

School Administrative District No. 53

293 Hartland Avenue Pittsfield, ME 04967

(207) 487-5107

Fax: (207) 487-6310

Burnham

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Excellence in Education

Michael A. Gallagher
Superintendent of Schools

Board of Directors

Minutes

11/2/09

Members in attendance: R. Down, B. Basford, S. Nolan, R. Williams, B. Poirier, B. Baldwin, M. Hodgins, J. Bradshaw and J. Laux

Absent: P. Williams

Item 1. Call to Order. R. Downs called the board to order at 7:00 P.M.

Item 2. Adjustments to the Agenda. None

Item 3. Consideration of Minutes of October 5, 2009. On a motion by J. Laux, seconded by B. Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

Item 4. Public Commentary on Agenda Items. None

Item 5. Strategic Plan Goals. Superintendent Gallagher indicated that the District Improvement Team, in their review of the current goals of the strategic plan, felt that they should remain as they are currently written in the new strategic plan. They are broad and reflect the district's mission and vision. From these goals the District Improvement Team and Administrative Team will write objectives to be accomplished under each of the goals. He then directed the board to the blue handout in the board packet showing the first draft of the strategic plan goals and objectives. He summarized the organization of the document and then drew the board's attention to objective two under goal one. This goal is to have the stakeholders of MSAD #53 develop a plan to prioritize needs within existing programs based on data, research and student need. He indicated that he would be working with the Budget/Finance Committee to establish a plan for having the full board weigh in on the priorities of the district at either the December board meeting or the January board meeting. This information will be important in constructing the next fiscal year budget. He also pointed out that under goals two and three there were some ideas for objectives under each of those main goals.

Item 6. Committee Reports. The Budget/Finance Committee report was provided by B. Poirier. She provided a brief review of the written Budget/Finance Committee minutes included in the board packet. She indicated that the over expenditure report had not changed since the last meeting, and that the percentage of the budget that has been expended at this point in time is above each of the last three years, but not significantly. She also indicated that a review of the audit report was provided by the district auditor Charemon Davis. Mrs. Davis indicated that the SAD #53 audit was a clean audit with no recommended modifications to accounting practices. However, Mrs. Davis did suggest that the board develop a policy regarding the utilization of fund balances. It was her suggestion that the district establish additional reserve funds similar to the capital reserve fund that the district currently has. Some discussion regarding the reasons and rationale for having a policy regarding the district's fund balance was conducted.

The Policy Committee report was provided by Mrs. Williams. She indicated that she would address the work of the Policy Committee during the Old Business consideration of policies that were being presented for adoption, and under New Business the policies will be presented for their first reading.

Item 7. Old Business. Presentation on school consolidation/reorganization update - Superintendent Gallagher indicated that a number of board members met with MSAD #68 board members via a video conference on Tuesday, October 27. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the AOS structure. Two examples were provided to the board, one from Mt. Desert and one from AOS 92 made up of Waterville, Winslow and Vassalboro. The two major advantages that were noted by the Superintendents are that the AOS structure allowed the district to maintain their own autonomy and that it fit into a structure that allowed them both to avoid penalties. The downside for both Superintendents were the difficulties regarding the distribution of state funding since the AOS is treated as a single entity without the breakdown of how those funds could be provided to each of the individual units. Superintendent Gallagher also explained that a district in an AOS could receive less funding than they would had they remained an SAD. A question about why that would occur was asked. The explanation provided had to do with special education funding and the placement of a student in a residential treatment facility at a very high expense that would originally be borne by one district that would now be borne by districts across the AOS. As well, the subsidy received for special education was very difficult to dole out in a consistent and fair fashion.

Consideration of policies 9.40, Dropout Prevention/Student Withdrawal from School; 9.41, Alternative Education Programs; 9.42, Free and Appropriate Public Education; and 11.09, Parent Involvement in Special Education. Mrs. Basford questioned the idea of having additional policies added to the already numerous policies that the board has. Answers were provided to her questions, and on a motion by J. Laux, seconded by B. Poirier, the board voted eight in favor, with one abstention, B. Basford, to approve the policies as presented.

Item 8. New Business. Presentation of policies 1.10, Educational Goals; 1.02, Academic Freedom; 1.03, Staff Involvement in Decision Making; 1.04, School District Goals and Objectives; and 5.05, Crisis Intervention. Mrs. Williams provided a brief review of the modifications made to each of the policies included in the first reading. Questions were asked about the modifications with one particular suggestion to review the word “confidence” in policy 1.01, Educational Goals, in relationship to occupational confidence. The issue was that by making this type of statement in a policy, would it open up the board to lawsuits should a child not receive a job after completing school? The Policy Committee will take notice of that at their next meeting, and may choose different language for that particular goal.

Item 9. Superintendent’s Report. Head of School report was provided by Dean of Academics Jim Hornor. He reported first about the H1N1 identification, treatment and vaccinations of MCI residential students. He then discussed the results of the SAT for this current senior class. The SAT’s were taken last spring; this class scored very well in relationship to the state average and to other town academies. Mr. Hornor provided insights into the student performance and made comparisons with the MCI residential population in the areas of English, language arts and math. He then provided a list of college acceptances from the 2009 graduating senior class. He noted that the students had been accepted to 122 different colleges all over the United States. He also indicated that it would be his hope that students from MSAD #53 would be participating in calculus classes at MCI at higher rate than they are currently. Mr. Hornor graciously indicated that the results on the SAT’s earned by this year’s senior class was the result of their education in grades PK through their junior year.

Superintendent Gallagher indicated that the district’s administrators would answer any questions of board members based on their reports. He then indicated that Mr. Nevens had additional information that he wished to provide to the board. Mr. Nevens discussed and then distributed two individual pieces of information regarding middle school education and regarding the awarding of a memorial scholarship in the name of Teresa Poulin Kane. One question was asked of Mrs. Shorey and an answer was provided.

Item 10. Communications. Superintendent Gallagher indicated that included in the board packet was a memo from MSMA regarding state budget reductions. He indicated that the Administrative Team would be meeting on Wednesday, November 4 to discuss how they would address the reductions in state funding that are scheduled to occur this year.

Item 11. Future Agenda Items. None

Item 12. Executive Session. Chair Downs asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session to consult with council regarding legal rights and duties of the board pursuant to 1 MRSA§ 4056 (e). On a motion by B. Basford, seconded by S. Nolan, the board voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 8:12 P.M. The board came out of Executive Session at 8:41 P.M.

Superintendent Gallagher recommended that the board authorize the Superintendent to submit a letter to the Commissioner of Education requesting the designation of a “donut hole” for MSAD #53 after communicating with superintendents in each of the contiguous districts. On a motion by B. Poirier, seconded by B. Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation.

Chair Downs then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a draft of the Superintendent of Schools evaluation pursuant to 1 MRSA § 4056 A. A motion was made by B. Poirier, seconded by R. Downs, and board voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 8:45 P.M. The board came out of Executive Session at 9:32 P.M. and adjourned at 9:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Gallagher