

**I. CALL OF MEETING
TO ORDER AND
FLAG SALUTE**

A regular meeting of the School Committee was held in the Library at the Middle/High School.

Present: Ms. Wendy Happel, Chair; Mr. Chris Coyle, Vice-Chair; Ms. Danielle Grafton, Secretary; Ms. Julie Groom, and Ms. Heidi Hernandez, Members. Also in attendance were Mr. Peter Schafer, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Felicia Moschella, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Elizabeth Lindo, Student Representative; and Ms. Theresa Minnehan, Administrative Assistant.

II. HEARING OF VISITORS

None.

III. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 15, 2022.

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Julie Groom) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes of February 15, 2022, as presented.

IV. PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

A. Update on Grade 8 Participation with High School Sports.

Mr. Bourn, Abington High School Principal, Mr. MacCurtain, Middle School Principal, and Mr. Serino, Athletic Director, were present this evening to give an update on grade 8 participation in high school sports this school year. Mr. Serino began his presentation thanking and acknowledging Alicia Reid for her work as Abington Public Schools' athletic trainer, as this is athletic trainer recognition month. He gave a quick review of the process for grade 8 participation in high school sports beginning with MIAA approval and then league approval each year. Once the school committee approves, a waiver for each sport will have to be submitted once again to MIAA, proving a need for eighth grade participation. This year overall the program has been very successful with girls' soccer team allowing a JV team as well as the varsity team being able to hold real practices on their own. Cheerleading was able to have a third stunt group for practice to build their skill. The hockey team was able to cover injuries and in the spring we are able to have sub-varsity teams such as boys' and girls' lacrosse as well as freshman baseball. Over 50 eighth grade students are looking to participate in the high school sports program. Both middle and high school students are benefiting from the program. Each season the communication in terms of attendance, physical and academics has been easier with the middle school

staff. Mr. Serino asked students and they have positive experiences which Ellie Lindo, Abington School Committee's Student Representative, agreed. Mr. MacCurtain thanked Mr. Serino and the MIAA for his student's participation in the program which has been all positive and Mr. Bourn agreed stating that the connections being built will be very helpful in the transition from middle school to high school. School Committee members asked questions around the youth sports programs and impact and Mr. Serino said that there were no major concerns except around the timing of youth basketball. Mr. Serino stated that without the eighth grade program, fielding JV boys' and girls' soccer, freshman volleyball, freshman baseball, JV boys' and girls' lacrosse as well as freshman basketball would have struggled. School committee members also mentioned that having high school role models was also a great experience building relationships. Also asked was if middle school students are keeping up academically and Mr. MacCurtain stated that there have not been any incidences of students falling behind or unable to play due to poor grades in part due to the support of Assistant Principal Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McDermod in guidance. Mr. Schafer congratulated Mr. Serino, Mr. Bourn, Mr. MacCurtain, coaches and all involved in the athletic program for once again winning the MIAA Sportsmanship Award for Abington. Mr. Serino will come back in May to give the whole year update and school committee members can decide at that time on Grade 8 participation next year.

B. Update on Student Activities and Travel.

Mr. MacCurtain gave an overview of upcoming activities at the middle school beginning with the grade 8 semi-formal in June. He stated that they are anxious to offer the grade 8 trip to Philadelphia next school year as well as other trips such as Washington D.C. and he looks forward to coming back in August with some requests. Mr. Bourn spoke about upcoming events such as senior and junior proms, and he is also looking to get back into domestic and international travel. Ms. Daisy, Abington High School's travel liaison, has reached out to some companies and is contemplating that in 2023 9th and 10th graders will have a trip to the Grand Canyon and an international trip to Puerto Rico for 11th and 12th graders. He will also be coming back to seek permission for these trips.

V. **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT**

A. Guidance Department Update.

Ms. Park, Director of Guidance, was present this evening to give a presentation on the Guidance Department. She reviewed the counselor breakdown, including the three high school counselors, and the individualized counseling provided to students; such as, social emotional needs, academic counseling, course selection, post-secondary planning, and new student registrations. She reported on the strengths and areas in need of improvement as well as the guidance curriculum for grades 9-12. She also highlighted ongoing guidance events as well as new events this year. Ms. Park answered school committee members questions around the amount of time students spend with his/her counselor and that they meet each year and it ramps up more towards senior year, she also stated that Credit for Life is coming back through the business department, career and college fairs are offered for students, college essays take place in English classes, college board has a great tool for students entering college, the financial aid session which took place virtually but will also take place in person and

college debt discussion takes place in both personal finance courses and in discussion between counselor and students and scholarship information is shared with students and more information can be pushed out to parents. Interviews in general are covered in business classes as well. School Committee members thanked Ms. Park for these updates.

B. Update on Receiving the Grant Entitled, *Proficiency-Based Outcomes in Languages Other Than English*

Dr. Fedorowicz was pleased to report that the Abington Public Schools received from the state funding to purchase STAMP testing materials. The amount is \$12,800 with half to be used this fiscal year and the other half for next fiscal year. The STAMP test in Portuguese, Spanish and French was taken by 51 students in grades 11 and 12 last week and in May approximately 130 eighth grade students will take the Spanish exam at no cost to the student. Abington Public Schools started taking exam last year and will continue again next year.

C. Update on Abington Public Schools' District Review.

Dr. Fedorowicz gave an update on the upcoming district review conducted by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She reported that the team will be here the week of April 25th beginning on Tuesday. An outside consulting firm will come out to do the review. This review occurs every few years and Abington is up for review on the standards student centered systems, focusing on curriculum, instruction and assessment and student support. Over the next few weeks we will be gathering documents, setup interviews and classroom observations. Results will come back in a few months. Two school committee members will be asked to participate in the interviews. Chris Coyle and Heidi Hernandez volunteered to participate in the review.

D. Consideration of 2022-2023 School Calendar with Professional Development Days.

Mr. Schafer stated that we can decide on the calendar tonight or at a future meeting. He and Dr. Fedorowicz reviewed the 2022-2023 school calendar focusing on the request to survey on Good Friday as a non-school day. In the North River Collaborative group all school districts do not have school on Good Friday except Stoughton Public Schools. A survey was sent to staff and 63.4% would rather not have school that day. Mr. Schafer also reached out to Stoughton and they stated that student absence is about one percent and for staff is about five percent due to having children in other district who do not have school that day. Stoughton also stated that having school on Good Friday has not been a problem. Mr. Schafer distributed a revised school calendar with Good Friday as a school day which will in turn have students released a day earlier in June. School Committee members stated that a day in March or April is more productive than in June and that district calendars vary from town to town. Ms. Grafton would still like to consider a school day on Good Friday if the state is still saying we cannot do distance learning on snow days. There was also discussion on the all-day inservice day following Halloween. School committee members asked for more time to talk to parents and make a decision at the next meeting in April.

E. Chester Millett Outstanding Teacher Award Update.

The nominations are now open for the Outstanding Teacher and Education Support staff. Announcements have been sent with links via Constant Contact and in school newsletters. The links are also available on the School Department website. It is all on line. The deadline to submit nominations will be midnight on Sunday, April 3rd. The committee will meet in mid to late April and the winners will be announced on Teacher Appreciation Day which is on May 3, 2022.

VI. **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

A. FY-23 Budget Update.

Dr. Moschella reviewed the new major category increase sheet with a consensus with the town for the April 4th town meeting. She thanked all those at the town hall for their help and meetings on the FY-23 school department budget. The \$200,000 laptop item that was originally in the budget is now in the Town's Capital Plan. Therefore, going into Town meeting, the budget is now \$27,749,776. We can vote on this budget number this evening or wait until the meeting on April 4th prior to town meeting. A question was asked about Circuit Breaker and Dr. Moschella stated that we will not get the figure from the State until the State has a budget, but it is not anticipated to be more than the 70%.

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Heidi Hernandez) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the FY-23 budget figure for the Abington School Department as \$27,749,776.⁰⁰.

B. Warrant Article for the Annual Town Meeting.

Dr. Moschella reviewed the warrant article stating that at the 2017 Town Meeting, \$85,000 was allocated for the upgrade of the Garaventa chairlift at the Frolio School. It has since been determined that an upgraded chairlift is not feasible. This article transfers the original funds to *Survey, Design, and Bidding* an Accessibility Ramp in its place.

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Wendy Happel) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to submit for the Town Meeting Warrant an Article to see if the town will transfer the unused balance of funds from 2017 ATM

Article 3, Exterior Lift - Frolio, the amount of \$85,000 in order to pay for Survey, Design, & Bidding of an ADA AAB Accessible Ramp to Frolio School and anything incidental or related thereto, or take any other action relative thereto.

Dr. Moschella also reported that a Capital Plan item has also been submitted for the painting and de-leading at the Frolio School.

VII. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Consideration of R.E.A.D.S. Collaborative Capital Reserve Fund and Capital Plan.

Mr. Schafer streamed a video from R.E.A.D.S. Collaborative in which Dr. Theresa Craig, Executive Director, gave a brief overview of the READS programs, services and locations. READS is seeking to formally establish the reason and limit for the READS Capital Reserve Fund through approval of Member School Committees for the reason for the reserve: maintenance and improvement of READS properties and leased properties, provide funding for payment of the lease for READS Academy Public Day School location during periods of time when enrollment is below expectations and prepare to purchase the location of the Academy Public Day School to eliminate the expense of a lease beyond 10 years. The limit on the balance as approved by the READS Board of Directors is \$4,000,000 for the reasons identified above. Dr. Craig reviewed the history of READS Collaborative Capital Funds, the newly opened campus in September 2021, and the five-year capital improvement plan details for fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

Mr. Schafer stated that READS services students with disabilities for member Districts and they have been dealing with an inadequate facility for decades and they are not able to apply for MSBA funding through the State and rather than wait for this to change through legislation READS has started a fund that already has a million dollars in it and they have to follow procedures and protocols receiving the appropriate votes and there is also own a piece of property to be sold; when it is sold there is no place for the money to go and they are currently in a leased building and this fund will allow them to purchase the building but they cannot have this account without member Districts approval. Tonight we will vote to establish this account. Mr. Schafer asked School Committee members to support his request.

VOTED: on motion of Heidi Hernandez (Danielle Groom) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the reason for the capital reserve fund as presented and the limit of \$4,000,000 held in the reserve.

B. 2022-2023 R.E.A.D.S. Collaborative Board of Directors.

Mr. Schafer requested the school committee appoint him to serve on the R.E.A.D.S. Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 school year. This is an annual appointment.

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Danielle Grafton) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to appoint Peter Schafer to serve as the Abington Public Schools' representative on the Board of Directors of R.E.A.D.S. Collaborative, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 4E as amended by Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2012 for the 2022-2023 school year.

C. 2022-2023 North River Collaborative Board of Directors.

Mr. Schafer also requested that the school committee appoint him to serve on the North River Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 school year. This also is an annual appointment.

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Danielle Grafton) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to appoint Peter Schafer to serve as the Abington Public Schools' representative on the North River Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 school year.

VIII. **ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DATE**

April 4, 2022 @ 6:30 p.m. prior to Town Meeting
April 26, 2022 Regular Monthly Meeting @ 7 p.m.

IX. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

- Abington Public Schools' Student Opportunity Act (SOA)
- R.E.A.D.S. Collaborative Quarterly Report Overview – March 2022

- North River Collaborative Quarterly Report – January 2022
- Correspondence from MIAA Regarding Abington High School Receiving the 2022 MIAA District 9 Sportsmanship Award
- Personnel Administration - Informational
 1. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Catherine Darcy as a substitute special education teacher within the Abington Public Schools effective on February 14, 2022.
 2. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Patricia Dion as a mathematics teacher within the Abington Public Schools for the purpose of retirement effective at the close of the 2021-2022 school year.
 3. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Tatyana Faynberg as a school psychologist within the Abington Public Schools for the purpose of retirement effective on September 20, 2022.
 4. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Jessica Sullivan as a wellness teacher within the Abington Public Schools effective immediately.
 5. On the recommendation of Matthew MacCurtain, Principal of the Abington Middle School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Connor Bennett as a long-term substitute grade 5 teacher within the Abington Public Schools effective on or about March 15, 2022, continuing to on or about June 7, 2022.
 6. On the recommendation of James Robbins, Director of Student Services, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Stephanie Corcione as a .5 school adjustment counselor within the Abington Public Schools effective on March 31, 2022.
 7. On the recommendation of James Robbins, Director of Student Services, the Superintendent has approved the reassignment of Jillian Earle to a school adjustment counselor position within the Abington Public Schools effective on March 7, 2022.
 8. On the recommendation of Chris Basta, Principal of the Beaver Brook Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Melissa Foley as a substitute special education teacher effective on February 16, 2022, and continuing to April 25, 2022.

9. On the recommendation of Matthew MacCurtain, Principal of Abington Middle School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Kelli Moran as a substitute geography teacher effective on March 7, 2022.
10. On the recommendation of Chris Basta, Principal of the Beaver Brook Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Samantha Snyder as a paraprofessional effective on Monday, March 7, 2022.
11. On the recommendation of Annie Robinson, Early Education Program and Out of District Coordinator, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Jennifer Worden as a paraprofessional effective on Monday, March 7, 2022.
12. On the recommendation of Matthew MacCurtain, Principal of the Abington Middle School, the Superintendent has approved the following advisors:
 - Yearbook Melissa Manley
 - GSA Melissa Manley
 - Drama Katherine Beckvold
13. The Superintendent has granted Ms. Lauren Bates, a mathematics teacher within the Abington Public Schools, a parental leave of absence in accordance with Option B as stipulated in Article XXIV of the Unit A Agreement. This leave of absence will begin on or about May 14, 2022, and continue to October 3, 2022.
14. The Superintendent has granted Ms. Thea Showstack, a school psychologist within the Abington Public Schools, a parental leave of absence in accordance with Option B as stipulated in Article XXIV of the Unit A Agreement. This leave of absence will begin on or about May 27, 2022, and continue for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year.

- Dates to Remember

1. Thurs., March 31 – Inservice/Early Release Day
2. Mon., April 4 – Annual Town Meeting @ AHS @ 7 p.m.
3. Fri., April 15 – Good Friday – All School Offices and Buildings Closed
4. Mon., April 18 – Patriots Day – All School Offices and Buildings Closed
5. Mon., April 18 – Fri., April 22 – Spring Vacation
6. Sat., April 30 – Town Elections @ BBES 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Prior to adjourning Ms. Hernandez wanted to give a shoutout to the High School Drama Program for their current production, *Lockdown*. She stated that it was fabulous and a tremendous job with the question and answer session at the end.

X. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

@ 8:35 p.m.

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Julie Groom) the members of the School Committee unanimously by roll call vote voted to adjourn the March 22, 2022, School Committee meeting at 8:35 p.m. to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to ongoing litigation; specifically, an MCAD complaint, Samantha Baggett versus the Town of Abington, since an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and not to return to public session.

Yes: Chris Coyle
Danielle Grafton
Julie Groom
Heidi Hernandez
Wendy Happel

Danielle Grafton, Secretary