

**Farmington River Regional School District  
Otis/Sandisfield  
555 Main Road, Otis MA 01253  
School Committee Regular Meeting #423  
Friday September 12, 2022, 7:00PM  
Farmington River Library**

**Members Present:** Jess Drenga, Deb Fogel, Amanda Leavenworth,, Carl Nett, Roger Kohler, Arlene Tolopko, Carol Lombardo. **Also present:** Eric Jesner and Robert Putnam

**The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Carol Lombardo.**

**Public Comment**

- Dawn Lemon asked that parents be notified if and when a staff member leaves the employ of the FRES. She also asked for a clarification between the superintendent's role and the principal's role within a school district.
- Phil McGovern asked for an update on the bus schedules which are sporadic and often delayed and asked about the plan for addressing the problem. He also asked if the bus contract offered any recourse for the failure to transport students in a consistent manner.
- Jennifer Thomas asked for information about the financial settlement with Thomas Nadolny. She also wanted to know if there had been any consequences in response to the accusations made in the survey.
- Denise Hardy asked if questions raised in public comment would be addressed and answered by the school committee.

**1. Introduction and welcome Robert Putnam, Principal/Superintendent Interim**

- a. Robert Putnam introduced himself with a brief synopsis of his educational history which can be found in the attached resume.

**2. Discuss Minutes**

- a. The minutes had not been transcribed for the meeting. Putnam explained several options for getting the recorded meeting transcribed and said he would pursue all necessary options to ensure that minutes were transcribed in a timely fashion.

**3. Principal/Superintendent updates**

- **Getting to Know You:** The goal of my first week was to introduce myself to students, families, and staff. To that end I held an All School Assembly on Tuesday to introduce myself to the students and then I followed that up by greeting them in the morning, stopping by classrooms, and wishing them au revoir at the end of the day. I conducted a Zoom meeting for FR families on Thursday September 8 at 7:00 pm. There were 22 participants, but I hope to meet more

families at Back to School Night on the 15th. My effort to meet staff was based on individual interviews lasting from 10-25 minutes. I have met with 25 of our 36 employees to date and will complete the remaining interviews this week.

- **Bussing:** There have been issues with bussing but I believe that resolution is at hand. I spoke with Teri Gardino of Dufour bussing who explained that the problems were the result of staffing shortages. This is not just a problem for FT bussing as many districts are experiencing similar issues. Teri expects the issue to be resolved because a new driver has been hired and will start work on September 19th.
  - **Staffing:** The principal secretary position has not yet been filled despite several interviews. I am expanding the search by adding School Spring and Berkshire Jobs to our list of posting sites. I am also looking into sites in Westfield as I only recently realized our proximity. I have reached out to TEC Staffing Services in Pittsfield MA to explore the option of a temporary position until we can fill.
  - **Back-to-School Night:** The event is scheduled for this Thursday from 6-7 pm. The evening is divided into three 20 minute segments; all together, 20 minutes in the classroom with another child's teacher, 20 minutes in the classroom of another child or with specialists. The purpose is for teachers to explain the goals, materials, and procedures for the grade level.
  - **After School Programs:** The after School Program began today with Girls on the Run. Girls on the Run has fun, evidence-based programs that inspire all girls to build their confidence, kindness and decision making skills. Dynamic lessons instill valuable life skills including the important connection between physical and emotional health. The culminating event is a 5K run. The program is scheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays 3:10-4:40 and 6 teachers are collaborating on the coaching. Band will be starting this week on Wednesday afternoon. Proposals are being submitted and more programs will be announced as the proposals are reviewed and approved.
  - **Student Teachers:** Westfield State regularly sends student teachers to our school for observations and practicums. They started trickling in this week.
  - **Nature's Classroom:** Students in grades 5 and 6 will be spending the week in Ivoryton, CT starting September 26. The students will participate in field groups, special interest activities, and evening activities. We have arranged programming for students who opt out of the opportunity.
4. **Discuss the Administrative options for long term Principal/Superintendent position**
- a. Putnam prefaced the discussion with a handout (see attached) that delineated the interlocking responsibilities of a School Committee, superintendent, and principal. The document was based on an MASC Charting the Course handout.

- b. Putnam pointed out the costs and issues associated with what he considered the possible administrative configurations: (1) principal/superintendent, (2) full-time principal/part-time superintendent, (3) full-time principal/contract with a neighboring district for superintendent services or joining a Superintendency Union. He presented his calculations for each of the configurations and said that configurations 2 and 3 would cost more than configuration 1. He also described the pros and cons associated with the three configurations.
- c. The committee discussed the three configuration options and #2, although not voted on, was the favorite of the group.

**5. Discuss the qualifications for a new Principal**

- a. Putnam informed the committee that the PTA and the FRES staff were in the process of identifying the qualities they want to see in a principal candidate. Leavenworth made a motion to reopen public comment but the motion was withdrawn when it was agreed that public questions could be sent to members and answered at subsequent meetings.

**6. Adjournment.** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tolopko and seconded by Fogel. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting. At approximately 8:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Robert R. Putnam, Interim Principal/Superintendent

## Attachment 1

**Robert R. Putnam**  
**24 Crooked Hill Road Alford, MA 01230**  
**413-528-8464 Home 413-358-2690 Cell**  
[putnam.robert@gmail.com](mailto:putnam.robert@gmail.com)

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

- 2021 Interim Principal for Richmond Consolidated School
- 2020 Interim Superintendent for the Mt. Greylock Regional School District
- 2019-2020 Interim Director of Learning and Teaching Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- 2019-2020 Assistance Lead for the Statewide System of Support
- 2016-2018 Superintendent of the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District
- 2015-2016 Teacher (Middle School Music) Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- 2014-Aug. 31 2015 Superintendent of Central Berkshire Regional School District
- 2010-2014 Assistant Superintendent of Central Berkshire Regional School District
- 2006-2010 Director of Teaching and Learning of Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- 2003-2006 Principal of Berkshire Stockbridge Plain and Muddy Brook
- 2001-2003 Director of Teaching and Learning of Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- 1988-2001 Teacher (Elementary and Music) in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District
- 1978-Present Professional Musician

### **EDUCATION**

- 1996 **Ed.D.** University of Massachusetts Curriculum Studies
- 1986 **M.Ed.** University of Massachusetts Instructional Leadership
- 1978 **B.A.** University of Massachusetts European History

### **RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- 2016-Present Berkshire County Education Task Force (BCETF)
- 2016 MCLA Adjunct Professor
- 2014 MASS/MASC New Superintendents Induction Program
- 2013 Coordinator for the Berkshire County Curriculum Frameworks Project School
- 2012 Leaders Network Training
- 2012 Data Team Training with Research for Better Teaching
- 2011 PARCC Presenter for DSAC
- 2010 NISL Berkshire Cohort
- 2010-2014 McKinney-Vento Coordinator, ELL Coordinator, Title I Coordinator Conducted
- 2009 Lenox Supervision and Evaluation Training
- 2009 South Berkshire Educational Collaborative Mentor Training
- 2008 Hampshire Education Collaborative Instructor in Administrative Licensure
- 2008 Curriculum Design and Delivery Training with Phi Delta Kappan
- 2007-2013 Associate with Consulting Partners, Inc.
- 2006 Understanding by Design Training with Grant Wiggins
- 2006-2007 Director of the BHRSD Comprehensive Induction Program
- 2007 Gardner High School-NEASC Curriculum Team
- 2007 Secretary for the revision of the BHRSD Administrator Evaluation Document
- 2006 Developed the BHRSD Long Range Technology Plan
- 2006 Secretary for the revision of the BHRSD Supervision and Evaluation Document
- 2003-2004 Completion of Research for Better Teaching OAT I and OAT II

### **GRANT WRITING EXPERIENCE**

Title I Grant, Title II Grant, DSAC Grant, PLTW Grant, Kindergarten Enhancement Grant, NCLB Grant, Reading Intervention Grant, RTTT Competitive Reading First Grant, Competitive Elementary School Wide Literacy Grant, Competitive Comprehensive School Reform Grant for \$50,000.

## Attachment 2

### COMPARISON OF THE RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE, SUPERINTENDENT, AND PRINCIPAL

Based on MASC 2007 Document from Charting the Course

Prepared in Collaboration with The Center for Public School Leadership:

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Bridgewater State College

School Committee	Superintendent	Principal
<p>Policy Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish and periodically review educational goals and policies for the schools in the district, consistent with the requirements of law and the statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education. This is the primary role of the school committee. Policies should be reflective of the fact that the school committee has oversight of and responsibility for the school system, the direction in which the system must go, and establish criteria to determine if its goals and policies are being met.</li></ul>	<p>Policy Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and inform the committee of administrative procedures required to implement committee policies.</li><li>Present policy options along with specific recommendations to the school committee when circumstances require the committee to adopt new policies or review existing policies</li></ul>	<p>Policy Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refer to policy manual and ensure actions are in accordance.</li></ul>
<p>Finance Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review and approve a budget for education in the district according to a process and timeline developed with the superintendent.</li><li>Work to ensure that necessary funds are appropriated for the district and that a balance is maintained between needs and resources in the distribution of available monies.</li><li>Oversee the operation of the annual</li></ul>	<p>Finance Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop a timeline and recommend to the school committee the system's educational goals and annual school budget</li><li>Oversee the operation of the annual school budget. Provide periodic updates to school committee.</li><li>Provide early notice of any potential budget overruns.</li></ul>	<p>Finance Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stay within the budget.</li><li>Work with staff to determine needs and prioritize needs based on the direction of the superintendent.</li></ul>

school budget.		
<p>Staffing Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint the superintendent.</li> <li>• Hire legal counsel.</li> <li>• Appoint the assistant/associate superintendents, school business administrator, administrator of special education, school physicians and registered nurses (unless employees of the Board of Health), and supervisors of attendance, upon recommendation of the superintendent.</li> <li>• Consent to hiring based on the superintendent's recommendation should not be unreasonably withheld.</li> <li>• Set compensation for the superintendent and overall compensation limits for assistant/associate superintendents, school business administrator, administrator of special education, school physicians and registered nurses, legal counsel, supervisors of attendance, school principals, and other administrators not assigned to particular schools.</li> <li>• Prescribe additional qualifications for educator positions, beyond basic certification.</li> <li>• Discipline or terminate the employment of the superintendent, in accordance with state law and the terms of the contract of employment.</li> <li>• Terminate employment of legal counsel.</li> </ul>	<p>Staffing Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint, discipline and discharge administrators, principals, and staff not assigned to particular schools.</li> <li>• Review and approve principal's hires of all teachers, athletic coaches and other personnel assigned to a particular school, consistent with district personnel policies and budgetary restrictions.</li> <li>• Initiate or review and approve discipline or discharge of staff.</li> </ul>	<p>Staffing Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire, discipline, and discharge staff members.</li> </ul>
Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as employer of school employees for collective bargaining purposes.</li> <li>• Designate a negotiator or negotiating team.</li> <li>• Receive advice from superintendent about educational consequences of bargaining positions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as a resource in collective bargaining.</li> <li>• Assure adherence to all collective bargaining agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to collective bargaining agreement.</li> </ul>
<p>Performance Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, the performance standards for teachers and other employees of the school district.</li> <li>• Evaluate the performance of the superintendent.</li> <li>• Conduct self-evaluation of the committee's effectiveness in meeting its stated goals and performing its role in public school governance.</li> </ul>	<p>Performance Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure the evaluation of personnel and provide training for evaluators in harmony with district policy.</li> <li>• Develop performance standards for all staff that are in keeping with school committee policy, contractual agreements and educational goals of the district.</li> </ul>	<p>Performance Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and supervise all staff in accordance with district policy and contract agreements.</li> </ul>

<p>Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a professional development plan for all principals, teachers and other professional staff employed by the district.</li> <li>• Provide and encourage resources for school committee professional development programs that will enable school leaders to have the knowledge and skills required to provide effective policy leadership for the school system.</li> </ul>	<p>Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the professional development plan adopted by the school committee for professional staff.</li> <li>• Ensure that professional development activities are available to all school department employees.</li> </ul>	<p>Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the professional development plan for teachers and paraprofessionals.</li> </ul>
<p>School Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and approve an annual school improvement plan for each school in the district.</li> </ul>	<p>School Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review with principals the role of school councils and relevant activities</li> </ul>	<p>School Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form and run the school council.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and encourage resources for school council professional development programs that will enable council members to have the knowledge and skills required to provide effective educational leadership.</li> </ul>		
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<p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve major adoption or revision of curriculum and textbooks upon recommendation of the superintendent.</li> </ul>	<p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a process for the development and continual refinement of the curriculum.</li> <li>• Recommend major adoptions of courses or textbooks.</li> </ul>	<p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with teachers to implement curricula with fidelity.</li> <li>• Use data to determine efficacy</li> <li>• Work with teachers to refine curricula.</li> </ul>
<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district, consistent with the requirement of law and the statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education.</li> <li>• Delegate to the superintendent the responsibilities for all administrative functions.</li> <li>• Act only as a body as prescribed by law and not as individual members.</li> </ul>	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as the school committee's chief executive officer and preeminent educational advisor in all efforts of the committee to fulfill its school system governance role.</li> <li>• Serve as a catalyst for the school system's administrative leadership team.</li> <li>• Propose and initiate a process for long range and strategic planning that will engage the committee and the community in positioning the school system for success in ensuing years.</li> <li>• Ensure that the school system provides equal opportunity for all students and staff.</li> </ul>	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief executive officer of the school.</li> <li>• Serve as catalyst for the school staff</li> <li>• Propose and initiate a process for long range and strategic planning that will engage the families, staff, and students.</li> </ul>

<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development and promotion of the vision, mission, goals</li> </ul>	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep all school committee members informed about school operations and</li> </ul>	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep staff, students, and families informed about school operations and</li> </ul>
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<p>and strategies of the school system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review prior to all school committee meetings the information provided by the superintendent and when possible communicate any questions or concerns to the superintendent prior to the meeting to provide an opportunity for a response.</li> <li>• Consult and confer with the superintendent on all matters as they arise that concern the school system, and on which the school committee may take action.</li> <li>• Maintain open communication between the community and the schools by scheduling public meetings on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Support the superintendent in all matters that conform to committee policy.</li> </ul>	<p>programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and articulate the needs of the school system to the school committee.</li> <li>• Develop and promote a plan for achieving the mission, vision, goals and strategies of the school system.</li> <li>• Provide all school committee members with appropriate background information in advance of each committee meeting.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media.</li> <li>• Be aware of all aspects of Massachusetts education law and share all changes or amendments with the school committee in a timely fashion.</li> <li>• Share responsibility with the school committee for open communication and honest discourse.</li> <li>• Maintain open communication between the community and the schools.</li> </ul>	<p>programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and promote a plan for achieving the mission, vision, goals and strategies of the school.</li> <li>• Be aware of all aspects of Massachusetts education law and share all changes or amendments with the staff in a timely fashion.</li> <li>• Share responsibility with the staff for open communication and honest discourse.</li> <li>• Maintain open communication between the community and the school.</li> </ul>
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