

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Monday, November 22, 2021
Greenfield MA

Note: This meeting was held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20.

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Susan Hollins (SH) (arrived 6:02); Glenn Johnson-Mussad (GJM); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Absent: Amy Proietti (AP)

Also present: Christine DeBarge, Superintendent; Karin Patenaude, Assistant Superintendent

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, GJM, JW, JW, RW) and in absence of Chair Proietti, Vice-Chair Eckstrom called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Public Comment

Jayne Winnell, GMS staff, spoke to healing trauma & support for transformative justice.

Andrea Michael, parent, wants to hear from teachers & staff; is opposed to SRO, consider only as temporary solution in crisis.

Lozen Adastr, Northampton, spoke to his trauma of having police officer in his school.

Elizabeth deNeeve shared concerns that adding SRO was a "done deal," pointed to studies of schools with SROs.

Garrett O'Brien, former special education GHS staff, noted increased difficult behaviors are not a Greenfield-only problem; spoke against SRO & in favor of student-centered intervention.

Doug Selwyn spoke against SROs; noted underfunding by state/federal gov't to support educators & families.

James Henry noted that SRO has been successful support for his son.

Molly Merrett spoke against SRO & in favor of restorative justice, offered example of Pa'lante program in Holyoke.

Adrienne Nunez spoke against SRO, encouraged supports needed by students.

Kaydance Scotto noted need for care & compassion, not control; supports of restorative justice, partnerships with community organizations.

Ann Childs, parent, supports SRO with comfort dog & recommended later school start time.

Dawn, parent, spoke in support of SRO who built relationships with students in her children's school.

Melissa Webb said that staff in schools should make decision.

Trey Henry, parent, said her child would not feel safe with police officers.

Marianne Bullock, parent & incoming City Councilor, spoke against SRO, concerned that students of color are disproportionately affected.

Ella noted that many students need a trusted adult to talk to but should be mental health professionals, not SRO.

Eve Bogdanove, parent & trauma therapist, spoke to severe understaffing as core problem.

Andrew, Florence, spoke against SROs.

III. School Committee Reports

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Health, Safety, and Facilities (KC)

KC and GJM summarized Subcommittee's discussion: recognition of crisis; need to tighten & practice safety measures; focus on equity, protecting children in trauma. Goal to empower Superintendent to plan best ways to support students.

KC moved, as part of a multi-tiered support system, sensitive to equity issues in our schools, that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to begin discussions with the Chief of Police on safety and security support options from his department, for our schools, and report back to the School Committee. RW 2nd.

Discussion:

- Supt. already has authority, is pursuing multiple strategies
- Complex issues affected by discipline policies, literacy, crowded classrooms, violence in media, etc. Seek short-term & long-term solutions.
- Concerns re: challenges felt by students transitioning to new building
- Support for Supt. & Police Chief to work together
- Requesting comments from GPS educators
- All options to return to School Committee for discussion

Supt. DeBarge reported on recent work & challenges:

- Increased social work staff at GHS, GMS
- Purchased sensory materials that help students calm
- Staffing is a challenge
- Working on increasing structure & opportunities for volunteers
- PD for trauma-informed care
- Working to strengthen academic & social-emotional curricula
- Need for consistency among schools
- Acknowledged staff doing exceptional work
- Working with local & state social service resources

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Policy & Program (GJM)

a. Policy JIC: Student Conduct

JIC was approved by School Committee in August in time-sensitive expedited vote. Request for Policy Subcommittee to re-visit.

b. Policy JLCD: Administering Medicines to Students

School Committee had previously approved on expedited basis, with recommendation to move details out of the policy and into administrative regulations. Recommended sequence is to adopt now, bring back to Committee for affirmation vote.

GJM moved to adopt Policy LJCD: Administering Medicines to Students, as presented in our packet, on the first reading. RW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Policy BEDH: Public Comment

Presented for second reading and vote.

GJM moved to approve and adopt the Public Comment Policy [BEDH], as presented. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Vote to assign school committee members to GEA & Transportation collective bargaining negotiations

GJM moved to table item to December meeting. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (a): (4) To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto.

Executive Session not needed.

IV. Adjournment

SH moved to adjourn. GJM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda: November 22, 2021 Special Meeting
2. Policy JLCD Administering Medicines to Students