

Approved

**Hudson School Committee
Open Session Minutes**

Meeting Date: September 10, 2019

Location: 155 Aspley Street

Members present: Glenn Maston, Steven Smith, Adam Tracy, Nina Ryan, Matthew McDowell,
and Michele Tousignant Dufour, Rebecca Weksner

Members absent: none

Others present: Dr. Marco C. Rodrigues, Superintendent
Annamarie O'Donnell, Recording Secretary

I. Call the Meeting to Order: 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, Glenn Maston.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Regular Meeting: August 20, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes of August 20, 2019 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee: August 5, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2019 Buildings and Ground Subcommittee was made by Mr. Tracy and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

III. Public Participation:

none

IV. Reports and Presentations

Report of the Superintendent: School Opening

Dr. Rodrigues presented the School Opening Report with the following highlights:

- There are four new members of the District Leadership Team:
 - Hudson High School Principal Mr. Jason Medeiros
 - Quinn Middle School Principal Mr. Jeff Gaglione
 - Forest Avenue Elementary School Assistant Principal Ms. Judy Merra
 - Performing Arts Subject Matter Leader Ms. Sarah Worrest
- 88 hires completed
- 314 staff transfers/changes, resignations, retirements
- Student Enrollment by grade level
- 304 New Students enrolled
- 95 students enrolled in the school choice program grades K-12

Approved

- 46 students transferred to Assabet Valley Regional Vocational High School
- 16 transfers to the Advanced Math and Science Academy

Discussion ensued about fluctuations in enrollment numbers and reasons for attrition

Class sizes

- Elementary class sizes range from 16-24
- Quinn Middle School core content class sizes range from 15-25 in grade 5, 17-24 in grade 6, and 13-24 in grade 7.
- Quinn Middle School related arts class sizes range from 10-31.
- Hudson High School class sizes are generally 17-30 students. This master schedule does contain 30 + courses with 13 or fewer students. Dr. Rodrigues stated that there are justifications for these classes. For next year, work will begin on the high school course selection sheet this month. This will allow us to look at course selection first and then staffing.

Discussion ensued about distribution of these classes less than 13. Discussion ensued about common traits of classes of 26 and above.

School Supplies and services

- Processed more than 627 supply requisitions and purchase orders before the start of school
- Processed payments in excess of \$1.2 M for supplies and services to prepare for the opening of schools
- Addition of chromebooks for grade 3
- Electronic signing of student handbooks, student photo restriction form, and the Hudson Public Schools protocol for district issued devices
- New leased equipment
- Installed new phone system in Administration building
- Completed all state reporting requirements
- Completed Aspen rollover process

Discussion ensued about electronic signing of handbooks and the rationale of using myschoolbucks.com as opposed to something else. Dr. Rodrigues stated that myschoolbucks.com is the place where signatures are kept for all other things especially at the secondary level. Discussion ensued about options for helping parents sign up. Dr. Rodrigues stated that the plan is to guide parents through signing up as part of the registration process.

Grants

- FY19 grants totaled approximately \$ 2.5 million
- FY20 grants total approximately \$ 1.27 million year to date

Food Service

- New Equipment including Replacement ovens, warmers
- Implemented breakfast cart grab and go at Farley
- Served 124 Kindergarten lunches on the first day of school
- 133 free and reduced applications received
- District free/reduced percentage is 38%

Transportation

- New Transportation Provider: First Student
- Meet and greet held to introduce Hudson administrators and support staff to the First Student team
- Contracted for 12 large, 5 mini-buses, and 2 mini-vans
- 1867 students in the district are eligible for transportation. Bus counts will be done to identify how many and which students are actually using transportation.
- Assabet Valley Collaborative: 23 min-vans for out of district placements
- 1 McKinney Vento student needing transportation

Discussion ensued about transportation issues. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we are in constant conversation with First Student regarding issues that occur. Bus counts are being done, so soon we will have a baseline. This will allow us to make adjustments where we can with the goal being to post specific times for each stop,

Discussion ensued about drivers and whether they are new and permanent.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that there is a learning curve with the brand new buses that were ordered.

Discussion ensued about the change in dismissal time and if it would be enough to keep busses from being late. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we are gathering data to see whether the five minute change in elementary bell times is enough. Discussion ensued on the contract and how we can hold the bus company accountable

Ms. Tousignant Dufour asked about Safe Routes to Schools. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we had taken their recommendations for drop off at some schools.

Buildings and grounds

- Completed new electric service at Mulready
- Installed new fire alarm system at Farley
- Procured emergency generators for Mulready and Forest
- Completed renovations to accommodate SPED services
- Hired several student workers to help get the schools ready
- ALICE Training
 - Quinn Middle School and Hudson High School
 - Training will be completed by the staff by mid- October
 - A student safety drill scheduled for mid- October
 - Elementary Schools
 - Training will be completed by the staff by mid- October
 - *I'm not scared, I'm prepared* book will be used with students in October

Summer Leadership institute

- District Improvement Plan; Action Steps for 2019-2020 completed
- Cycle of Inquiry Process
- Multi- Tiered System of Supports Framework (MTSS)
- District Leadership Team Communication Plan

General Assembly for staff

Dr. Rodrigues stated the theme was from the Brene Brown book *Dare to Lead* “We are the guardians of spaces to allow students to breathe, be curious, and to explore”
Brene Brown

Communication

- Creating connections- Weekly Publication
- Parent Forums will be held at Hudson High School in room F101 on October 15, December 10, February 11, April 14
 - Dr. Rodrigues stated that these may be specific to a topic at times, for example updates to the attendance policy and student discipline policy.
- Staff listening sessions will be held at each school in October, December, March and May

Dr. Rodrigues informed the committee that yesterday, a letter was sent to parents on restrictions put into place at the schools out of an abundance of caution because of the increase in the EEE risk level to high in Hudson.

The Board of Health confirmed that spraying would happen at our schools on September 11 in the evening. Additionally, there will be aerial spraying. We will evaluate when it is safe to get our students outside.

Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee

none

Policy Subcommittee

Mr. Smith reported that the policy subcommittee had met earlier that evening and started to talk about the facilities naming policy. The next meetings are October 22, December 3 and then before the first school committee meeting of each month starting in January.

Strategic Goals Subcommittee

none

Superintendent’s Evaluation Subcommittee

none

Student Report

None

V. **Matters for Discussion:**

- a) Old Business
- b) New Business
 - 1. Cherry Sheet Discussion

Ms. Patricia Lange reported on the Cherry Sheets. The Cherry sheet is a notice of state aid and assessments produced by the Department of Revenue annually. Cities and towns use these estimates to set the tax rates for the upcoming year. The sheets show receipts and assessments for the year. The governor sets a proposed budget, the house of representatives sets their proposed budget, and the senate sets their proposed budget. A conference committee then meets to come up with a final budget. The budget then goes back to the senate and the house and once approved goes to the Governor for

approval. This becomes part of the general appropriations. Chapter 70 is the amount of money slated to fund the education budget from the state. We received an additional \$30.00 per student. The Cherry sheets also include school choice and charter school tuition reimbursement.

Discussion ensued about charter school reimbursements.

2. Discussion on What's New in the Hudson Public Schools in 2019-2020

Dr. Rodrigues stated that we have created great opportunities in our schools and this is a direct result of our zero based budget process. We have been able to see what is needed to support the mission and the vision of the district and reallocate resources. He presented what is new in Hudson Public Schools for 2019-2020 highlighting the following:

- **New Programs**

- Harbor Program at Hudson High School
- Pace Program at Quinn Middle School
- Partnership with Wayside MetroWest Community Services

Discussion ensued on enrollment in these programs and continuation of services to students in the summer.

- **New Courses and Pathways**

- Hudson High School College and Career Pathways are in place.
- Several new courses introduced at Hudson High School including AP Physics C, Medical Interpretation II, Fashion Design

- Seal of Biliteracy will be applied for

- New STEM areas for Elementary schools in Grades 1, 2 and 4 (Project Lead The Way)

- **New Structures and Services**

- District Improvement Plan action steps for year 2 created
- 1:1 Technology Program expanded to Grade 3
- Electronic Student Handbooks
- The new district website is live (not for public viewing yet)
- The district has hired 2 permanent day-to-day substitute teachers for each school

Discussion ensued about utilization rate of the day-to-day subs. Down the road the committee would like to see a summary of utilization and whether this saves the district money.

- Chromebooks secured for each paraprofessional assigned to classes with students in grades 3-12
- Additional Speech and Language Pathologist for FY20

Discussion ensued on why there was the need to hire for this position. Dr. Rodrigues stated that after looking into services needed and the scheduling issues there was a need to hire an additional 1.0 FTE.

Discussion ensued about articulation services last year. Dr. Rodrigues stated that entrance and exit criteria for students were developed and showed a number of students no longer needing articulation services.

- Edmentum/Plato program for online support for the Harbor Program and Credit Recovery
- Language based services added for grade 7 at Quinn Middle School
- Funds secured for emergency generators at Mulready and Forest Avenue Elementary Schools

Mr. Smith asked if there is the plan to assess and optimize these new programs. He asked if the committee could get an in depth presentation on what is working and what is not. Dr. Rodrigues said we are incorporating a cycle of inquiry to look at data, and information and deploy resources and monitor results.

VI.

Matters for Action:

a) Old Business

1. Petition to name the Hudson High School Library to honor former teacher Susan Menanson.

A motion to name the Hudson High School Library to honor former teacher Susan Menanson was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Tracy. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

2. Petition to name the Hudson High School Auditorium to honor former teacher Paul “Skip” Johnson

A motion to name the Hudson High School Auditorium to honor former teacher Paul “Skip” Johnson was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

b) New Business

1. Approval of FY19 Budget Closure

Ms. Patricia Lange presented an update on the budget close for FY19 and its impact on FY20 and FY21.

Ms. Lange discussed the transfer sheet, which would be voted on to balance the school district’s books with the Town of Hudson’s books. There is a reclassification for school choice, and a reclassification to balance the food service revolving fund.

Ms. Lange presented the FY19 results with the following highlights:

- Savings in Personnel of \$1,821,672
- Savings in General Expense of \$727,933
- Deficit in Transportation spending of \$29,477

Personnel savings were attributed to the following:

- Hiring variances
- Grant Funding for a position
- Unfilled vacancy in technology office
- Special Education and ABA savings
 - ABA openings are remaining unfilled
- Special education assistants savings
- Substitutes
- Librarians
- Maintenance personnel savings
- Coaches and advisors savings
- Clerical sub account savings
- Unpaid leave of absences
- Unfilled positions
- Reductions due to salary scale

It was noted that the variance in substitutes was not due to a need for less substitutes, but instead due to the fact that the district could not find substitutes.

Dr. Rodrigues presented the historical personnel savings numbers. He stated that this year is very unusual for variances.

Mr. Smith asked if we build the personnel savings into the budget.

Dr. Rodrigues said that the stabilization plan includes this.

Provisions are being made to minimize the variance.

Discussion ensued on how to project these savings

General Expense Savings attributed to the following:

- Savings in Tuitions
- Utilities
- Legal Fees
- Athletics (spending diverted to revolving account)
- Finance and Admin support
- Superintendent's office
- Contracted services
- Professional Development (obtained through grant)
- Teaching services
- Computer services

Overspending in transportation

- Special needs transportation
- Some savings in athletics
- Some savings in basic transportation

Ms. Lange went on to give a FY20 budget update. She reported a

School Choice balance including expenditures and Food Service deficit. She also gave a school choice estimate for FY20.

Discussion ensued about how school choice is estimated. Ms. Lange explained she estimates using \$5000.00 per student. Additional revenue is captured for students with disabilities. Discussion ensued about timing for school choice acceptances and the way students are counted.

Ms. Lange continued with the FY20 update outlining the town appropriation, circuit breaker, school choice estimated revenue, and the school choice carryover.

Currently, it is anticipated that revenue will exceed expenses. This will allow funds to be moved forward to fund the FY21 budget. For FY20, savings of \$1.4 million in FY19 budget are needed to fund the budget. Because we had a savings of \$1.8 million, we now have a excess carryover of school choice.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that because of this excess carryover in school choice, there would be no reduction if general expenses in FY20, and FY21. He went on to say there is an additional \$251,000 we can use in FY20. Dr. Rodrigues suggested bringing the budget team together to look at what requests were not approved during the budget process, and decide how to spend the overage.

Discussion ensued about what happens in FY22, FY23 and beyond. Dr. Rodrigues stated that we will continue to look at the vacancy factor in personnel.

Discussion ensued about minimum wage and family medical leave. The district follows collective bargaining and school committee policy.

Discussion ensued about the best way to use the surplus.

A motion to approve the recommendation of transfer of \$319,727.51 from FY19 General Expense to FY19 Transportation was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Mr. McDowell. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to approve the recommendation to transfer \$36,999.58 from FY19 General Expense to FY19 Food Service Revolving Fund was made by Mr. Maston and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to approve the recommendation to transfer \$1,410,895.60 for FY19 Personnel Expense to FY19 General Expense, was made by Mr. Maston and seconded by Mr. Tracy. On a vote of 7-0, the

motion passed.

A motion approve the recommendation to encumber \$351,984.07 from the FY19 General Expense to FY20 funds, was made by Mr. Maston and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to approve the recommendation to encumber \$15,852.32 from FY19 Personnel to FY20 funds, was made by Ms. Maston and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

2. Approval of Contract with IXL Learning in the amount of \$11,138.00 for site license for IXL Math grades 5-12 and IXL ELA grades 5-7

A motion to approve the contract with IXL Learning in the amount of \$11,138.00 for the site license for IXL Math grades 5-12 and IXL ELA grades 5-7 was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Tracy. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

3. Approval to exclude the acceptance of Stop N Shop A+ School Rewards in the amount of \$734.38.

Dr. Rodrigues stated that this check had been written to the Hudson Public Schools but the money actually belonged to the Home and School association. The committee had previously accepted these funds. We need to now vote to exclude so we can return the funds to the Home and School Association.

A motion to approve to exclude the acceptance of Stop N Shop A+ School Rewards in the amount of \$734.38 was made by Mr. Tracy and seconded by Mr. Smith. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

4. Approval of FY19-734 Early Literacy Grant in the amount of \$18,000.00

A motion to approve the FY19-734 Early Literacy Grant in the amount of \$18,000 was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

5. Approval Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston/ on behalf of Avidia Bank gift in the amount of \$1000.00 to the Hudson Adult Learning Center

A motion to approve the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston/ on behalf of Avidia Bank gift, in the amount of \$1000.00 to the Hudson Adult Learning Center was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

6. Approval of The Thomas Hamilton Estate gift in the amount of \$1006.50 to Hudson High School

A motion to approve the Thomas Hamilton Estate gift in the amount of \$1006.50 to Hudson High School was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

7. Reclassification of Funds

Approved

A motion to approve reclassification of funds #1 in the amount of \$1,300,356.79 from Teachers to School Choice and \$ 36,999.58 from Technology to School Choice was made by Mr. Tracy and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

A motion to approve reclassification of funds #2,3,& 4 as presented and transfers #1 and #2 was made by Mr. Tracy and seconded by Ms. Tousignant Dufour. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

VII. Items of Interest to the School Committee

Mr. Tracy asked to see our athletic enrollment and what our sports are drawing in terms of numbers of students relative to past years

Mr. Smith asked if we had timing for the FY21 budget process. Dr. Rodrigues stated that he has potential dates and times to start work. He also stated he has to confirm the timing of our budget submission to the town this year.

VIII. Executive Session

At 9:26 p.m., Committee Chair Glenn Maston, noted that Executive session was not needed.

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Tousignant Dufour and seconded by Ms. Ryan. On a vote of 7-0, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tousignant Dufour, Secretary
Hudson School Committee