

**Farmington River Regional School District
Farmington River Elementary School
555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253**

**Library
Monday November 4, 2019, 7:00PM
Meeting #379**

Community Participation: Lisa Grant, Linda Curtiss and Jennifer Thomas were present to ask the School Committee to be listed on next month's agenda to discuss a concern about the use of plastic silverware being used in the lunch room. They would like to switch over to metal silverware that can be reused and environmentally safe. Jennifer Hibbins spoke on their behalf about a possible school policy being set regarding possibilities of recycling, solar panels and other ideas to make the school more environmentally friendly. This topic will be on next month's agenda.

Warrants:

Members Present: Nicholas DellaGiustina, Carol Lombardo, Deb Fogel, Jennifer Hibbins, Arlene Tolopko, Jess Drenga, Thomas Nadolny and Eric Jesner

Members Absent: Billie Pachulski

Guests: Laurie Flower, Lisa LaGrant, Linda Curtiss, and Jennifer Thomas

Nicholas DellaGiustina called the meeting to order at 7:02pm

1. Approval of last month's minutes #378.

As submitted _____ ☒ #378 As corrected _____

2. MCAS update. Laurie Flower was in to discuss and show a slideshow of the MCAS scores from last year's tests, 2018-19 school year.

Overall the scores were down. Laurie elaborated as to what contributed to the change and what the focus will be moving forward.

The tests are now taken on the computer by all participating grades(3-6th). Laurie explained that the tests are now more rigorous. Each year the scoring expectations are rising, and the tests are changing to meet the expectation standards set by the state. This is difficult to track progress because there is nothing to compare the scores to at this point with all the changes. The test was first adjusted in 2017, and again in 2019.

The state evaluates MCAS and classes with a population of 20 students or more. This is not a true reflection on a small school. The sample is so small that one student can throw off the percentage at a much higher rate.

Our Math curriculum changed last year for the upper grades to Go Math. This did bring down the scores a bit due to the new program. Generally it takes 3 years for a new curriculum to take effect. Go Math is going to be added to the lower grades so the program will be generated throughout the school. The program is very good. Lenox and Richmond use this program and score above meeting expectations on their MCAS.

The students also type their answers. Handwriting is no longer accepted. This applies to all grades. The state wants the students to become autonomous in typing by 5th grade. (Roughly 45 words a minute) Laurie did research on this topic and found out that creative ideas and sentence structures are hindered because the focus is now on finding the keys to type and motor control. Now in computer class the first 10 minutes are focused on a typing instruction program. The students also have a password to the program so they can practice at home.

Moving forward, Tom had a discussion with the 4-6th grade Teachers on focus areas that need attention. The amount of homework given has to increase. Also, another way of academic achievement needs to develop. Honor Roll was stopped due to the different grading system, so another way of recognition needs to be applied. Missed work and attendance needs to be focused on as well as enrichment and the arts programming

3. Principal/Superintendent updates. Tom Nadolny discussed this past month's activity.

The second Professional Day is Tuesday November 5th. We are hosting a class/seminar on GoMath. A professional is going to come in and explain the curriculum and teach how the program works. Teachers and Paraprofessionals will be attending programs around the county.

Neesha Dolan is doing a fabulous job on the front end position. Many compliments are coming in concerning the communication of the school is better. Neesha is making sure no one enters the building without signing in and out.

Camera system is scheduled for Winter Break.

Tom was in touch with Bridge. Tom asked if someone could come in and speak about multicultural populations considering we are in a predominantly white community. They are going to get back in touch with Tom as to what they can offer and when. The next available Professional Day isn't until May. Tom will continue to look further into getting a speaker to come in.

4. **2019-20120 School Calendar.** Teresa DellaGiustina asked the School Committee if we could move our April vacation. Other schools in the area are off April 20th-24th. We currently have the week of April 13th-17th off. Jess Drenga motioned to move April vacation from the week of April 13th to the week of April 20th. Carol Lombardo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to switch weeks.
5. **Eric Jesner to discuss quotes for new vans.** Eric provided the quotes for the new vans to the School Committee. The vans will be on the contract for the state as of January 1, 2020. The vans will at that point be offering 4 wheel drive. The purchase price would run approximately 42,000 dollars. Our only back up van broke down last week. It will not pass the 7D state inspection. The only 4 wheel drive van that we do have does not have as many seats in it for transporting than the other vans. Eric realistically thinks we are in need of 2 new vans because of the these reasons.

Eric looked into leasing the vans through the same company and procedure as the Town of Sandisfield used when they leased one of their town truck. Through Regional Transportation, we do have enough money to purchase one van without asking for money from either town. The second van we would have to ask the towns to help us fund the van. A rough total of 20,000 dollars would be needed. If the van is purchased in full not leased or by payment plan, the savings in interest would run around 3,500 dollars. The savings would be applied this year. If this does not go through and we add the needed amount on next year's budget, the 3,500 dollars will not be saved in interest. Nick motioned a vote to use the Regional Transportation money to purchase a new van and to send letters to the towns asking if they would help support the purchase of a new van. Jess Drenga seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

6. **Jennifer Hibbins to finalize the social media policy, a vote from School Committee.** Jennifer suggests sending the policy to our lawyer to make sure everything is in proper order. Everyone agreed. Nick read through the policy by paragraph, asking if everyone agreed with the information. Some changes were made. The policy should state all staff not just teachers. Tom suggested that one of the paragraphs be worded differently. The teacher's character is brought up when being asked not to respond to negative comments made about them or the school. It should be more of a recommendation not to respond to any negative comment. We don't want to take the rights away from anyone, but prefer you stay out of conflict.
7. **School Committee to vote on designating one member to sign off on warrants in between School Committee meetings.** After discussing the conveniences and inconveniences of having 2 members come in every other week on a routine basis, the Committee decided to keep the procedure the same as usual. This would Eric sending an

email out to all members with the warrants attached. Members would review them then sign in the meetings. No vote was needed. The topic was tabled.

8. **Vote to move into Executive Session to meet, then adjourn out of Executive Session, back to School Committee meeting only to adjourn.** Nick motioned, Carol seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously passed.

Roll Call: Jess Drenga-yes, Arlene Tolopko-yes, Carol Lombardo-yes, Deb Fogel-yes, Jennifer Hibbins-yes and Nick DellaGiustina-yes

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Teresa DellaGiustina", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Teresa DellaGiustina, School Committee Secretary

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