

DRAFT

MEETING OF THE
MONTPELIER BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

DRAFT

July 5, 2017
MINUTES

Minutes Approved:

Present

Board: Bridget Asay, Rebecca Bowen, Michele Braun, Steve Hingtgen, Tina Muncy, Jim Murphy, Peter Sterling
Administration: Superintendent Brian Ricca, Principal Mike McRaith
Public: Ken Jones, Anne Watson
Absent: Brynn Bushey, Omeed Fallahi

Item I – Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Bridget Asay. Ms. Asay requested an addition to the agenda for consideration of the charge for the policy revision committee.

Item II – Executive Session

- Motion to Move to Executive Session for the Purpose of Employee Evaluation

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. to discuss an employee evaluation. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to leave Executive Session at 7:05 p.m.

Item III – Return to Open Session 7:08 p.m.

Item IV - Public Comment None.

Item V - Consent Agenda

Superintendent Ricca requested removal of warrants and addition of a resignation to the consent agenda.

- **Approval of** Minutes of June 7, 2017, June 15, 2017 and June 23, 2017 School Board Meetings
- **Approval of** Technology Bid (Limitations Policy 2.3)
- **Approval of** Resignation (Limitations Policy 2.9)

Ms. Asay moved, seconded by Mr. Murphy, to approve the consent agenda including minutes of the June 7, 2017 regular meeting, minutes of the June 15, 2017 and June 23, 2017 special meetings, GDW.G's technology bid in the amount of \$97,879.95, and the resignation of Todd Keller. Motion carried unanimously.

Item VI – Governance Process Policy – Governance Process

- Adoption of Policy E11 – Travel Reimbursement

Ms. Bowen moved, seconded by Ms. Asay, to adopt policy E11, Travel Reimbursement. There was discussion in regard to accompanying policy procedures. Motion carried unanimously.

Item VII – Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication and Support to the Board

- Update on MPS International Program – Anne Watson

MHS science teacher Anne Watson updated the Board in regard to international recruiting efforts. The District is currently working with three organizations that do international recruiting and host family management. Updated policy language is currently being reviewed by a lawyer. There was discussion about J1 versus F1 visa students. Ms. Watson advised that there will be two F1 visa students from China attending school in Montpelier for the 2017-2018 school year.

Item VIII – Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication and Support to the Board

- Discuss Race Relations – MHS Principal Mike McRaith
A handout was distributed and discussed (copy attached).

Item IX – Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication and Support to the Board

- Superintendent’s Report – End 1

Superintendent Ricca reviewed SBAC data. Board members identified missing data from the report.

- Accept Superintendent’s Report

Following discussion, there was consensus to not accept the report on End 1 and to ask Superintendent Ricca to return with a revised report that includes SBAC data from the 2016-2017 school year when available, longitudinal science NECAP data, some form of local data from the elementary school, and a narrative addressing the achievement gap.

Item X – Governance Process Policy 4.0 – Governance Process

- Discuss Transition to New Unified Board

Next steps were discussed including meetings, clarification of clerk issue, and asking administrators to report on initiatives to reach out to Roxbury families this summer. Mrs. Braun will follow up with John Odum for a status update on getting the vote certified.

Item XI – Governance Process Policy 4.6 – Board Committee

- Discuss Policy Revision Committee Charge

A draft charge was distributed and reviewed (copy attached). Ms. Asay and Messrs. Hingtgen and Murphy volunteered to serve on the committee.

- Approve Policy Revision Committee Charge

Mr. Hingtgen moved, seconded by Ms. Bowen, to adopt the policy revision committee charge with the committee members mentioned. Motion carried unanimously.

Item XII – Executive Session

- Motion for Approval for Executive Session for the Purpose of Contract Negotiations

Ms. Asay moved that the Board find that discussing contract negotiations in open session would put the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Mr. Murphy seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 9:18 p.m.

- Motion to Move to Executive Session for the Purpose of Contract Negotiations

Ms. Asay moved that the Board enter into Executive Session in accordance with 1 VSA §313 to discuss contract negotiations. Mr. Hingtgen seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 9:18 p.m. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to leave Executive Session at 10:00 p.m.

Item XIII – Adjourn

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Heather J. Michaud
Recorder

School Board Meeting: Race Relations at MHS

(July 5th, 2017)

(Mike McRaith)

Sequential Bulleted Points of Interest:

- Principal raised systemic concern to students and staff in October 2015, including the Educational Support Team (EST). The concern at that time was due to some harassment and incident investigations between students with alarming racial comments, many of which were conducted in private online group chats.
 - Alternative dispute resolution-mediations & confirmed racial harassment cases have occurred throughout the past two years at MHS.
- January 20th 2016: Principal raised concern with faculty and the group read and processed the NY Times Article *"Challenging White Privilege From the Inside"*
 - Sparked several curriculum changes—most notably Ta Nehisi Coates book: *Between the World and Me* in both 10th and 12th grade units for 2016-17.
- Speaker/Poet UVM Professor Major Jackson did an assembly on 3/24/2016 with an incident that sparked:
 - The Black Student Union which became the Diversity Club in Spring of 2016, led by our Social Worker. The group has been very active and meets weekly.
- 10/30/16, MHS invited Poet and Performer Rajnii Eddins to be a keynote performance during the Fall Harvest Celebration: He read his poem, "For Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown and the Countless Unnamed" for the full school.
- 3/20/17: After meeting with our Social Worker and Diversity Club student leaders in January 2017, student leaders presented to faculty on 3/20/17: which had a major impact on faculty. Since that time there has been a newly heightened awareness and desire to improve—including TA presentations afterwards to all students, several proactive teacher/student discussions, and the Diversity Club presenting to the middle school's faculty.
- March 2017: Student leaders attended anti-defamation league youth summit in Boston with our social worker and with the support from Community Based Learning
- May 2017: With the encouragement of our social worker and student leaders, the district leadership team was introduced to the idea of the January 30th, 2018 district in-service being dedicated to building more inclusive settings and proactive cultural competency skills for our educators.
- May 2017: Behulum Wude, visiting Ethiopian artist via professional learning opportunity with English department faculty member

- June 2017: Honored a student founder of Diversity Club at school-wide Awards Assembly. Principal spoke to and named the issue around race in our school and community.

2017-18:

- Plans with Diversity Club leaders to address full student body in the opening part of the year on microaggressions, implicit bias, and institutional racism.
- The recent Alan Weiss gifted donation will in-part support our Diversity Club with bringing in speakers, trainings for staff and students, purchasing content, and more.
- The Fall 2017 CQ Series will be attended by administration, students, and faculty: The Foundations of Cultural Competency / "We All Belong" program helps organizations increase awareness, knowledge, and skills related to culture and cultural differences.
- Race Against Racism: Sept 17th (hosted by MHS student leaders and MHS' Action Club)
- The 2017-18 faculty professional learning will focus on Personalization and Universal Design for Learning, both of which ask the educator to be proactive in understanding diverse cultural differences and how those affect the individual's learning. As an example of the kind of work that calls for: "Curriculum that does not explicitly acknowledge the cultural frames it draws upon perpetuates the marginalization of students due to implicit and explicit bias--both individual and institutional."¹
- Restorative Justice Practices: The Montpelier Community Justice Center is starting to work with MSMS and we will be "in the wings" to see if we might also build an official restorative justice practice at MHS
- January 30th District-Wide In-Service on Inclusion with workshops provided by experts in the field.

Summary: Montpelier High School is in a state of active improvement in regards to its race relations and inclusive practices. Sparked by some alarming student reports of all-too-frequent racial comments out of the earshot of adults, online, or under the guise of humor--MHS administration and faculty are working to do and be better for all of our students. In the past 18 months, student leaders have been incredibly brave. They have had excellent support and leadership from our school social worker. Naming this issue and building on the above proactive and responsive approaches have been important steps in improving. We will remain vigilant and open to partnership for continuous improvement.

¹ Gay, Geneva. Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice, 2nd ed. Teachers College Press, May 2010, pp. 49-50. Multicultural Education Series.

The Board resolves to create a Policy Revision Committee, with the following charge:

The Policy Revision Committee will:

- (1) review existing policies and identify their strengths and weaknesses; review and evaluate policies from other districts in Vermont and elsewhere; and review and evaluate recommended policies from the VSBA and the Agency of Education;
- (2) review the formal policy governance model and its strengths and weaknesses as a governance model for this district;
- (3) obtain public input through public hearings and other sources;
- (4) obtain regular Board input as appropriate;
- (5) recommend revised and/or new policies and report to the board on the reasons for the recommendations and the process that led to the recommendations;
- (6) during the 2018-19 year, continuously review the new policies in the context of the new district and make any recommendations necessary to the Board.

The intent of the Board is that the policy committee will include meaningful participation from the Roxbury district from the outset and will be ratified and, if necessary, its membership expanded, once the Montpelier-Roxbury board becomes operative. The Board is concerned that delaying this work until the new Board is legally operative will undermine the interests of the new district and leave too little time to develop policies before July 1, 2018.

The members of the Policy Revision Committee will be:

The committee will report regularly to the Board and will confer with the chair to ensure adequate time for full Board discussion of policy questions as appropriate. At a minimum, the policy committee will report to the Board in September 2017; December 2017; and March 2018. No later than May 1, 2018, the committee will propose a set of policies to govern the Montpelier-Roxbury district, to afford the Board adequate time to review, revise, and adopt those policies before July 1, 2018.

No later than May 1, 2019, the policy committee will recommend to the Board whether it should continue as a standing committee or be dissolved. Absent further action, the committee will dissolve on July 1, 2019.