the 2016-2017 school year.

Others items discussed included the sand issue and the shade that is needed, per state regulations, on the playground. The sand issue has been resolved. The board is researching the shade issue and will bring this back to the Committee when they have more information.

B. Preschool Report

Joanna Stevens, Director of the Nauset Integrated Preschool, provided an update to the Committee. Presently Wellfleet has a total of 20 students, 9 special needs students and 11 community friends in the Integrated Preschool Program. She also indicated that in the past they have received a lot of referrals from Early Intervention but that is not the case so far this year. This year there are fewer students waiting to be assessed. Most of the referrals come from Early Intervention or a pediatrician. The Preschools held an open house last March which was very successful and they plan to do that again this year. They also advertise on the Nauset website, in handbooks and in the newspaper. She noted that last year there was a Preschool Program added at Eastham Elementary School that is an extended day for students with multiple and significant needs. She is working on making the Preschool Program consistent across the district. The State has asked them to be trained in restraining students and they are working on getting training for staff. She

continues to look for resources to support the Preschool families.

Mort Inger inquired about the tuition payments and if payments are made in a timely manner. Ms. Stevens indicated that the cost for Preschool is \$160 per month and is also available to parents on a sliding scale if they cannot afford that tuition. If a family has not paid their bill in three months, they receive a call from the Central Office with a follow up letter. Ms. Stevens also indicated that the Wellfleet voucher system pays for some of the students. Presently, there is no waiting list and the afternoon program is full. Ms. Stevens indicated it is difficult to get community friends because of the shorter day, 2 ½ hrs., and in some cases, parents are confused about who the programs serves. The Committee brainstormed ways to communicate to parents through newsletters, newspapers, and the Wellfleet Community Space. The Committee urged the Director to pursue other ways of marketing the state of the art, quality program. Ms. Stevens stated that Barnstable waived the fee for community friends because it was so difficult to get the ratio required under the guidelines. She also mentioned that it is difficult for working families to transport their child to and from the program.

Chair Plaue reported that she and Jill Putnam attended a workshop at the MASC conference relative to early childhood education. She mentioned the discrepancy in pay for an early childhood teachers in the private sector and in the public schools. In the future, she would like to see a public elementary school for preschool and would like Wellfleet Elementary School to lead the way on this initiative. Ms. Stevens stated that there are others that echo her sentiments. Mashpee Public Schools offers universal preschool and Nauset could use them as a model. Ms. Stevens is very much in favor of the idea as it would become a more cohesive group and the community friends could start school at an earlier age too. Chair Plaue indicated that she does not wish to put Preschools out of business but is convinced that the earlier children begin schooling, the better and it is something the Committee should work toward. She felt it was conceivable to have this in Wellfleet and perhaps attract a few more families to the community.

Superintendent Conrad indicated that it is a non-issue for the district right now because space is an issue. He also stated that Mashpee took a couple of years to work this out with the private schools in the area. Some private schools might have staff that the public schools would hire.

C. Food Service Report

Sue Murray gave the Committee an overview of the Food Service Program. She indicated that Wellfleet Elementary School has a new Cafeteria Manager, Cassandra Nannini. All the cafeteria staffs have been trained on “Back to Basics” Meat Alternatives” and “Back to Basics: Whole Grains.” Wellfleet celebrated Wampanoag Day and collaborated with the history teachers who were studying the Native Americans. A Nutritional Resource Library was created in the cafeteria for students, staff and families. The cafeteria is continuing with the Harvest of the Month, the monthly newsletter, and connecting to the classroom. Food Day, Apple Crunch Day, Meatless Mondays, taste testings and a harvest meal for Thanksgiving were held. The Middle School and High School have partnered with the Local Scoop to provide two flavors of frozen yogurt that met the Federal/State guidelines. This past summer the cafeteria partnered with the Firebirds

Baseball Team and ran the concession stand raising \$20,000 to purchase equipment for the cafeterias in the region.

Superintendent Conrad applauded Ms. Murray's efforts. He thanked Michele Ayochock, Cafeteria Manager at the High School, Judy Day, Cafeteria Assistant at the Middle School and Sue Murray for all their efforts on behalf of the Nauset Public Schools.

Lunch participation rates are down due to enrollment in Wellfleet.

Administrators' Reports

Principal Rodman's Report:

Principal Rodman distributed handouts to the Committee regarding the PARCC assessments. She indicated that Wellfleet did not meet the target of 75 but missed it by 1.6 points. Technically this would make Wellfleet slide to a Level 2 school but it did not because schools taking PARCC last year were "held harmless" because of the trial aspect of the test. She also indicated that it is hard to score enough points when you are already at the top. This spring Wellfleet has to meet 85. They will participate in PARCC again for Grades 3-5 and will take the MCAS Science/Technology/Engineering tests. The PARCC window is April 25-June 6th. All the technology to take the exam has been uploaded and the test is all computerized. The students don't seem to mind using the computer for testing.

Committee members discussed being penalized for being such a high scoring school. Superintendent Conrad indicated when scores are high, the pressure is tremendous.

Principal Rodman shared the book that was chosen for the One Book, One School project, The Year of Billy Miller, which is a Newbury Honor Book. The kick-off is February 29th. Principal Rodman has received \$250 grant from the Wellfleet Cultural Council to purchase the books. (100 books @ \$4.50) She will need additional money to pay for the books and asked that the Committee give permission to take the money out of appropriations.

Motion:

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously (5-0) to take the rest of the money from variances.

Principal Rodman reminded the Committee that the Cape Community Orchestra concert is scheduled – February 10th from 12:45 – 1:45 p.m. in the gymnasium. All were invited to attend.

Assistant Superintendent's Report:

Mr. Gauley's written report was included in the packet.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Conrad reviewed the Every Student Succeeds Act with the Committee stating that it is still in a holding pattern. The highlights of the Obama bill are: That all students disadvantaged and high-need have a chance, all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers, eliminates No Child Left Behind, and eliminates NYP numbers. The Superintendent indicated that this will make us look at testing in general. Systems will be reviewed in terms of dropout rates and students that fall behind. The bill also provides more students access to quality Preschool programs. The Superintendent indicated that the MASC is trying to decipher how this will impact schools as we do not want to lose funding. (Kindergarten Grants, Title I) The Superintendent will keep the Committee informed.

Superintendent Conrad informed the Committee that he is moving forward with his entry plan and that he has shared it with the Administrative Team. He has narrowed his research down to 6 or 7 themes:

Global Education – looking at bilingual education – visit Millis Elementary School

Homework – real concern – purpose and amount

Elementary Schools – more options beyond the core subjects (electives)

Extra help for struggling students at all levels.

Length of the school day and school year

Communication and School to the Community at Large

The Superintendent reported that an Endowment for Education has been formed in the District by a group of citizens to support academic issues. The Board is looking to expand and has added 4-5 people. The purpose will be to work K-12 with academic funding for programs that can't be carried in the operating budget and will be awarded through mini-grants. Mike Sherman and John Schiffner are establishing this and also developing an Alumni Association/donor list. Presently they have received \$100,000.

He also reported that he is looking for ways to open the facilities (gyms to start) at the schools on weekends for parents and their students. He is working with the Recreation Departments on this. Orleans will have an open gym on Sundays from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Parents cannot drop off their children but can come together and play basketball or hula hoop etc. All Recreation Departments were very supportive of the concept. Martha Gordon suggested expanding this to use of the libraries as well. Superintendent Conrad said eventually that could happen with community service personnel helping out.

FY16 Budget Review

Ms. Venditti reviewed the FY16 expenditure report with a balance of \$111,959.14. Variances were reviewed and it was noted that money was spent on account #4011, Cloud Backup and account 4019 – salaries Ed Assistants. (reclassification) Ms. Venditti indicated the budget is tracking very well.

Policy Updates

Betsy Ponteus reviewed the policies for the Committee.

Motion:

On a motion by Jill Putnam, seconded by Jan Plaue, it was voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Physical Restraint of Students Policy as written, for a first reading.

Motion:

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Jill Putnam, it was voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Fundraising Policy as written for a first reading.

Motion:

On a motion by Mort Inger seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Security Camera Policy as written, for a first reading.

Chair Plaue requested that staff and students be notified of the new policy.

G. Community Night

The Committee discussed how and when to proceed with plans for a community night at WES. The Superintendent would like to model the parent open houses for members of the community who never get a chance to visit the schools. The Superintendent suggested the community be invited to come into school during a regular school day and witness the extraordinary teaching and learning that takes place every day in our schools. After brainstorming, the Committee decided they could highlight one week of community outreach with student participation for art work and tours. It was suggested the event be planned and culminate with the Spaghetti Supper. Principal Rodman suggested a "Learning Walk." Liability issues need to be researched. It was suggested community policing members be involved and a few police officers on site. Chair Plaue requested that all the Boards be invited.

Superintendent Conrad left the meeting at 6:15 p.m. to attend another meeting.

The Committee took a short break at 6:15 p.m. to enjoy refreshments.

REPORTS AND INFORMATION

School Council - no report

Substance Abuse Task Force – no report

Transportation Subcommittee

Martha Gordon reported that the Cape Cod Collaborative Director met with the subcommittee to discuss the possibility of using them to provide all transportation in the District. The present contract will expire in one year and the subcommittee is looking at alternatives. She also indicated that the bidding process is not what

it seems to be in that the bus companies assign towns. Cape Cod Collaborative did not take this on previously because Nauset was switching from 3 tiers to 2 tiers. They will attend the next meeting and are not looking to make a profit. The subcommittee also talked about the possibility of the towns taking over the transportation piece.

PTA Report

Betsy Pontius reported that the PTA has not met and are meeting this evening. On the agenda is the Spaghetti Supper on April 1st. Jill Putnam and her husband volunteered to work at the event. Mort Inger and Martha Gordon also volunteered to work at the event. They are planning the WES Fest. They are also recruiting for membership as it appears the present officers might be moving on.

School Council –no report

Substance Abuse – Martha Gordon shared information about a program that is taking place at Preservation Hall on Feb. 6th. The Substance Abuse Subcommittee continues to meet and thoughtfully look at the problem and providing solutions for our families.

Cape Cod Collaborative Report

Jill Putnam reported that the meeting focused on finance. A very comprehensive financial report was distributed and is available for members to review. The Advanced Studies and the Leadership Program were discussed and the course of studies catalog was voted. Also voted were reductions in staff. It was noted that Jim Brown, Business Manager, is leaving in June. She also reported on the Early Learning Network Strategies Plan implementation and the Early Childhood Conference. She reported that some Cape Administrators are going to China to visit schools. The Star Program enjoyed a Thanksgiving luncheon with 37 families participating. The Alternative High School has 62 students enrolled and could go up to 64.

Approval of Minutes –

On a motion by Jill Putnam, seconded by Mort Inger, it was voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of the November 30th meeting.

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Jill Putnam it was voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of the December 8th meeting with a minor change in wording on page two – horrific to very difficult.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mort Inger, seconded by Martha Gordon, it was voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann M. Tefft

Included in packet: Administrative Reports, Expense Report, Cafeteria Report, and minutes