

**MEETING OF
THE MONROE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monroe, Connecticut
Monday May 24, 2021
Masuk High School Media Center**

Present: _ Chairman Donna Lane
Vice-Chairman George King III
Board Member Nicholas Kapoor
Board Member Jerry Stevens
Board Member Alan Vaglivelolo

Also Present: Superintendent Joe Kobza
Assistant Superintendent Jack Ceccolini
Interim Finance Director Ron Bunovsky
Masuk Student Representative Suja Srinivasan
Masuk Student Representative Elizabeth Winington

Absent: Secretary Shannon Reilly
Board Member Christine Cascella
Board Member David Ferris
Board Member Jeff Fulchino
Masuk Student Representative Melanie Antony

Call to Order

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Lane appointed *Board Member Vaglivelolo* to be the Acting Secretary for tonight's meeting.

Report of the Chairman

2021 Retirees Recognized at End of Year Celebration

Chairman Lane said they recognized the 2020-2021 at the Celebration earlier this evening but wanted to formally recognize them at tonight's meeting. The 2020-2021 Retirees are *Janice Birney, Marie Blake, Claude Genest, Denise Hoffmann, William Jarosko, Amy Kaminsky, Lisa Melillo, Anna Richa, and Rebecca Rosen*. *Chairman Lane* thanked them for their years of service and contributions to the District.

Recognition of Board of Education Student Representatives

The Board recognized and thanked the 2020-2021 Board of Education Representatives for their year of service. *Board Members Antony* and *Srinivasan* will return next year and *Board Member Winington* will graduate in June.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

Motion: (N. Kapoor)

Second: (J. Stevens)

Discussion: Superintendent Kobza stated that Jonathan Garcia, a former student teacher in the District, has been hired as the Spanish Teacher for Jockey Hollow and Masuk.

Motion passed 5 (Lane, King, Kapoor, Stevens, Vaglivelo)-0

21-039

Reports of the Committees and Liaisons

Masuk Student Representatives

Student Board Representative Srinivasan said that Orchestra and Band/Choral Concerts took place on May 13th and 20th respectively, and AP Final Exams will end on May 28th. She said that the Junior Prom was held on May 21st, and the Senior Prom was held on the 22nd; she thanked the PTC for their work for the post prom event. *Student Board Representative Winington* updated the Board on sports and robotics which held their virtual competition last week. Masuk will present a performance of *Meet Me in St. Louis* on June 4th and 5th. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as a liaison for the past few years.

Board of Finance

Board Member Kapoor expressed concern that a comment made at the last Board of Finance meeting regarding an increase in student enrollment will become “the narrative over the summer” should the enrollment numbers continue to rise. He said that though the district may have seen growth in the past, the current increase seems more concentrated at the elementary levels rather than spread across the grade levels. *Board Member Kapoor* wanted to share two dates with the Board; tomorrow, May 25th, there will be a Peaceful Gathering on the Green, and on Saturday, June 5th, the Pride Flag will be raised at Town Hall with a rain date of June 6th.

Public Participation

There was none at tonight’s meeting.

Report of the Superintendent

Staff End of Year Celebration

Superintendent Kobza thanked the planning committee for a wonderful event, and he wished all the retirees the best in their future endeavors. *Bill McDonough* was announced as the 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year, and he will attend a future Board of Education meeting.

Student COVID Vaccination Clinic

Superintendent Kobza said that over 220 students received their first vaccine at last week’s COVID Vaccination Clinic. He thanked the Town Health Department, Emergency Services, and all the volunteers, including nurses and secretaries. The students can receive their second shot on either June 9th, June 26th or at another location of their choice.

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Superintendent Kobza noted that to receive the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds, there is a prerequisite for Districts to provide a reopening plan for the fall as well seeking feedback and input from the public regarding the return. He added that he sent a parent survey on Friday, May 21st, and he has already received over 160 responses. *Board Member Kapoor* asked if the State Department of Education was providing any guidance; *Superintendent Kobza* replied that there has been some guidance received for summer school including that masks will be required.

Review of the Fund Activity Statement

Interim Finance Director Bunovsky said they are in the process of closing purchase orders, and by the next meeting on June 14th, they will have a much clearer picture of where the end will end. He continued there are currently surplus funds in both transportation due to Covid and in Tuition Public.

Review of the Proposed Budget Transfers

Interim Finance Director Bunovsky reviewed the transfers which will be voted on later at tonight's meeting. The transfers, which were presented in the packet, are for Instructional Materials and Athletics at Masuk.

Presentation-Board of Education Professional Development

Special Education Referral Process - Alan Vaglivo, Board Member; Darleen Fensore, Director of Student Support Services; Jennifer Parsell, Assistant Director of Student Support Services

Ms. Fensore reviewed The PPT Referral Process and the steps taken to determine a student's eligibility for services; she noted that every public school district has the responsibility to identify, locate, and evaluate all children who may have disabilities. Monroe works with Birth to Three, local preschools, and SRBI teams. *Ms. Fensore* continued that the process begins with a referral, and the referral can be made by the school team or a parent. Once received, a PPT (Planning and Placement Team Meeting) is scheduled to determine if a student needs to be evaluated and develops, reviews or revises an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If the team decides that an evaluation is to be conducted, they will determine eligibility after evaluation is completed.

The PPT participants include an administrator, a special education teacher, a regular education teacher, parents, students, and any others providing services, such as occupational therapy. During the Initial Referral meeting, the team reviews a student's current level of performance and any data collected. If a parent provides their consent for further testing needed, the team has 45 school days to evaluate the student. *Ms. Fensore* provided the Board Members with a decoding activity to illustrate the difficulties.

There was an exercise provided to have the Board better understand the difficulties that students with learning disabilities experience.

Ms. Parsell said that if further testing is needed, the next step is to complete a comprehensive evaluation and testing in the following areas:

- Psychoeducational Evaluation
- Academic Testing
- Speech and Language Evaluations
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Behavior Rating Scales
- Classroom Observations

Once the PPT Team completes the evaluation, there is an Eligibility PPT to review their findings. *Board Member Vaglivo* shared a mock comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation, which examined a student's cognitive, academic, behavioral, and social/emotional functioning. He said that with this process, there is a classroom evaluation, lasting from a half an hour to an hour, and incorporates tests for varied learning methods. *Board Member Vaglivo* also discussed Executive Functioning; He stated that there are a lot of areas, and he gave a brief overview of Cognitive Flexibility, which requires a student to quickly shift their attention to different tasks.

Another area he discussed was Continuous Performance Tasks, which shows the length of a student's attention span compared to their peers of the same age.

Board Member Vaglivello discussed reading performance and wanted to emphasize that students with reading difficulties tend to have average IQs, and there is no relationship between IQ and reading abilities. He continued that there are also assessments for Semantic Memory, Comprehensive Reading, Math, and Written Language. *Board Member Vaglivello* said that the comprehensive testing is lengthy and takes place over time; it can take up to 10 hours to write and compile the report.

Once a student's eligibility for services is established, an IEP is written, and the plan describes in detail the child's special education and related services the district will provide to meet the student's individualized needs.

Old Business

Curriculum - Second Review - Vote Anticipated
STEM Art Course Revision - Julia Strong, STEM Director, and Megan Anderson, STEM/ME Art Teacher

Motion to approve STEM Art Course Revision as presented

Motion: (N. Kapoor)

Second: (A.Vaglivello)

Discussion: Board Member Kapoor stated that he felt this is a great program that aligns with the Vision of the Graduate as well as providing meaningful and marketable skills.

Motion passed 5 (Lane, King, Kapoor, Stevens, Vaglivello)-0

21-040

New Business

Policies - First Review

The following policies are up for first review and will be voted on at the next Board of Education meeting:

- 5145.5/4000.1-Title IX
- 5111-Admission Placement
 - Form # 1-Acknowledgment to exempt attendance (5 or 6 year olds)
 - Form # 2-Acknowledgment to exempt attendance (17 year olds)
 - Form # 3-Declaration of Legal Residency
- 3324.1-Contracts
- 3324-WMNR Reimbursements
- 1250-Visits to the Schools

Board Member Kapoor asked if parents/guardians needed to provide authorization for a student's picture to be taken at school; *Chairman Lane* said that they do need to provide consent through PowerSchool.

Approval of Budget Transfers-Vote Anticipated

Motion to approve the budget transfers as presented at tonight's meeting

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (N. Kapoor)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 5 (Lane, King, Kapoor, Stevens, Vaglivello)-0

21-041

Approval of the Superintendent's Contract-Vote Anticipated

Motion to approve the Superintendent's contract commencing July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (A. Vaglivello)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 5 (Lane, King, Kapoor, Stevens, Vaglivello)-0

21-042

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: (J. Stevens)

Second: (N. Kapoor)

Discussion: None

Motion passed 5 (Lane, King, Kapoor, Stevens, Vaglivello)-0

21-043

Respectfully Submitted,

Alan Vaglivello
Acting Board of Education Secretary