

MSAD #51 PTO  
Meeting Minutes  
October 13, 2009

7:00pm

MIW Library

**Attending:** Gloria Nicholson, Nancy Savage-Marcus, Tracy Silverman, Laura Singer, Karen Campbell, Sally Hunter, Ericka Winchester, Chris Hall, Linda Collins, Darin Lary, Heather Giandrea, Vickie Bell, Beth Smith, Greg Smith, Kelly Craig, Jen Rohde, Katie Campbell, Lalla Carothers, Tricia Small, Sara Perfetti, George Marcus, Margo Harrington, Jen Segal, Mori LeFevre

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

7:02pm call to order by Heather Giandrea.

Heather introduced guest speakers Superintendent Bob Hasson, and Curriculum Director David Galin. Called for self introductions of room with 24 people in attendance.

**2. PTO addressed by Dr. Bob Hasson, Superintendent of schools, and David Galin, Curriculum Director MSAD 51**

**Bob Hasson** gave Superintendent's current overview of MSAD#51

Declining enrollment

400 employees

\$28 million budget

Fantastic results primarily due to:

Students

Supportive families, parents, guardians

Excellent support staff

School Board consists of 8 members from North Yarmouth/Cumberland

Functions in quasi-judicial manor

Focus on one issue at a time (single employee, policy, goal)

Superintendent's role is implementation of Board's recommendations.

Current challenges:

1. Enrollment – declining sharply from 2200 to projected 1800 if no change

2. Funding – decreasing at state, national, global levels

\$350,000 curtailment last year (7/1/08 – 6/30/09)

Anticipates:

real curtailment - 2009/2010,

funding cliff (when federal money runs out) - 2010/2011

("unpleasant")

3. Lack of diversity – number one "marker" from post-grads

4. Arts – an area that is "adequate", particularly with dance, movement

Strengths:

1. Trained community asset: Arts Alliance

2. Language – Modern Classical Strategic Language program needs to be expanded or reoriented. 2007 task force established recommendations currently available to implement, however no funding available to put into practice.

School Board's goals: (passed out MSAD 51 Annual District Report)

Tasks, Stewardship

The Board is working on a Sustainability Task force\* to focus on the use of assets and buildings.

**David Galin**, Curriculum Director gave overview of district curriculum, structure

K-5: increase literature and structure, with writing curriculum focused on 6-7 units of study/year

Broken down K-2 and grades 3-5

Grades 3-5, while same general units covered, now writing personal essays. Reports “phenomenal results” due to increased writing.

Grades K-2: consistent phonics strand for reading

Grades 3-5: effective directive structure

All students (grades 1-5) have 2 hands-on sciences (goal) and physical earth space/life science units per year.

Grade 6: Focus on **Impact** math with a sample set in 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Next year, plan for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> performing **Impact** math with sample set in 8<sup>th</sup>

Galín noted that general math performance decreased after 5<sup>th</sup> grade with no corresponding drop in reading, therefore curriculum changed. Partnering with **Scarborough** school. Goal for students to enter high school beyond Algebra I.

Grades 6,7,8 – Literacy

Identify common units of study

All students take English and Social Studies with these topics all 3 years:

Persuasive writing

Literary analysis

Research

High School/ IBC – accepted last year with approx 50% of the teachers trained to instruct at least one IB course. **Currently 21 students are enrolled in IB.**

International Baccalaureate (IB) = rigorous programming both junior and senior years

Requiring same 6 courses x2 years

English

Foreign language

Elective (art/music)

Math

Science

Social Studies

IB full diploma = “Theory of Knowledge”

International Baccalaureate is the best preparation for college.

National feedback from college freshmen states this increases academic preparation, and that they are prepared to write and think.

MSAD51 partnering with Bedford and Kennebunk

School Board offers presentations reflecting initiatives:

Full day Kindergarten (after 4 years) – Susie Robbins to report.

Technology – not a strength but looking to improve.

Increase community involvement:

Forum sustainability task force – Susan Campbell is lead.

Initially anticipated student growth for 2400, however currently under 2200 with continued anticipated decline to 1800 in next 8 years.

Big question – Is this OK?

How to best use our assets?

Different ways to look at funding schools?

(eg: new athletic fee)

Budget revisited regarding choices, input is thinking behind forum

Where is value/should money be allocated in tight budget:

Arts

World language

Academic choice at HS level

AP/special programming/ full range of electives

**Questions addressed by speakers:**

Linda Collins recognized the importance of budget forum. Asked David Galin if he could make available copy identifying budget breakdown being very transparent regarding the cost of each item for review prior to school board meeting discussing budget cuts.

David Galin and Bob Hasson conferred and stated this should be no problem.

Jen Rohde asked what the PTO should do to best support MSAD 51 at this time? Particularly given new 501C3 status – grants?

Bob Hasson responded affirmatively to grants, and further replied that outlining our positions and passions during the budget season – where money is, how it's being spent and to glean from the public where their interests are. He states he believes the "Greenwich Effect" is coming (quasi-private groups that raise money to keep student/teacher ratios down).

Bob Hasson further stated budget cut 2-4% of the development office's budget.

States the most important thing is to grasp from the community what its priorities are. Current picture will not be able to continue – requires reprioritization and separate funding.

Jen Rhodes asked Bob Hasson to identify the distinctions seen between N. Yarmouth and Cumberland from his perspective.

Bob Hasson replied that his goal is to teach students to think and communicate like world citizens, with the necessary technological and math skills required. Noted that when IB programs initiated, everyone's data goes up in schools.

Reports this district is "new" since 1966. #1 asset beyond the people = schools  
Very little here (NY/C) other than the schools.

Laura Singer questioned if Ivy league schools get good results – college admissions looks at the highest range of what a school offers at high school level. Are we watering down college prep for the average kid? What percentage of kids graduate with IB degree?

David Galin responds that of 175 juniors, 21 (12%) taking full diploma with 30-35 taking at least one IB course Further notes that in 1993, 63% of GHS did not access AP/advanced courses.

Further answered that one doesn't water down the other. His belief is it opens doors. The full IB diploma is not for the majority of students.

If looking at college prep, Maine leads the country in high school graduation, BUT sends fewer students to college initially, AND fewer students return after their freshman year.

Asking more of students than ever before. Three areas students need to be prepared: academic, financial and social. Need to make them academically ready at minimum.

Greg Smith questioned how many have entered college and how many achieved degree?

David Galin responded that 2003 was the first year this data was available and notes it is not 100% complete. But reports last year approximate college graduation between 50-60% graduated or are no longer in school, with approximately 70% enrolled at the end of freshman year.

Follow up question notes the availability of this date on the School Board website and asks can we do the same for the IB program?

Bob Hasson interjects that the national average for college graduation is 6 years.

Jen Rhode asks for comment about attracting new students and if this is seeking to increase the diversity of the student body.

Bob Hasson reports that school actively marketing for tuition students. This was stopped 8 years ago (revenue then was \$5-600,000). Further reports a liaison is working with the Portland Public Schools looking for the best way to utilize our physical space – possible options are for student exchange/international studies. Possible foreign exchange students (would increase revenue, diversity and level out enrollment). Reports all academies looking to expand internationally due to declining student enrollment.

Offers that consolidation is another option.

Margo Harrington states people are asking questions regarding the IB program – especially now with the tuition option where should she direct their inquiries?

Bob Hasson replies he or David Galin will address these personally. For more info, they can access the MSAD 51 website.

Kelly Craig asks which direction the DRS physical plant is leaning and how much lead time will the public be given in the event of changes?

Bob Hasson reports the administration promised not to close the DRS in 2009. The big question is how to use the building best. Goal is to make a decision this year (generally), then spend the next year to develop the full plan with the following year being the year of implementation. However he cautions that the board may require quicker action due to budget needs.

Currently, he feels that 5 transitions is too many, especially for special needs kids. He would like to focus on bring the number of transitions down to 3 (ideally). However, he reports the group will look at all configurations and make recommendations. His hope is for a year to plan and then implement in 2011/2012.

Mori LeFevre asks where does he anticipate putting the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and other options for that building?

Bob Hasson replies that his hope is to house a charter school in one of the buildings. Points out we are one of the last states in the US without these. Reviews charter schools as quasi-public, with a 5-year contract and required to obtain performance measures. General trends = personalization of schools with increased choices and high quality. Specific options are Maine Farm Enterprise School (charter), immersion school, modern classical language school.

Katie Campbell worries that the diversity focus will lead to bussing. Reminds participants there are many ways to increase diversity without bringing other kids in because we would ill-prepared to meet the needs of these children.

Sara Perfetti asks how the Superintendent prioritizes and runs the district and is able to take on big projects and turn it into a reality?

Bob Hasson states the current budget is not “needs based”, rather a “stay open” budget. Like a business model, it can only do so much.

Board generally identifies projects and prioritizes them  
1<sup>st</sup> priority = stay open (day to day running of the school)  
Beyond this, it requires volunteers for 1-3 different projects

Believes we need to move from resources to being resourceful.  
Reminds the group that every project has an advocacy base – even if just one person.

Nancy Savage-Marcus asks for ballpark amount regarding budget cuts.

Bob Hasson replies we are waiting on the state. The 2008 budget was \$350,000. No additional funds given for 2009/2010; however fixed costs went up 3-5% leading to a 3-5% budget cut. The Board has run a scenario for up to \$1million in cuts. 2010/2011 is a “crap shoot”.

Addressing the question of why there is so little community backing, Bob Hasson replied that now 49-51% of the community is related to a child currently in school. (State average = 22-23%) However, there is no industrial base. Even if increased this by 8-12% “that would really help.” All revenue comes directly from the taxpayer. Those over 65 years of age, especially in N.Yarmouth are stretched very thin in this community.

David Galin interjects that schools played a very different role in the past in these communities. It is not just a schoolhouse anymore – must meet medical, social and emotional needs as well.

Bob Hasson reports that last year’s budget had something to anger everyone – due to all the cuts. Reminded all this is a highly labor intensive process, and that our diversity is primarily children with special needs.

Gloria Nicholson expressed the frustration of a parent at not being able to access GHS electives.

David Galin noted lots of single offerings given the size of the HS with classes of 5-9 kids. Traditionally, GHS has offered lots of electives as singletons. Certain priority placements given, then the rest filters out. Typical HS day offers a max of 8 courses, but in reality, kids are only taking 5-6 classes.

Bob Hasson reports the school will try to do a better job next year, but that part of the problem is the bounty of choices with only 700 students.

David Galin responds that everyone will get into their needed classes (math, English, American Hx), however there are not unlimited sections of AP bio, physics/advanced math (offered apart because a lot of kids need both), college prep II, AP stats/calculus (offered together because few take both).

Margo Harrington questioned if IB made this harder or worse because of the finite number of teachers/resources?

David Galin replied that he does not believe so –  
IB/AP/independent study art is all the same  
English II changed to IB English  
Decreased history need in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade due to IB  
Decreased intensity of foreign language to increase draw  
Bio/chem. is new for IB and pulls IB kids from general science classes  
All need PE but not available to freshmen  
Math is one section most impacted. Larger sections of advanced classes  
with smaller section earlier in order to best incorporate the IB needs - this  
decision was driven by the teachers.

GHS objective to encourage strong electives, not just fill in the schedule boxes.

Community identified core value of offering electives. This could change with a change in community's values. GHS could just do core courses as many high schools do, or does the community want the opportunity for poetry for 20 kids.

Bob Hasson wrapped up that the PTO offers a fantastic resource to teachers, administrators through support, increased value and funding.

Heather Giandrea addressed participants once speakers left. Expressed her appreciation at the turn out which emphasized the positive momentum building. Reiterated the need for support, feedback at School Board meetings, usually conducted with few participants outside the sitting board. Reminded group that the schools are our primary asset and the next 2 years will be a pivotal turning point in our educational system. This is a great opportunity to share **our** thoughts – especially those with the perspective of experience as a parent in the school district. Called for further questions.

Laura Singer questioned the budget timeline.

Heather Giandrea reminded everyone about the School Board meeting scheduled for 10/19/09 at 7pm at the town hall. All meetings at the town hall except 11/2/09 meeting at Greely. Thank you to Sara Perfetti for getting all town hall meetings taped.

General statements made about the need for full inclusion, why this especially important in focusing on community values. Asked if CD51 would be appropriate place to ask these questions, get answers and inquire as to accountability.

Katie Campbell inquired if minutes available?

Beth Smith asked if this isn't a requirement given elected, public office?

Tricia Small asked about the ability to have anonymous postings on CD51?

Heather Giandrea replied this not possible. Recommended the site be used for questions, inform quickly a specific link. Reports 227 CD51 subscribers to date.

Karen Campbell is chairing the Communication Committee. Looking for:

2 community members

2 school board members

1 other member (speaker unable to recall)

Value = stay on top of School Board communication and advocate for follow through.

\*Sustainability Task Force

**The Board is working on a sustainability task force. The Sustainability Task Force is charged with reviewing available demographic and enrollment data, policies, current school building uses, grade configuration practices, costs and other related information and developing a set of recommendations for the Board of Directors that optimizes the relationship between District assets, student achievement, and costs. Using the District's Mission and Goals as the foundation for its work, the Task Force will examine:**

- enrollment projections and patterns, using data from NESDEC, Policy 1, and the National Center for Education Statistics, as well as State demographic and school enrollment reports,
- facilities assets using the District's Capital Plan and an analysis of the current status (structural and functional) of individual buildings,
- goals for student achievement and the principles that guide academic planning and curriculum development within the District, and
- costs and benefits associated with the operation of the District's instructional facilities.

**The work of the Task Force will culminate in a set of recommendations to be presented to internal and external stakeholders at the Board of Director's first meeting in January, 2010. In preparing its recommendations, the Task Force will provide opportunities for input from the District community, including administrators, teachers, staff members, parents, students, as well as members at-large from North Yarmouth and Cumberland. to focus on the use of assets and buildings.**

### 3. Approval of September Minutes

Linda Collins motioned; Stacey Carlson seconded; minutes were approved.

### 4. Old & New Business

Peter Scott of GHS social services expressed a need and inquired if it fit into the PTO's mission. The Greely Social Needs Fund is requesting \$600.00 to cover all 5 schools for lunch, one-time food assistance off campus, clothing, basic needs, school events and supplies. During discussion, Beth Smith (Fundraising) brought up the Sally Foster fundraising campaign is on track to average 50% of prior years money. Due to PTO funding limitations, above request tabled at this time.

### 5. Committee Reports

#### a) Treasurer

No report given.

#### b) Events

Bus Driver/Custodian Appreciation Day is 10/21 is Appreciation Day. Needs identified for baking to be delivered 10/20 in the morning, followed by arranging 12:30 – 2:30pm on Tues. Food delivery assistance needed in am of Weds 10/21. E-mail for assistance pending.

#### b) Fundraising

decline in giving by 50% from prior year.

#### c) Publicity

No report given.

#### d) Volunteer

Next meeting of Green Team at 3pm with goal to increase participation. Initiating recycling program in middle school – informed already recycling committee – encouraged to see Michelle Dubey for more information. Lowe's grant identified as possible opportunity.

#### e) Enrichment

No update.

#### f) Secretary

No update.

#### g) Co-Chair

No update.

### 8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

**Respectfully submitted:** Stacey Carlson, Co- Secretary, October 18, 2009.