

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #38 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Mount Vernon Elementary School
October 4, 2017
Minutes of Meeting

Members Present: Wendy Brotherlin, Jon Caron, Gary Carr, Cathy Jacob, Betty Morrell, Kaleb Pushard, Shawn Roderick, Lucas Rumler, Thomas Sneed, David Twitchell, Adam Woodford, Alexander Wright
Member Excused: Melissa O'Neal
Administrators: Superintendent Donna Wolfrom, Principals Jeff Boston, Dwayne Conway, Janet Delmar, and Rick Hogan, Assistant Principal Kristen Levesque, Special Education Director Ryan Meserve, Technology Director Diane MacGregor, Finance Manager Brigitte Williams, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Nancy Harriman

1. Call to order: Chair Morrell called the meeting to order at 6:32.
Chair Morrell expressed gratitude to the Mt. Vernon teachers for being available tonight to show their classrooms and talk with board members.
Susan Lockhart, Literacy Specialist for Mt. Vernon and Wayne Elementary Schools shared a PBIS assembly video that the Mt. Vernon Elementary School starts one day a month with.
2. Presentations:
 - a. Maranacook Education Foundation
Doug Boyink, Harry Lanphear and Rick Wilson, members of the Maranacook Education Foundation Board of Directors presented on the history and function of the MEF board. This is a board of all volunteers. Every dollar raised goes to fund grants that benefit educational activities in the 4 towns of RSU 38 and Fayette. They also assist in serving as a foundation for other groups that fill educational roles such as the Ricky Gibson Field of Dreams. They also have a fund that was started with a generous donation from a Maranacook alumni that is geared toward student grants. Six grants have been funded through this program over the last 3 years. In total MEF has granted \$25,000 in grants for education.
The MEF is currently seeking grant proposals for this year. Grants are awarded in the amount of \$250 - \$1,000 each. Proposals are due by October 20, 2017 and will be awarded in November.
High School Earth Science teacher Cheryl Marvinney shared a video on the "stream table" she was able to purchase in part with funds from a MEF grant.
 - b. Advisory Program
Kristen Levesque, Gwen Mohlar and Anna Satterfield presented on the advisory program at Maranacook High and Middle Schools. They shared a video and reported on the day/week of an advisor.
3. Student Representatives Reports:
Principal Rick Hogan introduced the two new Middle School Student Representatives to the RSU #38 Board: Naeema O'Rourke and Thomas Struck. Naeema reported on the activities of the Middle School Civil Rights Team and Thomas reported on the advisor system.
4. Citizens' Comments:
Matt Dwyer, Manchester resident expressed his concern regarding teacher retention, asking if it was a district-wide issue or a Manchester Elementary School issue. Chair Morrell responded that this subject will be discussed later in the agenda.
Cynthia Cushing, Readfield resident raised a similar question.
5. Additions/Adjustments to the Agenda by Board and/or Superintendent: None
6. Action/Discussion/Informational Items:
 - a. Approval of Minutes of September 20, 2017

MOTION by G.Carr, second by D.Twitchell to approve the Minutes of September 20, 2017 as presented. Request was made to correct a typographical error, section 5e, first sentence.

Motion Carried: 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (Rumler)

b. Acceptance of teacher resignation – Robin Holman, MES

MOTION by G.Carr, second by A.Woodford to accept the resignation of Robin Holman with regret.

Ms. Holman addressed the Board. She stated that she is very grateful for having worked here for 24 years, but the last 7 years have been very different. She went back to school to earn her Doctorate so she could apply what she learned in her classroom, but doesn't feel she was able to do that. She thanked Nancy Harriman and Sarah Caban for everything they do. She asked the board to look at systematic things; look at teacher evaluations; and to shift some things out.

Motion Carried: unanimous

c. Acceptance of Donations

MOTION by G.Carr, second by C.Jacobs to accept the donations as presented.

Motion Carried: unanimous

d. Review of MSBA draft resolutions

Chair Morrell reported that the MSBA Constitution and Bylaws Committee and Board of Directors are proposing a number of changes to the MSBA Constitution. Do any board members have any questions or concerns on any of these that Gary should raise at the MSBA Delegate Assembly on October 26? None

The MSBA is proposing several resolutions for the Delegate Assembly to consider. Superintendent Wolfrom provided a brief review of each.

2.A.4f. School Board Training – This resolution encourages boards to adopt policies on school board training. We do not have a policy but we do provide training for the Board at the beginning each year, and Board members are offered to attend the MSMA fall conference each year. These activities are budgeted for.

Vote: 11 in favor, 1 opposed

2.B.1.g. Career and Technical Education Opportunities – This resolution encourages expanded opportunities for students. Vote: 7 in favor, 4 opposed

3.A.2.3. Regionalization of Services – This resolution stresses that decisions on regionalization are based on the best interest of the students, not necessarily cost efficiencies. More information on this will be brought to the board for review and consideration as it becomes available. Vote: 7 in favor, 2 opposed

4.30 Technology in the Classroom – This resolution supports making recommendations to the Legislature to ensure all schools have technology in the classroom. Vote: Majority supports

4.31 Graduation Pathways for All Learners – This resolution is to bring recommendations to the Legislature to provide flexibility that would help all students. Vote to support: unanimous

1.3 Support for Public Education – This resolution officially puts Maine School Boards on the record as standing with other state to support public schools. Vote to support: unanimous

4.32 Funding for Proficiency Based Graduation Standards – This resolution supports putting funding back in place for costs pertaining to Proficiency Based Graduation Standards. This represents about \$11,000 this year for RSU 38. Vote to support: unanimous

3.B.1.b. Scheduling of Career and Technical Education Programs (CTE) – This resolution updates the terminology. Vote to support: unanimous

e. Appointment of First Probationary Teacher – Brianna LeCours, Kindergarten, MES

MOTION G.Carr, second by J.Caron to appoint Brianna LeCours to a first probationary teacher contract.

Discussion followed about the application process. Superintendent Wolfrom reported that Kate Taylor went through the applications received over the summer for other positions. Ms. LeCours was interviewed and was offered a part-time teaching position, but refused it because she needed a full time position. When this position became available she was invited to come and interview for the position.

Motion Carried: unanimous

f. Update on Grade 4 Position at MES

Superintendent Wolfrom reported that the teacher resignation was received September 18; 2 candidates were interviewed, one in-district candidate one not; both candidates declined. Outside candidate stated she would take it for \$40,000 but there is a negotiated agreement to follow so we could not meet her

request. The position has been advertised in ServingSchools.com, which is the employment sight education staff use when looking for a position. She added that the teacher shortage in Maine is very real; it is a national problem. She pointed out two articles provided to the board – one is a recent article from the KJ regarding the shortage of substitute teachers and the other is from a professional journal “Kappan”, which states that since 2013 there has been a decline of 35% of students going on to school to become teachers.

Human Resources Manager Kate Taylor added that she has contacted UMF, USM, and UNE to seek potential candidates who may have recently graduated.

Superintendent Wolfrom reported that up to this point she was optimistic about hiring a teacher, but in light of conversations with other superintendents it is time to explore other avenues. We could continue to place subs in the 4th grade but she does not think that is in the best interest of the students. Manchester currently has 2 second grade classes with 11 student each. Another option might be to combine the 2 second grade classes, hire an ed tech to help the teacher, and move one of the teachers to grade 4.

The data presented by Steve DeAngelis at the last meeting regarding teacher turnover is in board folders.

Kate Taylor reviewed the data she provided to the board regarding teacher turnover for the last 3 years. She also reported that two candidates that accepted positions earlier in the summer rescinded their decisions. One was offered her former position back once the district’s budget was passed, and the other accepted another position.

Questions/observations from board members:

How do we compare to other school districts in terms of turnover rate, pay and benefits; number of applicants they receive for teaching positions?

How long are teachers staying in the profession.

What are we doing for retention efforts?

Stay interviews – supervisors could learn how to do these; have we considered this?

How many employees do we have district-wide? 250

Kate Taylor explained how the new staff orientation has changed over the years; bringing in the administrators, interventionists and coaches to work with the new teachers before they start working in the classrooms, and assigning mentors.

C. Jacobs added that she works at UMF and works directly with 15 different schools throughout the state. Every school is facing the same problem. If we can get some of that data it would be helpful.

S. Roderick reported that he also did his own research, calling districts within 15-75 miles of our district, and 7 are looking for teachers.

What can we do as a district to make our district a more attractive place to teach? Supt. Wolfrom responded that we are hearing from our new teachers about the amount of support they are receiving from the math coach, literacy coach and interventionists; this is unique to our district.

Request to include in staff survey what % of our teachers feel interventionists are helpful?

The question isn’t why we can’t replace but why are they leaving in the first place. “New job opportunity” there’s more to the story.

Would be interesting to find a district with low turnover rates, to find out what they are doing differently.

Chair Morrell outlined the next steps.

Contact other districts and see if they have information regarding turnover rates, number of applicants they receive for positions; rates of pay/benefits

Survey staff, include a question regarding interventionists.

Talk about stay interviews; may include helpfulness of interventionists.

A-Team – discuss level of support for teachers.

Parents addressed the Board.

Shannon Ferran – parent of 4th grader and kindergartener at Manchester offered her perspective as a parent. Also knows the outside candidate who applied for the position; feels what she was offered is insulting. On top of the pay, the feedback about what is going on at the school is not helping matters. She also asked why the math coach isn’t in that grade more.

Leigh Coryell – parent of student at Mt. Vernon and teacher at RSU 4. Asked that when you ask teachers for their opinion that you do so with protecting their privacy; support it in a private manner.

Stephanie Garofalo – parent of students at Manchester expressed her concern about the loss of feeling of community; 2 families have left; breaks her heart that Robin would have stayed if things would have been different.

Patricia Poulin – parent of student at Manchester, watched the discussion last year and heard you say there wasn't a teacher shortage and that it wasn't hard to hire teachers; does not believe all retirements shouldn't be included in reasons people are leaving. Understand you want to be data driven, but you also need to look at what people are telling you.

Chair Morrell thanked everyone who attended and spoke.

A.Woodford asked if we have an interventionist who could fill the 4th grade position for this year. Superintendent Wolfrom responded that we have a literacy specialist that is working with that class every day. She has asked and no one was willing to take a classroom position for the year.

7. Informational Items: Reports were provided in packet
8. Executive Session to consider labor contract between the RSU #38 Board of Directors and the Maranacook Area Schools Support Staff Association pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D)
MOTION by G.Carr, second by S.Roderick to enter Executive Session to consider labor contract between the RSU #38 Board of Directors and the Maranacook Area Schools Support Staff Association pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) .
Motion Carried: unanimous

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:34 p.m. and returned to public session at 9:15 p.m.
9. Action following Executive Session (if any): none
10. Adjournment: Motion and Second to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna H. Wolfrom, Superintendent/Secretary
D. Foster, Recorder