

Carlisle School Committee Minutes
October 5, 2005
Robbins Library, Carlisle Public School

Present – School Committee: David Dockterman, Chair; Nicole Burkel, Vice-Chair; Michael Fitzgerald; Christy Barbee; Wendell Sykes.

Present – School Administrators: Marie Doyle, Superintendent; Stephen Goodwin, Principal; Steven Moore, School Business Manager; Michael Giurlando, Assistant Principal, Linda Stapp, Director of Student Support Services.

David Dockterman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Review of Minutes

Wendell Sykes made a motion to approve the minutes of September 21, 2005 as amended. Christy Barbee seconded the motion, and all members present voted in favor.

Communications/Correspondence

Mr. Dockterman reviewed the material in the communications folder. Public hearings will be held across the state in the coming months to discuss education reform. He had received material from MASBO regarding a meeting about school building projects. Steve Moore is planning to attend the meeting.

Introductions

Superintendent Marie Doyle introduced the teachers attending the meeting: Wendy Stack and Mimi Chandler.

Superintendent's Report

- A. **Strategic Planning Committee.** Ms. Doyle reported that the first strategic planning meeting had been held with the teacher members of the committee. They had an excellent discussion about values. She would like to include a wide range of people on the committee, including representative Carlisle senior citizens. Her goal is to assemble a team with different voices and different opinions. The plan is to re-examine the School's vision and mission statements, and Jon Saphier will be working with the team on the strategic plan.
- B. **Elementary Parents' Night.** Elementary Parents' Night was held on September 29, 2005 and was well received by the parents. Middle School Parents' Night is scheduled for October 6, 2005.
- C. **Staff Coffee.** Ms. Doyle had the first of four scheduled staff coffees. The staff coffee was well attended and people seemed upbeat and optimistic about the new school year. She also visited with parents at a parent/superintendent coffee on September 30, 2005.

- D. **Chinese Partnership Committee.** The Chinese Partnership Committee had their first meeting. The focus was on a Chinese New Year celebration for the School and the town. Chiao Bin Huang will be working on this, and she hopes to have more student involvement this year. She is teaching her classes traditional Chinese dances.
- E. **Staff Development Update.** Ms. Doyle reported that there would be a professional day on Tuesday, October 11, 2005. Louise Thompson will be here meeting with staff and discussing curriculum and benchmarks.
- F. **CSA Fair.** Ms. Doyle had a chance to address the parents at the annual CSA Fair. She extended special thanks to Kim Rusling-Flynn for her work on the Husky Handbook. Ms. Barbee noted that she would like to get a copy of the Handbook, and Ms. Doyle stated that she would follow up on this.
- G. **Staff Softball Game.** A softball game for faculty and staff was held on September 23, 2005. Ms. Doyle thanked Liz Gray for organizing the event.
- H. **Practice Lockdown.** Ms. Doyle stated that a practice lockdown had been held and had gone very smoothly. Mr. Sykes asked for clarification on this, and Ms. Doyle explained that this is a practice for the procedure that would be followed if there were an intruder on the school campus.
- I. **DeCordova Gallery on the Go.** An exhibit from the DeCordova Museum had been installed in the school library thanks to a cultural enrichment and CSA grant. Artists will be coming to School to discuss the exhibit with students.
- J. **Newcomers Coffee.** Over 40 people attended the newcomers' coffee, which the CSA sponsors to welcome new school families. Ms. Doyle noted that this is an excellent and unique local event.
- K. **Science Clubs.** The after school science clubs have begun and are very popular. They are over-enrolled, and school staff is working on a plan to handle this and make the clubs available to all who wish to attend.
- L. **Rosh Hashanah and Ramadan.** Ms. Doyle noted that the teachers handled the holiday absences and student workload very well. She and Stephen Goodwin had sent explanations to the teachers and instructions about homework. Mr. Goodwin noted that these holidays were more public this year, which is very positive.
- M. **Kindergarten Hullabaloo.** The Kindergarten Hullabaloo was held on October 5, 2005. All students and Kindergarten staff participated along with parent volunteers in this highly successful event.
- N. **Donations.** Ms. Doyle informed the School Committee about a donation made by Caroline Howe to the school's music program. She has written a thank you note to Caroline and commended her on her philanthropy. Ms. Doyle also received a surprise check from the Old Home Day Committee for the Middle School art department. Middle School students had helped set up the art show for Old Home Day.

Members/Committee Reports

School Building Committee. Ms. Barbee reported that the School Building Committee met on September 29, 2005. The committee discussed the possibility of funding a

larger generator than required for the Waste Water Treatment Plant to support emergency power for a town emergency. After reviewing a presentation, it was determined that this option would be too expensive, and should really be part of overall emergency planning for the town. SBC also discussed the process for the HMFH meetings with school staff on October 7, 2005.

Concord-Carlisle Regional School Committee. Michael Fitzgerald reported on the most recent Regional School Committee meeting. The committee has been reviewing policies. They also accepted the 2005 - 2006 District Goals for the region. He noted that the new Student Advisory Committee has met and that Carlisle is well represented on the committee.

Cell Tower Committee. Mr. Sykes reported that the committee had received a consultant proposal to review both the coverage plan for the town and the existing cell tower bylaw.

Long Term Capital Requirements. Mr. Sykes reported that the LTCRC is planning to send out a memo to all town boards requesting details as to how they determine their capital needs.

All Boards Meeting. Mr. Dockterman, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Sykes, and Ms. Barbee had attended the meeting and presented the school issues discussed at the September 21, 2005 School Committee meeting. There was discussion at the meeting regarding the technology infrastructure and problems maintaining information technology. David Trask of the Finance Committee presented a bleak financial picture for the town, but Selectman, Tim Hult, reported that the town had received some unexpected reimbursement.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Ms. Doyle stated that the Concord Consortium would be presenting a program regarding science, technology, and engineering in schools on October 11, 2005. She also stated that several school staff would be attending an upcoming STEM conference in Sturbridge.

Information/Discussion Items

A. MCAS. Steve Goodwin introduced the discussion by noting there is much to celebrate with the recent MCAS scores and also things we need to continue to work on. He handed out a table comparing Carlisle Public School scores with similar districts and noted that our school scores are very similar to comparable schools.

He then distributed a set of graphs, which showed MCAS results for Carlisle classes over time. He particularly noted that the current 6th grade reached a good level of achievement in the 5th grade science test compared with earlier scores in their 4th grade math test. He noted that this is evidence of all the work done with the class. He also noted that almost all classes show improvement over the years they have taken the tests and that by 8th grade, scores are very good.

Ms. Barbee asked how the MCAS results compare with other measurements the school uses. Mr. Goodwin stated that the benchmark work is nearing completion and will help us determine this better. He stated that we need to do more internal measurements and are working on this. Mr. Dockterman stated that it would be great to be able to eventually compare our benchmarks with MCAS results. Ms. Doyle noted that one of the best indicators was the work done with last year's 5th grade. The science scores validated the extra work done with the class.

Mr. Goodwin read part of a letter he had sent to staff regarding MCAS. He stressed that it's only one tool used to measure our students' achievement and the need to maintain balance in assess students' performance. MCAS is a very public indicator, but we need to keep it in perspective with all the other things done in the classroom.

Mr. Sykes asked for additional information regarding our special needs students. Mr. Goodwin stated that the Massachusetts test is one of the most challenging. Linda Stapp explained that all Carlisle students are reflected in the scores, even those who may be in special schools. She noted that some special needs students submit a portfolio for evaluation instead of taking the full test. Ms. Doyle stated that there has been much discussion statewide about how to handle special needs students.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked why the 4th grade continues to score lower than the other grades, and wondered if part of it might be that it's the first time the students have seen the test. Mr. Goodwin agreed that this might be part of the reason. He also noted that there has been more turnover on the 4th grade team than in some other areas. This can make it harder for the team to own the curriculum. In some schools there is more teacher specialization in 4th grade, and the Carlisle team will be discussing this. He stated that it should be possible to help students prepare for the tests by teaching them terms, without teaching to the test.

Mr. Fitzgerald commended the school administration for not teaching to the test. He said that the Carlisle Public Schools have always produced high-level, high-thinking students and we should continue to do this aside from the MCAS tests,

Nicole Burkel expressed concern about spelling and basic grammar. She said that parents have spoken to her about these skills, and that we need to have measurement tools such as benchmarks for these skills.

Parent Alex Krapf stated that he is concerned about the 4th grade, although he can see the progression of our students over time. He wondered why we are our 4th graders are 70th in the state and what we are not doing that other schools are. He asked about the mathematics curriculum. Ms Doyle stated that many schools are using the same math program as Carlisle, but that a math review team is evaluating the Everyday Math program. The team is looking in depth into using other programs to supplement the current curriculum.

- B. **Policy Review.** The following three policies were reviewed with the intent that they should be re-affirmed:

**Gift and Loan
Pest Management
Annual Formation of the School Council**

The School Administrative Team had reviewed the policies, and recommended that they be re-affirmed.

Ms. Barbee asked about the pest management policy and the management of pesticides. Ms. Doyle responded that David Flannery keeps up on pesticide safety through state and federal websites.

Action Items:

A. Vote to accept the 2005 -2006 District Goals.

Ms. Burkel made a motion to accept the 2005 - 2006 District Goals. Ms. Barbee seconded the motion, and all members voted in favor.

B. Vote to accept a \$100 donation from Caroline Howe.

Mr. Sykes made a motion to gratefully accept the \$100 donation from Caroline Howe. Ms. Burkel seconded the motion, and all members voted in favor.

C. Vote to accept Old Home Day donation.

Mr. Sykes made a motion to accept the donation of \$200 for the Carlisle Public Schools Middle School art program. Ms. Burkel seconded the motion, and all members voted in favor.

There was no additional business, and Mr. Dockterman asked for a motion to adjourn to executive session to discuss litigation and contract negotiations. The meeting would not return to an open session. **Ms. Barbee made a motion to enter executive session. Ms. Burkel seconded the motion. The roll call vote follows: Mr. Dockterman, yes; Mr. Sykes, yes; Ms. Barbee, yes; Ms. Burkel, yes; Mr. Fitzgerald, yes.**

The public meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire M. Wilcox
Assistant to the Superintendent