

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

The School Committee meeting opened this evening with a hearing on school choice for the 2023-2024 school year. Mr. Coyle asked if the committee or any members of the audience had any questions on school choice and there were none. Mr. Coyle closed the public hearing and returned to the regular meeting session.

II. **HEARING OF VISITORS**

There were none.

III. **READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. October 25, 2022.

VOTED: on motion of Heidi Hernandez (Wendy Happel) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes of October 25, 2022, as presented.

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Consideration of a Change of School Books for “This Book is Gay (J. Dawson)

Mr. Coyle stated that at the last meeting we gave a notice of the consideration of a change of school books, *This Book is Gay*. Mr. Schafer gave an update since the October meeting on what has transpired and a seven-member review committee was formed and met. The group read the book, deliberated on the book and the majority recommended that the book remain on the high school library side. Therefore, the book will remain on the high school side of the library. Ms. Happel gave a timeline of what has transpired and regarding the parent who contacted with Mr. Schafer from September to present. Mr. Schafer pointed out that he read excerpts from the book initially and pulled the book. After further consideration and reading the book, and the full context, he decided to put the

book back. Mr. Schafer said the information cautions the reader about sex, safe sex and on-line behavior. Ms. Hernandez agreed that this has been a lot and she sat on the review committee and before making a decision she read the book and listened to the audio book and met with the person who made the original complaint, and her thought is having this book available to students helps them understand what is ahead and may help or open students' minds and she supports this book. Mr. Coyle trusts the judgement of those put on the review committee. Ms. Groom asked if this topic is done and Mr. Coyle stated that he does not plan on having this on the agenda for the January 3, 2023 meeting.

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

A. 2022 MCAS Review (E. Gonsalves, M. Doherty & N. Corbett)

Dr. Basta thanked the school committee for having the department heads here this evening to review the MCAS results in math, science and ELA. He stated that overall our students did well but we have a few areas to work on as a district to support all students. He reviewed the nation's report cards and Abington has not been randomly selected but this gives us a review of where we are post-pandemic. 2022 was the first full test administration since 2019 and the department heads, Dr. Gonsalves, Ms. Doherty and Ms. Corbett reviewed the areas of strengths and growth and recommendations for each area. The recovery has begun and that to use the 2022 scores is more productive and analyzing the data is a tool to use as a new benchmark to measure future growth. Dr. Basta stated that every one, students, parents and teachers have all worked hard these past few years and this needs to be recognized and these scores help us to look at how we are doing as a district. Mr. Schafer also thanked the department heads and Dr. Basta, teachers and students for all their hard work during the Pandemic. We compare ourselves to the state because that is the equalizer and we want to do better than the State but Massachusetts is still one of the highest performing states in comparison.

VI. **REPORT OF THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**

A. Update on the Athletic Program. (P. Serino)

Mr. Serino was present this evening to give an update to share all the happenings in the athletic program. He thanked the committee and administration for their support of our student athletes. The fall season just wrapped up very successfully both individually and as teams. The winter season has started up and participation is strong across the board. The eighth-grade waiver is still being used and a benefit to the district as a whole and provides additional opportunities for all students in grades 9-12, varsity teams are being offered. The waiver is as needed and when there is an opportunity to hold onto a team by adding eighth graders. Girls' hockey is new this year with a coop with Norwell High School with three of our female hockey players participating this year. Next year some changes will be a realignment for both our league and MIAA, most of our schedules will expand to an eleventh team with Sandwich High School. Next year we will be on the Tobin side, which is a smaller size being the larger district on the smaller side. MIAA state tournament schedule is on a realignment as well

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and for the fall have been shared, all of our teams have been aligned as previously and we may apply for appeals. Mr. Schafer thanked Mr. Serino for his highlights on both the grade 8 participation and the update on the shift in the leagues. A competitive equity tool is being used to determine the league alignments.

VII. **REPORT OF THE MASC DELEGATE ASSEMBLY** (H. Hernandez)

- A. MASC/MASS Annual Joint Conference (November 2-5, 2022) at Resort and Conference Center at Hyannis, Hyannis, MA

Ms. Hernandez was the voting member at the conference, but Mr. Coyle also acknowledged that Ms. Happel and Ms. Groom attended the conference as well. Ms. Hernandez stated that the six resolutions issues were voted on with minor amendments and she voted the way the Abington School Committee directed her. She attended a number of break out meetings from mental health, arts and music and she would be happy to share with others.

VIII. **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

- A. Consideration of the Abington Public Schools' participation in the School Choice Program for the 2023-2024 school year in accordance with Chapter 76, The Education Reform Act of 1993.

Mr. Schafer stated that the public hearing took place in the first part of the meeting. He stated that if the committee does not opt out of school choice then we are automatically a member of school choice and this means that students may apply to attend Abington Schools. We are not overcrowded but we are tight. He recommends that we do not participate in school choice for the 2023-2024 school year because we do not have the space and we are tight. We have seen some growth in Abington and we are retaining Abington students and we need to take care of the Abington students before taking on other students. Mr. Schafer did state that our students may attend another district if the receiving district participates in school choice.

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Julie Groom) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to opt out of school choice for the 2023-2024 school year.

- B. Update on Administrator Searches.
- Beaver Brook Principal
 - High School Assistant Principal

Mr. Schafer gave a brief update on the searches for a Principal at the Beaver Brook Elementary School and the Assistant Principal at Abington High School. He reviewed the timeline given with the advertisements/postings going out after the first of the year in order to have people in place and introduced to the school committee at the February meeting. This process is not new and he asks for a school committee member to serve on the search committees. Mr. Coyle asked that school committee members reach out to him if they are interested in serving on either search committee.

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

*Tuesday, January 3, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.
Public Hearing on the FY-2024 Preliminary Budget @ 7:30 p.m.*

*Tuesday, January 24, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.
Regular Monthly Meeting*

X. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

- Correspondence from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: 2023 Special Education Determination under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- READS Collaborative Annual Report
- **Dates to Remember**
 1. Thurs., December 1 – Junior Class Auction
 2. Wed., December 7 – AEF Meeting @ Town Hall @ 7 p.m.
 3. Tues., December 13 – Inservice/Early Release Day for Students
 4. Fri., December 23 – Mon., January 2 – Holiday Vacation Break
 5. Mon., January 2 – News Year’s Day Observed – All School Offices and Buildings Closed
 6. Tues., January 3 – School Committee Meeting with an FY-24 School Department Budget Hearing @ 7:30 p.m.
 7. Sat., January 7 – AEF Trivia Night at the Abington K of C @ 7 p.m.
 8. Mon., January 16 – Martin Luther King Day – All School Offices and Buildings Closed
 9. Tues., January 24 – Next Regular School Committee Meeting @ 7 p.m.
 10. Fri., January 27 – Inservice/Early Release Day for Students
- **Personnel Administration - Informational**
 1. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Lance Hammond as a maintenance worker within the Abington Public Schools for the purpose of retirement effective on January 3, 2023.

2. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Melissa Manley as a tutor within the Abington Public Schools effective on Friday, November 18, 2022.
3. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Diane Salvetti as a long-term substitute biology teacher effective on Monday, November 14, 2022.
4. On the recommendations of Jason Linn, Maintenance Director, and Felicia Moschella, Assistant Superintendent, for the Abington Public Schools, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Edward Belcher as a maintenance worker effective on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.
5. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Kristina Wilson as the Director of World Languages for the 2022-2023 school year.
6. On the recommendations of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, and Peter Serino, Athletic Director, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of the following coaches:
 - William Caseley Head Girls' Indoor Track
 - Jenna Olem Head Softball
 - Stephen Perakslis Head Baseball
 - Bridget Wakelin Head Tennis
 - Michael Caseley Head Boys' Track and Field
 - William Caseley Head Girls' Track and Field
 - Michael Grafton Head Boys' Lacrosse
 - Gabrielle Majenski Head Girls' Lacross
7. The Superintendent has granted Ms. Jacklyn Gurry, a wellness teacher within the Abington Public Schools, a parental leave of absence in accordance with Options B and A as stipulated in Article XXIV of the Unit A Agreement. This leave of absence will begin on or about February 15, 2023 and continue to on or about April 26, 2023.
8. The Superintendent has granted Ms. Loreen McGrath, a cafeteria worker within the Abington Public Schools, a maternity leave of absence effective on November 14, 2022, and continuing to on or about March 6, 2023.
9. The Superintendent has granted Ms. Thea Showstack, a school psychologist within the Abington Public Schools, a leave of absence in accordance with Options B and A as stipulated in Article XXV, Section 7 of the Unit A Agreement. This leave of absence will begin on or about November 28, 2022 and continue for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION
@ 8:33 p.m.

VOTED: by roll call vote in accordance with MA G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) for the purpose of updating the Committee on negotiations with AEA Units A and B, and the Superintendent of Schools' salary re-opener, since, as declared by the Chair, to hold this discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee; and not to return to regular session.

Yes:

Mr. Coyle
Ms. Grafton
Ms. Groom
Ms. Happel
Ms. Hernandez

Heidi Hernandez, Secretary