

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, February 8, 2023**
Jon Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant St., Greenfield MA

Present: Elizabeth Deneve (ED); Glenn Johnson-Mussad; (GJM); Kathryn Martini (KM); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW)

Absent: Susan Eckstrom (SE); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Also present: Christine DeBarge, Superintendent; Andy Paquette, TMS, Business Manager; Karin Patenaude, Assistant Superintendent; other school staff, students, & citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (ED, GJM, KM, AP, JW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Michael Kuchieski: Hall of Fame

Dr. DeBarge introduced Michael Kuchieski, GPS Athletic Director & football coach, & presented a trophy to honor his induction into the Massachusetts Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

III. Grinspoon Excellence in Teaching Award winners:

Assistant Supt. Patenaude introduced & congratulated Grinspoon Award winners:

- Deborah Richerson, Kindergarten teacher at Federal Street School
- Shannon Eaton, 6th grade ELA teacher at Greenfield Middle School

IV. Budget Update

Andy Paquette, TMS, reported on FY23 budget, including:

- Meeting with administrators & Dr. Dickinson; reclassifying negative balances
- "As usual, it's going to be tight this year."

V. Approval of Minutes

KM moved to approve draft minutes of January 11, 2023. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Public Comment

Asking School Committee to allow homeschooled students to participate in GPS sports and activities:

Katie Pierce, Greenfield, parent of homeschooled students

Michael Pierce, homeschooled junior, GPS baseball player since 7th grade

Johnny Marchefka, GHS student, baseball teammate

Tom Suchanek, GPS Coach

Alex Siano, Greenfield

V. Reports

A. Student Representatives

S.T. and B.W. reported on GHS clubs' activities and community service projects, winter sports.

GHS team competed in ASMW Quiz Show, will air April 29 on NEPM.

Update on GHS bathroom closures due to vandalism.

B. Administration Reports

1. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Karin Patenaude summarized recent work including high school math curriculum; staff PD; AEL library; grants; DESE's district and schools "report cards." (*Details in written report.*)

Discussion:

- Reasons for choosing math curricula currently under field testing: accessibility to students in intervention & ELL programs, built-in support for absent students to catch up; quality of online/paper components
- Staff survey planned for suggestions to improve PD
- Specific priorities for use of Title I resources
- Description of GPS civics education with state civics grant, new MA civics standards.
- Challenges to gathering data on causes of student absences. GPS staff, including social workers & nurses, regularly reach out to families re: absent students. DESE does not differentiate between excused/unexcused absences.

2. Superintendent

Dr. DeBarge noted awards to staff; grant-supported purchase of food truck; Instructional Leadership Teams; new Sustainability course at GHS; staffing; GCC nursing students interning in GPS; new Wellness Committee; strategic planning surveys; preparing FY24 budget; "Rethinking Discipline" initiative. (*Details in written report.*)

She presented data on MAP test results and projections of MCAS results for grades 2-8 in reading & math. Goal to improve % of students meeting expectations. Growth Summary Report shows students are improving but not up to MAP improvement targets.

Discussion:

- Covid disruption contributed to learning gaps.
- Do MAP results determine PD? Not yet; focus is on learning new curricula.
- Goal for MAP results to guide individualized support for students
- Impact on students & facility of vandalism & closure of GHS bathrooms
- Support for equity focus of GPS social-emotional work, given that discipline data show higher rate for students of color & students with disabilities. Positive approaches to discipline.
- Request for report to School Committee from Glen Franklin, Social Justice and Community Connections Coordinator

C. School Committee Reports

1. Chair (AP)

AP presented subcommittee assignments, same as last year except removed Health, Safety & Facilities Subcommittee. GPS Wellness Committee will include School Committee representative.

Budget & Finance: Eckstrom, Chair; Johnson-Mussad; Martini
Policy & Program: Johnson-Mussad, Chair; Deneeve; Proietti
Redistricting: Wall, Chair; Deneeve, Johnson-Mussad
Rep – Personnel & Collective Bargaining: Wall (alt. Proietti)
Rep – Collaborative for Educational Services: Deneeve
Rep – City Planning & Construction: Proietti
Rep – Library Building: Wall
Rep – Sick Bank: Martini (alt. Johnson-Mussad)

Rep – Strategic Planning: Wall
Rep – Wellness: Martini

KM moved to approve the subcommittee assignments for 2023, as presented. ED 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Collaborative for Educational Services (ED)

ED announced these events:

March 11, Transforming Education for Social Justice, UMass Amherst. ED is attending.
March 20, DYS Racial Trauma Conference

ED will make Drive folder to share CES information, and will consult with Supt. to find meeting space in Greenfield for CES meetings.

3. Policy (GJM)

Working on Subcommittee's 2023 calendar.

4. Re-Envisioning our School Facilities (JW)

JW presented background:

- JW and GJM began effort 3 years ago. Covid stalled subcommittee's work.
- As new superintendent, Dr. DeBarge initiated study of all buildings.
- Four options proposed, followed by listening forums around Greenfield and with GPS teachers & administrators. Support to move 5th grade back to elementary, move 8th grade back to middle school.
- Favored option: K-1, 2-3, 4-5 in 3 separate elementary school buildings. If approved, will be several years to implementation.
- Challenges: Transportation, and what to do with Green River School. Concern re: stipulations on state funding to repair Green River School.
- Subcommittee will continue its work, to hear concerns, solve problems.

Vote on Option 1 at upcoming meeting, to allow time to prepare for decision.

JW moved to request the Superintendent to review both transportation information regarding Option 1 and also the status of Green River as a school in the Greenfield Public Schools. ED 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Budget Subcommittee

Dr. DeBarge reported in SE's absence:

- Work continues on Superintendent's Budget for FY24; includes 4 new staff positions.
- Seeking change in City's handling of Medicaid reimbursements for medical services GPS provides to students. Currently, City receives and keeps reimbursements. Want Mayor to transfer \$ to schools. Approx. \$200K/year.
- Seeking funds to pay recording secretary for subcommittee meetings.

VI. Business

A. Dupere Law: Updated Retainer

Proposed new agreement is \$4,000/month, an increase from previous retainer but less than attorney fees prior to 2020, when GPS first hired Dupere firm. Noted that legal services are exempt from bid requirement.

JW moved to approve the updated retainer for Dupere Law Offices. GJM 2nd. Motion passed 4-0-1 (KM temporarily absent from room).

B. Tuition rates at Academy of Early Learning

Dr. DeBarge explained that three-year progressive increase in tuition was requested to begin 2021-22 school year, but not implemented. Increased rates are still competitive. Acknowledge that some districts offer free preschool for all. Currently at AEL, 30% pay full price; just under half are students with IEPs who attend free. AEL encourages parents to apply for reduced tuition.

GJM moved to accept the recommendations from the Superintendent to approve the 2023-2024 increased tuition at Academy of Early Learning. KM 2nd.

Discussion:

- Support for universal free preschool, but realistically we don't have tax base to support.
- During pandemic, the change to remote preschool meant large loss of tuition income.

Motion passed 4-1 (Yes - GJM, KM, AP, JW; No - ED).

C. Restrict enrollment in Commonwealth Virtual Schools

DESE will ask every year in which >1% GPS students attend a virtual school. Current virtual enrollment = 1.29%. AP recommends no action this year, consistent with prior years.

GJM moved to restrict enrollment from GPS in Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools to 1% of the district enrollment, beginning in academic year 2023-2024, and based on the October 2022 SIMS report. KM 2nd.

Discussion:

- If we don't vote limit, maximum is automatically 2%.
- Desire to keep Greenfield students in GPS district.
- Currently 19 students. Virtual school is needed option for medically fragile students.
- Student outcomes of virtual programs are "not particularly positive."
- Cautious of unintended consequences: Are we prepared to meet special needs of students who would otherwise enroll in virtual school?

Motion failed 1-4 (Yes - GJM; No - ED, JW, KM, AP).

D. Library books at GHS surplus

GJM moved to declare as surplus the library books from Greenfield High School listed on the provided Weeding List. ED 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Requests for New Agenda Items

For March agenda: Redistricting vote; School Committee annual calendar.

Reminder of budget hearing on March 2.

VIII. Executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a) (3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; (4) To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto; (7): to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements (approval of executive session minutes from January 11, 2023 meeting). The committee will not return to Open Session.

KM moved to enter Executive Session. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 9:03 p.m.

KM moved to adjourn public session. GJM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

GJM moved to adjourn. ED 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. out of executive session.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Materials

1. Agenda: February 8, 2023
2. Draft minutes: January 11, 2023
3. Superintendent's Update, February 8, 2023
4. Assistant Superintendent Update, February 8, 2023
5. Financial Reports, February 1, 2023
6. MAP Projected Proficiency Summary Report and Student Growth Summary Report
7. GPS School Committee Subcommittee Assignments, January 20223
8. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School Enrollment Restrictions
9. GHS Library Weeding List (300s through 700s)
10. Commendation for Stephanie Coffin
11. Retainer Agreement by and between the Greenfield Public Schools and the Dupere Law Offices, P.C.
12. Summary of Options for Re-Imagining our School Facilities, Fall 2022
13. Academy of Early Learning:
 - a. Memo to School Committee from Christine DeBarge, "Tuition Increase Request," February 7, 2023
 - b. Memo to Steve Nembirkow [Business Manager] from Jordana Harper [Supt.], "AEL Tuition," January 22, 2020
 - c. Preschool Tuition Fee Comparisons SY 22/23