

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – DECEMBER 6, 2021

A regular School Committee meeting was held at the Administration Building on Monday, December 6, 2021.

Members Present: Sonya Barbosa, James Carvalho, Eric Graham, Thomas Rodrigues, Scott Rowland.

Superintendent of Schools John J. Robidoux, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Elizabeth White and Student Representative Ava Silva were in attendance.

Visitors included: Joseph Case Junior High School Principal Robert Silveira, Assistant Principal Gregory Kelley, students and parents. Debbie Kelley taped the meeting.

Chairman Rowland opened the meeting at 6 p.m.

He announced that, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person in attendance who wanted to record any portion of the meeting is required to notify the Chairman. School Committee meetings are broadcast live and recorded for broadcast on Sunday at 12:30 p.m., Monday at 6 p.m., Tuesday at 2 p.m., Wednesday at 10 a.m., Thursday at 10 p.m., Friday at 10 a.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m. on Swansea Cable Access Channel 15. Meetings can also be accessed over the internet at swanseacabletv.com.

There was no executive session.

Mr. Rodrigues led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Barbosa offered a moment of silence.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Rowland established a Consent Agenda consisting of #4 Personnel Items, #5 Correspondence, #6 Informational Items, and #8 Approval of Minutes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Joseph Case Junior High School Spotlight - Unified Bocce

Principal Robert Silveira said they have had unified basketball for many years. Special Olympics Massachusetts encouraged them to try another sport. They decided on bocce. It started indoors but later moved to the front lawn.

Students Stephen Khoury, Samuel Woodsmall, and Emily Aguiar all said they had a good time playing and are looking forward to basketball.

Mr. Silveira acknowledged volunteer coaches and assistants, Transportation Director Dan Horton and Mr. Lance Machado.

Mrs. Barbosa said she enjoyed watching them play.

Mr. Graham thanked parents for coming to the meeting. He is happy students got the experience. He is looking forward to basketball.

Mr. Rodrigues said it is amazing. He is proud of them. He is also looking forward to basketball.

Mr. Carvalho thanked the volunteers and parents.

Chairman Rowland said this is what makes being a School Committee member gratifying. He thanked them for coming. He felt unified sports is fantastic. He thanked parents for supporting them. That is the best thing they can do for their child. He is also looking forward to basketball.

Ava said it is great that members of the team are here tonight.

Asst. Supt. White said it's a great opportunity. She thanked principals for making this possible and parents for their support.

Supt. Robidoux commented on the T-shirts students were wearing. He is very proud of Mr. Silveira and Mr. Kelley for making this happen and parents also. He suggested all students join basketball.

Joseph Case Junior High School Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Report 2021

Mr. Silveira said all students in grades 6, 7, and 8 have ELA and Math. Grade 8 has Science as well.

Students took half of the test. It is very different than in years past. Grade 6 did a little better than the state average in ELA and Math. Students with an IEP did well and were quite a bit above the state average. Economically disadvantaged students did quite well compared to the state average.

All students in grade 7 ELA were very close the state average. Math testing has become very difficult for students. They are just below state average. There is a drop off in numbers for the state and junior high school for students with disabilities. The state average is very low. Economically disadvantaged students do quite well according to the state average.

Grade 8 students are very close to the state average in ELA and Math and better than the state in Science. It is difficult for students with disabilities to achieve grade level according to the state average. Economically disadvantaged students are doing considerably better and are higher than the state average in Science and ELA.

Mr. Silveira noted it is difficult to teach Science remotely.

He noted the Leadership Team is working on strategies and interventions. They have an IXL online program and also students use their chromebooks all day. That has been useful for teachers.

Mr. Silveira explained the interventions. They use Edulastic online assessments. An after school math program has been in place for years. They added digital math in grades 6, 7, and 8.

In response to Mr. Rodrigues' question, Mr. Silveira explained the participation rate shown is for the junior high school and not the state. A lot of students were at home.

Mr. Rodrigues liked the after school math program.

Mr. Graham commented that grade 8 is much better than the state.

Mrs. Barbosa is sure Mr. Silveira is doing the best he can. She is excited about the new programs for special education. She would like to see legislation passed to provide an alternative test for students who struggle with testing.

Chairman Rowland thought we were on a good track for making MCAS useful. We started to see some progress on the main stream side. He heard about the proposed testing for special education students. Hopefully, this year there will be good data to use as comparison. He felt assessments are a good sign moving forward.

As a sophomore, Ava will take half the MCAS test.

Asst. Supt. White noticed the economically disadvantaged group is impacted the most especially in science and math. She liked the after school math program.

Supt. Robidoux said it is good to focus on interventions. He talked about common language. Students don't always understand the language. He felt it is important to enhance the special education model.

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

Mrs. Barbosa (School Committee delegate) said she learned a lot. She attended a few workshops. They have an app that can be watched until February 2022. She found the policy updates, the new and post pandemic issues and the system approach on literacy to be informative.

Supt. Robidoux said the conference changes every year. It seemed to be more on the side of School Committees.

Asst. Supt. White said she also attended the literacy workshop.

Pediatric COVID Pfizer Vaccine Clinic

Supt. Robidoux announced the Brewster Ambulance Co. will administer the pediatric vaccine on January 9, 2022 at the high school from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. That is the first dose for children ages 5 to 11. The second dose will be on January 30 at the same time.

He read the numbers as of today – 173 positive cases in Swansea. 10.14% positive rate, 6.8% Bristol County and 3.6% Massachusetts. Numbers are going in the wrong direction. We have a lot more cases in schools. He urged people to wear masks to help everybody stay safe.

Chairman Rowland stated that parental permission is required for shots.

Supt. Robidoux advised that 325 parents responded to a survey – 40 said yes and 100+ are already vaccinated.

Mr. Rodrigues reminded people that masks are required at the high school. This is a great opportunity.

Mr. Graham thanked Brewster Ambulance Company. He felt it is a good thing to do.

Supt. Robidoux said it is for walk-ins.

Ava said that it is great to have walk-ins.

Swansea Public Schools Policies; Update/Revisions

Section J

- JFBB - School Choice
- JFC – Student Withdrawal from School
- JH – Student Absences and Excuses
- JHD – Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance
- JICFA – Prohibition of Hazing
- JIFCA-E – MASC Policy not in our Manual
- JICG – Tobacco Use by Students
- JICH – Alcohol/Drug Use by Students
- JII – Student Complaints and Grievances
- JJA – Student Organizations
- JJE – Student Fundraising Activities
- JJF – Student Activity Accounts
- JJIA – Interscholastic Programs
- JJIB – Interscholastic Athletics

JJIF – Athletic Concussion Policy
JJIF-R – Athletic Concussion Regulations
JK – Student Discipline
JLA – Student Insurance Program
JLCB – Inoculations of Students
JLCC – Communicable Diseases
JLCD – Administering Medicines within Swansea Public Schools
JLD – Guidance Program
JLDBF – Staff-Student Relations
JLIB – Student Dismissal Precautions
JP – Student Gifts and Solicitations
JRA-R – Student Records
JRD – Student Photographs

Mrs. Barbosa asked about the position of the policy subcommittee.

Mr. Graham explained, once the policies are in place, the sub-committee will go back and review.

Mr. Carvalho recognized Amanda Silveira for her work on these policies

ACTION ITEMS

School Policy – Section J

Mr. Graham motioned, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adopt School Policies, as amended, inclusive of:
JFBB – School Choice
JH – Student Absences and Excuses
JHD – Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance
JICFA – Prohibition of Hazing
JICH – Alcohol/Drug Use by Students
JII – Student Complaints and Grievances
JJA – Student Organizations
JJE – Student Fundraising Activities
JJIA – Interscholastic Programs
JK – Student Discipline
JLCB – Inoculations of Students
JLCC – Communicable Diseases
JLCD – Administering Medicines within Swansea Public Schools
JRD – Student Photographs

A motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mr. Rodrigues, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept first reading of School Policies, inclusive of:
JIFCA-E – MASC Policy
JJF – Student Activity Accounts
JJIB – Interscholastic Athletics
JJIF – Athletic Concussion Policy
JJIF-R Athletic Concussion Regulations

A motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To remove School Policies, inclusive of:
JICG – Tobacco Use by Students
JJIA – Interscholastic Programs
JLA – Student Insurance Program
JLD – Guidance Program
JLDBF – Staff-Student Relations
JLIB – Student Dismissal Precautions
JP – Student Gifts and Solicitations
JRA-R – Student Records

A motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mr. Rodrigues, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To keep School Policy JFC – Student Withdrawal from School.

NEW BUSINESS: FUTURE DISCUSSIONS BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS,
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Graham said he got a disturbing e-mail from the Superintendent that school nurses are being badgered about following guidelines by the Dept. of Health and DESE. He asked people not to take it out on nurses. It has nothing to do with them.

Chairman Rowland agreed with Mr. Graham. He noted nurses have done an incredible amount of work and none of this is their fault.

Supt. Robidoux said the Holiday in the Village was well attended. It was great to see the community out and about. There was a dedication to John McAuliffe, former Town Administrator. He thanked all those involved.

He advised the theater company would present Epic Proportions on December 9-12 at the high school.

Asst. Supt. White noted winter sports are coming up.

Ava agreed with the comments. She enjoyed her first meeting.

Chairman Rowland said the Committee and Superintendent's office put a great importance on the student representative. He encouraged her to bring any concerns or questions to the meetings.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 13, 2021 at the Administration Building.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Carvalho, seconded by Mr. Rodrigues, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Carvalho – Aye; Mr. Rodrigues – Aye; Mrs. Barbosa – Aye; Mr. Graham – Aye; Chairman Rowland – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Gamer
Secretary

Items Distributed at the December 6, 2021 School Committee Meeting

Joseph Case Junior High School MCAS Report 2021
Notice on Pediatric COVID Vaccine Clinic on January 9 and 30, 2022
J Section School Policies
Karen A. Coffey- letter of resignation as of December 31, 2021
The Gardner Chirp - Volume 5, Issue 4
Hoyle Elementary School – December 2021 Newsletter and flyer on The Polar Express

