

# **School Committee Meeting**

**April 30, 2020**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Open Session**

**Remote Meeting**



## Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### School Committee

Date: 2020-04-30

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Agenda:

Purpose: Open Session

Meeting Called By: Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

**All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.**

### Topics of Discussion:

		THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD REMOTELY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS
7:00 p.m.		Call to Order
7:05 – 7:15 p.m.	C.	Public Comment For public comment please email <a href="mailto:dgschoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us">dgschoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us</a> Emails will be taken up at the meeting if they are relevant 1. Correspondence submitted in advance of meeting 2. Correspondence submitted during the meeting
7:20 – 7:25 p.m.	D.	Consent Agenda (Vote) - Accept a Donation to RMHS – Pacific Life Foundation - Approval of Minutes (April 6 & 23, 2020)
7:25 – 7:40 p.m.	E.	Reports 1. Students 2. Director of Student Services 3. Assistant Superintendent 4. Chief Financial Officer 5. Superintendent 6. Liaison/Sub-Committee
7:40 – 8:40 p.m. 8:40 – 8:50 p.m. 8:50 – 9:10 p.m. 9:10 – 9:40 p.m.	F.	New Business 1. Presentation by Labor Counsel Colby Brunt (Discussion) 2. Modular Project Update (Discussion) 3. Transportation Contract Update (Discussion) 4. Presentation of Evidence for Superintendent Evaluation (Discussion)
	G.	Old Business

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.



## Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

		1.
	H.	Information/Correspondence 1.
	I.	Routine Matters 1. Bills & Payroll Warrants 2. Calendar
	J.	Future Business
9:45 p.m.	K.	Adjourn

\*\*Times are approximate

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
Fax: 781-942-9149



Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Gail Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

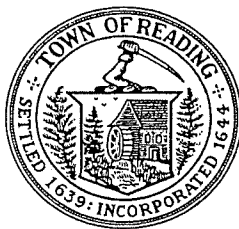
FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: April 27, 2020

TOPIC: Accept a Donation from the Pacific Life Foundation

At our meeting on Thursday evening, I will ask the School Committee to accept a donation in the amount of \$1,000 from the Pacific Life Foundation. This donation was applied for by a RMHS parent to be used to support professional development for staff in Adobe Animate.

If you have any questions, please contact us.



**John F. Doherty, Ed.D**  
Superintendent

**READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**Kathleen M. Boynton**  
Principal

62 Oakland Road, Reading, Massachusetts 01867  
Tel: 781-944-8200 Fax: 781-942-5435  
Website: [www.reading.k12.ma.us/memorial](http://www.reading.k12.ma.us/memorial)

**Craig R. Murray**  
**Jessica A. Theriault**  
**Thomas J. Zaya**  
Assistant Principals

TO: Dr. John F. Doherty, Superintendent of Schools  
FROM: Kathleen M. Boynton, Principal  
DATE: April 27, 2020  
SUBJECT: Donation for RMHS Staff

Please accept this donation in the amount of \$1000.00 from Pacific Life Foundation. This donation will provide professional development to any staff members in Adobe Animate, a program using a new Digital Animation and Design Course.

We ask that you accept this donation.

Thank you.



TENNYSON S. OYLER  
President

March 9, 2020

Ms. Kathleen Boynton  
Principal  
Reading Memorial High School  
62 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Ms. Boynton:

Congratulations to Reading Memorial High School on being awarded a 2020 Pacific Life Foundation *3Ts of Education* grant.

It is our understanding that the grant will be used to support programs at your school in one or more of the following areas: **Teacher Training, Technology, or Textbooks**. Attached please find the grant request detail you submitted for approval, for which the funds must be used.

Enclosed please find a check made payable to the Reading Public Schools in the amount of \$1,000. We ask that the check be submitted for deposit within 30 days of receipt.

With this contribution I extend our best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tennyson S. Oyler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the start.

Enclosure



# **PACIFIC LIFE FOUNDATION**

## **2020 3Ts of Education Request Details**

**School Name:** Reading Memorial High School

**Grant Amount:** \$1,000

### **Project Request Details**

1. To provide professional development to two staff members in Adobe Animate which is the program we will be using in a new Digital Animation and Design course.
2. To allow a new teacher to attend the National Teachers of Science Association conference this spring, which will be held in Boston



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

2018-09-22 LAG

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### School Committee

Date: 2020-04-06

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Draft

#### Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chuck Robinson, John Parks, Tom Wise, Erin Gaffen, Carla Nazzaro and Shawn Brandt

#### **Members - Not Present:**

#### **Others Present:**

Superintendent John Doherty, Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley, CFO Gail Dowd, Director of Student Services Jennifer Stys, Human Resources Administrator Jenn Allard and Director of Facilities Joe Huggins

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

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### Topics of Discussion:

#### I. Call to Order

Chair Robinson opened the meeting and announced the School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via Microsoft Teams, practicing social distancing and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on RCTV. The Chair called attendance:

Mr. Parks – here	Dr. Doherty – here
Mr. Wise – here	Mrs. Kelley – here
Mrs. Nazzaro – here	Mrs. Dowd – here
Mrs. Gaffen – here	Dr. Stys – here
Mr. Brandt – here	Mrs. Allard – here
Mr. Robinson – here	Mr. Huggins – here
	Mrs. Engelson - here

Mr. Robinson read the following:

*I would like to take a moment to extend our thoughts and prayers to the Reading Community, our staff, their families and the entire country while we all navigate through this national crisis. To the extent that we are able the Reading School Community we will be there to provide support both during and following this crisis.*

*I would also like thank our School and Town staff for their proactive response and support through this crisis. I will not name everyone, but this includes our central office administrators, principals, directors, teachers, paraeducators, directors and support staff on the school side and our Town Hall staff, town employees and first responders on the town*



*side. To use the cliché, it takes a village is appropriate and this Reading village has been strong in their response and will continue to be strong in the aftermath.*

*For our students we are thankful for your continuation of your education on a remote basis and we know it may be challenging or difficult to understand what is transpiring around you but please know our community and country is in a different kind of war like we have never seen before. Wars end, but warriors survive. We are thankful to include you all among our most important warriors*

A. Public Input

Mr. Robinson explained that public comment would be held at the end of the meeting allowing the public time to email questions to [dgschoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:dgschoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us)

He shared that the next meeting will be tentatively held on April 16th. He said that the committee has received many emails regarding tuition payments. This matter will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

B. Consent Agenda

Mr. Robinson asked if the committee wanted any items removed from the consent agenda. None were removed.

Accept a Donation to RMHS Basketball

Accept a Donation from the Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce

Approval of Minutes (February 13, 2020)

**Mr. Parks moved, seconded by Mr. Wise, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt, Mr. Wise, Mr. Parks and Mr. Robinson.**

C. Reports

Director of Student Services

Dr. Stys shared that we have received the final report from DESE on our Tiered Focused Monitoring results. She pointed out that there was one area that was in non-compliance but required no corrective actions, all other areas were in compliance. Dr. Stys thanked the team chairs and special education teachers and staff for their hard work during this process. A copy of the report can be found on the website.

Liaisons

Mr. Robinson shared that Dr. Dockser has submitted her reports on the Reading Coalition meeting which will be attached to the minutes.

The Chair opened the floor to the new members.

Mrs. Nazzaro said she is looking forward to being a part of the School Committee. She is impressed by what she has seen from Dr. Doherty and his staff during this crisis.

Mrs. Gaffen started by saying this is an interesting way to start on the School Committee and feels it is a privilege to serve. She's impressed by how hard working the administrative team is.

Mr. Brandt thanked the community for their support and patience and echoed the sentiments of the previous speakers on the Central Office efforts.

D. New Business

Reorganization

Mr. Robinson explained this action is needed due to the fact that the vice chair position is vacant due to Mrs. Borawski's decision not to seek reelection. He asked for nominations for vice chair.

**Mr. Brandt nominated Mr. Parks. Mrs. Gaffen seconded the nomination.**

**Mrs. Nazzaro nominated Mr. Wise. Mr. Brandt seconded the nomination.**

Mr. Robinson closed nominations. He called for a roll call vote for the nominations.

John Parks	Tom Wise
Mrs. Nazzaro – No	Mrs. Nazzaro – Yes
Mr. Brandt – Yes	Mr. Brandt – No
Mrs. Gaffen – Yes	Mrs. Gaffen – No
Mr. Parks – Yes	Mr. Parks – No
Mr. Wise – No	Mr. Wise – Yes
Mr. Robinson - No	Mr. Robinson - Yes

The roll call vote was a tie 3-3.

Dr. Doherty shared the options of leaving the seat vacant or revote.

Mr. Robinson asked each nominee to make a statement.

Mr. Parks shared that both he and Mr. Wise have been on the committee for the same amount of time. He has not missed a meeting and would like to continue to move the district forward.

Mr. Wise has also been on the committee the same amount of time and has not missed a meeting. He has biweekly meetings with the Superintendent and meets with other Central Office Administrators. He is a student of the policies.

Mr. Robinson thinks highly of both nominees. There has been an unwritten rule that members in a reelection year are not normally put into leadership positions.

Mr. Parks asked if this seat was only through the June reorganization. He also pointed out that members in election years have been voted into leadership positions.

Mr. Wise asked what the options are as we approach the reorganization in June.

Mr. Robinson said that over the past several years the committee has tried to avoid placing members in a reelection year in leadership roles. He added that generally the vice chair is in the mix for the chair or vice chair positions. Mr. Robinson called for a second roll call vote on the nominations.

John Parks	Tom Wise
Mrs. Nazzaro – No	Mrs. Nazzaro – Yes
Mr. Brandt – Yes	Mr. Brandt – Yes
Mrs. Gaffen – No	Mrs. Gaffen – Yes
Mr. Parks – Yes	Mr. Parks – Yes
Mr. Wise – No	Mr. Wise – Yes
Mr. Robinson - No	Mr. Robinson - Yes

The motion to elect Mr. Wise as vice chair carried 6-0.

#### Liaison Assignments

Mr. Robinson reviewed the vacant liaison positions and asked the following to accept the roles:

#### Audit Committee

Carla Nazzaro and Shawn Brandt

Mr. Brandt asked if this was until the reorganization only.

Mr. Robinson said that we could look at this during the reorganization.

#### Ad Hoc

Shawn Brandt and John Parks

#### RCTV

Carla Nazzaro

#### SEPAC

Erin Gaffen

#### Permanent Building Committee

Carla Nazzaro to replace Tom Wise

Mr. Robinson shared that we no longer need a representative for the Reading Coalition.

#### Update the community on how the schools are addressing the Covid-19 pandemic

Dr. Doherty began by expressing his heartfelt thanks to his Central Office Leadership team for the amazing work they have done during this crisis. He equated the work being done as building an airplane as it flies.

He wanted to publicly thank CFO Gail Dowd for extending her stay as she has been instrumental in the process.

He shared that a crisis like this requires structure. He went on to thank Joe Huggins and Kevin Cabuzzi, the building principals, teachers and other staff for their efforts.

Dr. Doherty began the plan for continuity of operations for education which include: defining clear roles and responsibilities with succession planning for each area of the district; At least one member of the Central Office Leadership Team and another district administrator are involved in each category; Central Office Leadership Team meets daily, District Leadership Team meets three times/week, with Directors, 1 time/week Meeting Agendas for Central Office Leadership Team meetings and District Leadership Team Meetings are based upon the different categories.

### Continuity of Education

Mrs. Kelley began by sending positive vibes to the community. Her team which includes coaches Heather Leonard and Alison Straker have been working on developing a rich robust learning experience with a sustainable program.

#### Phase 1 (Closure-April 6)-Focused on Connectivity, Support and Opportunity with Resources

The first days were spent connecting with families asking how we can support them (technologically, food needs, social-emotional needs and online connectivity).

#### Phase II (April 6-for remainder of Closure)-More Focus on Support, and Continuity of Learning

The middle schools have been using Google classroom which is well established at both Parker and Coolidge. The high school will be using a combination of Google classroom and the Portal. The elementary schools are working on setting up Google classroom as their platform.

We realize that we can't replicate the school day. Remote learning will look different for everyone. We are focusing on practicing and maintaining what has been introduced and not on acquisition of NEW material. We will focus on equity expecting things to be offered but offering great flexibility in what students can be able to do remotely. And finally building plans for re-entry-with focus on curriculum planning.

The high school sent out information on what their schedule will look like. Every Friday will be for office hours. The middle school's information has also gone out to families. Each team will send out the schedule for core subjects and enrichment activities. The elementary schools will be sending out their structure later this week with the focus on continuity of learning. RISE has designed their plan to be themed weekly activities.

Mrs. Kelley reviewed the plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter grading periods. The middle and high schools will be a pass/pass incomplete system. There will be follow-ups on students that receive a pass incomplete. There will be no cumulative assessments at the elementary level.

Mr. Brandt asked about the obstacles encountered. Dr. Doherty answered by saying we really didn't know what to expect. We wanted to make sure the students were okay. Next we had to build a remote learning platform and develop a MOA with the RTA. The first 5 days were considered snow days. The second week we continued to reach out to families, worked out glitches with video conferencing and to develop a tech platform that our teachers would be comfortable with. Mrs. Kelley followed up by saying that the teachers did not know that school would end on March 13<sup>th</sup>. We have been able to allow teachers to go to their classrooms to retrieve materials they may need. She feels we are in a good place now.

Dr. Stys provided the special education perspective. The state is not counting the first 5 days as snow days with respect to compliance issues. She and her team are communicating with the state on a weekly basis and making sure students have tech access and supports needed. We are working hard to create a consistent plan.

Mrs. Nazzaro asked about the MOA with the RTA and remote learning plans.

Dr. Doherty said he feels most districts will have MOAs with their teachers' unions.

Mrs. Kelley said we want students to connect with teachers. We are trying to build a flexible sustainable model. Children need routine and structure. Dr. Stys echoed what

Mrs. Kelley added that we are aligning our messages for special education and regular education.

Mr. Robinson asked about building plans for reentry. Mrs. Kelley said we are in a good place due to the curriculum work we have been doing. We will look at the pacing guides to determine what we will need to review to start the year both in mastery and power standards.

Mr. Parks asked about additional cost for Microsoft licenses and how we plan to advance students (summer programs). Dr. Doherty said that there will be no additional cost for Microsoft teams, we have purchased the licenses. There may be additional cost for Google classroom as we move forward. He followed up by saying we have no plans to offer summer programs. Dr. Stys said that the team chairs continue to meet to determine student needs.

### Special Education and Related Services

Dr. Stys said we are taking the same approach of equal access. She has reached out to the SEPAC about meeting weekly during this time. Our focus is on our students and the team chairs have done a great job reaching out to all families. The BCBA and AT specialists have been reaching out to families and teachers to make sure all are connected and have what they need. The staff is focused on goals and objectives with resources and supports individualized for each student. We are mindful of staff as well, developing a bank of resources. IEP meetings are being held virtually for this time period. We are not writing IEPs for this time period. The 504 plan accommodations will continue, although some may need to be rewritten. The staff continues to be mindful of students transition to new schools and we plan on providing summer services to those that require them.

Mr. Parks asked about following up with our out of district population. Dr. Stys shared that we have done tons of outreach following up with all of our out of district schools regarding their plans. We will provide continuity of learning.

### Facilities

Mr. Huggins reported that the elementary buildings have been cleaned and the high school is almost done. The middle school cleaning will begin this week. The facilities department is working staggered schedules and we are continuing to perform state mandated inspections. We are using a targeted approach for repairs at this point.

Mr. Robinson asked about staffing levels. Mr. Huggins said that we have reallocated hours for the cleaning contractor and shifted them to the middle schools. The custodians are on reduced hours doing building checks in the morning and the evening.

Mr. Wise asked about student access. Dr. Doherty said our buildings are officially closed. We need to keep practicing social distancing.

Mr. Wise asked how the purchase of the modular is being affected. Mrs. Dowd said we have received favorable pricing and are currently working through contract language. Mr. Wise followed up asking about the start date. Mr. Huggins said we are working with the OPM and Architect on the date. The Town will need to perform some site work.

### Finance

Mrs. Dowd began by saying that the Central Office staff is coming in on an as needed basis but are all working remotely. She is participating in daily calls with DESE

regarding vendor payments. We are going contract by contract regarding payments in an effort to maintain continuity of finance. We have cancelled all rentals.

Mrs. Allard has received guidance from the Department of Labor regarding the Family First Coronavirus Response Act. It is a temporary act regarding sick leave where two weeks of paid sick leave is directly affected beyond accrued sick leave. Part 2 of the act is that employees can take up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a child due to closure of schools and daycare due to Covid19. They would be eligible to receive 2/3 of their salary.

She continued saying that the hiring procedures continue focusing on vacancies for next year.

Mr. Robinson asked about the FMLA component to FFCRA. He asked if the union would have to weigh in on requests. The answer was no.

#### Food Service

Mrs. Dowd updated the committee on the outreach to families. She thanked Director Danielle Collins for stepping up to the task. We are offering grab and go meals to all RPS families in need. The needs are growing.

#### Computer and Systems Support

Mrs. Dowd thanked Julian Carr and his staff for the phenomenal work they have done. The district did initial outreach to families that could possibly need access to technology. We are working with the building principals and Grant Hightower to ensure our students have access to technology.

Mrs. Nazzaro asked about web access. Mrs. Dowd said that this is a challenge because there are not as many hotspots available anymore. We have sent information to families for reduced cost programs.

#### Communication

We are aligning our communication with the Town. Mr. Brandt said that it would be helpful if the FAQs were updated.

#### Provisions for Safety, Security, Mental Health, and Behavioral Health Services

We are looking for resources to support staff, families and kids. Next week Behavioral Health Specialist Lauren Sabella will update her website.

Dr. Doherty reiterated the importance of the relationship between the town and schools and shared ways to help out including donations of gift cards to support the Food Pantry.

Three questions on the presentation were received via email.

- a. *“does incomplete grade affect a gpa or the pass/fail of the class?”*

Mrs. Kelley responded that it will not go toward GPA. We are using a pass/pass incomplete. Mr. Wise asked if an incomplete would affect credit for the class. Mrs. Kelley said if a student receives a pass incomplete we will circle back to the student. This will be done on a case by case basis.

- b. *“I’m curious what will happen if we go past May 4 and school is called regarding kindergarten screening? If it’s already been mentioned please do not go through it again (just say it’s already been mentioned) the video is a little choppy online”*

Mrs. Kelley said screening is required but there is no date that it would have to be done by. Many districts screen in the fall.

E. Public Comment – emails received during meeting

*“Hi School Committee, my quick public comment is, is this new school committee going to revisit the superintendent review cycle change that was voted on during the 12/19/2019 meeting? This was a vote that caused a lot of public concern once it became known, and I believe it was said that it would come before the school committee after the election.”*

Mr. Robinson said it will be a future agenda item.

Remote Learning Questions submitted by Marianne Downing. (See Attached)

*Will students be allowed back in building?* No, the buildings are closed.

*How will grades be managed for middle/high school?* Answered during presentation.

*Expectation for all content?* Answered during presentation.

*Summer classes?* Answered during presentation.

*How will the district manage the process for grade 6 math placements in grade 7?* The middle school principals are developing a process and will be communicating to families.

*Availability to devices?* Answered during presentation

*Printing of documents?* There are no plans to students accessing printers.

*Can the district negotiate bulk purchases of technology?* No

Mr. Robinson followed up on the inventory of devices. Mrs. Dowd said we are in good shape.

*Will there be live teaching?* Most teachers will not be teaching live. Teachers will have office hours.

*Timed schedule for any grades?* Refer to Remote Learning Plan.

*How is district paying for services that are impossible to provide..?* We are navigating through uncharted waters. We are working closely with DESE and are reviewing all contracts.

Mr. Parks asked about standardizing communication. Dr. Doherty said each level will look different. Mrs. Kelley added that we are asking the elementary staff to use Google Classroom.

Mr. Brandt asked about tuitions. Chair Robinson said we will discuss this topic at the next meeting.

Dr. Doherty wanted to reemphasize the work done to date and is appreciative of the patience exhibited by our families. We are communicating with other districts daily and very few districts are doing true online courses. Everything we are doing is in the best interest of our students with the resources we have to get them engaged.

1. Routine Matters

a. Bills and Payroll (A)

Warrant S2034	2.20.20	\$242,023.75
Warrant S2035	2.27.20	\$29,359.70
Warrant S2036	3.05.20	\$205,770.08
Warrant S2037	3.12.20	\$255,396.46
Warrant S2038	3.19.20	\$345,910.32
Warrant P2017	2.21.20	\$1,822,633.13
Warrant P2018	3.06.20	\$1,638,070.84
Warrant P2019	3.20.20	\$1,719,930.66

b. Calendar

2. Information/Correspondence

3. Future Business

Mr. Robinson said the next meeting will be on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

4. Adjournment

Adjourn

**Mr. Parks moved, seconded by Mr. Wise, to adjourn. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

**NOTE:** The minutes reflect the order as stated in the posted meeting agenda not the order they occurred during the meeting.

Link to meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMRur2N3wTs>



## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 5, 2020 10:56 PM  
**To:** Marianne Downing  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: Remote Learning Questions for April 6, 2020 school committee meeting

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Marianne,

I hope all is well! Not ignoring your email. I will make sure staff gets back to you as I don't want to misspeak on any of your questions. Thanks!

Chuck Robinson

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**From:** Marianne Downing <mariannedowning@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 3, 2020 7:54 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** Remote Learning Questions for April 6, 2020 school committee meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.
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Dear Reading School Committee:

I hope that all of you are well and that by the time that you receive this email, that RPS has finally sent out a plan for remote learning moving forward up to at least May 4, 2020. As of this writing (4:46 pm on 4/3/2020), there has been no communication to parents, at a district level, regarding when remote learning, in compliance with the latest DESE guidance, is slated to begin, and what it will comprise. My understanding is that the Monday 4/6/2020 school committee meeting will go over this plan. Please consider emailing the actual plan (and slideshow that will be given on Monday, if it exists) in ADVANCE of Monday's meeting, so that parents have time to review and understand it before the meeting. It can be very difficult to follow a complicated plan on the fly, seeing it for the first time during a meeting.

These are some questions I hope that can be addressed on Monday night, relating to how remote learning will be implemented. Hopefully the plan itself addresses many of these concerns:

- (1) Will RPS allow parents/students to re-enter the schools to go to lockers to get notebooks/books/belongings? Recall that RPS had the schools open for a 4 hour window on 3/16/2020 but that is it - back when we all thought the schools were only going to be closed for 2 weeks. Very likely a great many families were not able to go in at that time – when I went into Parker for example, I was the only parent there, and I did not get every item out of my daughter's locker. Students may need their binders and/or any books, of course, to move forward in learning and/or review learning. And if this access is allowed, how will the schools manage this in an appropriate social distancing kind of way (e.g., scheduled access, or a staff member gets the locker contents and leaves the contents in a bag for a parent to pick up, etc.)?

- (2) How will grades (if any) be recorded or managed for Q3 and/or Q4, for middle and high school - is pass/fail an option?
- (3) Is there an expectation that all content for the year is going to be covered in middle and/or high school and, if it is not, is the content next year going to be modified to include the lost content? Ditto for elementary.
- (4) Will any summer classes be considered for regular day students to make up for lost content?
- (5) How will RPS manage the process for grade 6 students taking tests to determine if the students qualify for math 7/8? What tests, grades, etc., will be used for this determination?
- (6) Will the district consider making more district-owned devices available to families where multiple kids may have to share a computer, or where the device the children have access to, does not have a webcam?
- (7) Is there any part of the remote learning plan content that will require printing anything out and what about students who do not have printers at home, will the district be able to print out packets for such students?
- (8) Can the district negotiate any bulk discounts for families who may want to purchase an additional device (e.g., Chromebook) at this time? Most retail outlets for such devices are sold out.
- (9) Will there be actual live teaching in any grades? Pre-recorded? Is it at the teacher's option, or is there some standard expected for each grade?
- (10) Will students be expected to follow a timed schedule in any grades (e.g., if it is a "day 3" in a middle or high school rotation, will students be expected to log into Microsoft teams or some other platform at that time, to join the rest of the class)?

I also have some questions about district costs. In particular, how is the district handling paying for services that are impossible to provide during the school shutdown, especially services that are contracted (e.g., out of district transportation, use of consultants, in district transportation) ? What about stipends to things like coaches, advisors, etc. , where the season is cancelled or no extracurricular can take place – are they still getting paid? Will this result in any cost savings for the district? We are certainly saving on not having to hire substitutes, for example. And is the district refunding parent paid tuition for things like extended day and full day kindergarten, which was possibly paid in advance for some months but which never took place (e.g., entire month of April).

Thanks in advance for your time in addressing the concerns I list above

Best Regards

*Marianne M. Downing*

Home Phone: 781-944-3447 Mobile: 508-265-4214

Home Address: 13 Heather Drive – Reading MA

Email: [mariannedowning@comcast.net](mailto:mariannedowning@comcast.net)

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Mike <mkmona04@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2020 8:27 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** Fwd: sc question

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

>>  
>> does an incomplete grade affect a gpa or the pass/fail of the class?

mike monahan  
>

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Alicia Williams <aw@cordelephotography.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2020 8:25 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** Kindergarten screening

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Hi,

you may have already covered this:

I'm curious what will happen if we go past May 4 and school is called regarding kindergarten screening? If it's already been mentioned please do not go through it again( just say it's already been mentioned) the video is a little choppy online

Thank you  
Alicia  
Sent from my iPhone

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Marianne Comcast <mariannedowning@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2020 7:38 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** Revisited of superintendent review cycle public comment

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Hi school committee, my quick public comment is, is this new school committee going to revisit the superintendent review cycle change that was voted on during the 12/19/2019 meeting? This was a vote that caused a lot of public concern once it became known, and I believe it was said that it would come before the school committee after the election.

Thanks ,

Marianne Downing, 13 Heather Drive

Sent from my iPad

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 5, 2020 10:50 PM  
**To:** Jeanne Cappuccio  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: RMHS Remote Learning Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Jeanne,  
I hope all is well. Thank you for sending this email. Many administrators, directors, teachers etc. have been working very hard on this.

Chuck Robinson

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**From:** Jeanne Cappuccio <Jeannecap@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2020 12:00 AM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** RMHS Remote Learning Plan

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Dear School Committee Members,

I hope you and your families are well. I am a parent of a senior at RMHS and I just want to share with you my appreciation for the hard work, dedication, and support that RMHS staff has demonstrated during this very challenging time. Guidance counselors and teaching staff have reached out frequently to check-in and provide support as well as learning activities. The remote learning plan was developed quickly and efficiently. I know it will be very beneficial in supporting my son. The sample home learning schedule will definitely help to add more structure and meaningful activities to the days!

The entire Reading School District has been extremely supportive and we feel fortunate to be part of this community.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Cappuccio

The Reading Coalition for Prevention and Support  
Liaison Report for Meetings on February 26th and Remote Meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>  
Submitted by former School Committee Member Linda Snow Dockser  
For School Committee Meeting on April 6, 2020

The work of the Coalition continues despite the need to go remote. There have been two Coalition Meetings attended by former School Committee Member Linda Snow Dockser and Dr. John Doherty since the last update.

The Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> meeting transitioned the organization from the former Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse to The Reading Coalition for Prevention and Support, reviewing our mission and establishing the new Board of Advisors. Advisors are stakeholders, appointed by the Coalition Director, from our Community and Region who emanate from Law Enforcement, Schools, Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Clergy, the Press, and others who can exchange and share information, and provide feedback on the planning, implementation, and effectiveness of The Coalition's work. Director Erica McNamara also presented the Coalition Grant Outcomes from 2014-2019. RCASA's work has been vital to the health of our community.

At both meetings, we discussed the work done on Vaping Prevention prior to the closing of schools, by Outreach Coordinator Sammy Salkin and our two School Resource Officers. The work in progress is with both students and their families at both Coolidge and Parker Middle Schools. This is a serious and frightening addiction issue for our children that our medical providers are scrambling to figure out how to treat and prevent.

We also discussed the introduction and progress of Reading's Crisis Intervention Team who are triaged by Community Service Officer Kristen O'Shaughnessy. At the time of our last meeting, twelve of our police officers had done the training. When a police call is completed, it is logged and if it falls in certain categories, such as Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Senior Services, or Domestic Abuse, Officer O'Shaughnessy assigns it to members of this team for follow up. This follow up program gives support to those experiencing the problem and helps to decrease recidivism. This program is a vital step forward in transitioning from approaching problems as law enforcement issues to an opportunity to help and treat the problems which necessitate the police calls.

In response to the COVID 19 Crisis, The Coalition has been working with the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition to develop an important Resource Guide with many helpful tools for dealing with the mental health and substance use implications of this pandemic. It includes links to virtual support groups, family advice for explaining and coping with this crisis with children of all ages, explaining social distancing to children, and more. It is available on the Reading Coalition Website at <https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/community/readingcoalition/>. The specific link is: [https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/files/8315/8576/0120/4.1.20.Reading\\_MA\\_Services\\_Available\\_During\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_Outbreak.pdf](https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/files/8315/8576/0120/4.1.20.Reading_MA_Services_Available_During_the_COVID-19_Outbreak.pdf)

The group also discussed the collaboration between The Coalition and the Reading Public Schools. The Therapeutic Support Programs and Guidance are rising to meet the new needs of families and students through this crisis.

The Reading Coalition for Prevention and Support is available as a resource for anyone needing guidance or support during this challenging time. Please do not hesitate to contact them.



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

2016-09-22 LAG

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### School Committee

Date: 2020-04-16

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Draft

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chuck Robinson, John Parks, Tom Wise, Erin Gaffen, Carla Nazzaro and Shawn Brandt

**Members - Not Present:**

#### **Others Present:**

Superintendent John Doherty, Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley, CFO Gail Dowd, Director of Student Services Jennifer Stys, Human Resources Administrator Jenn Allard and Director of Facilities Joe Huggins

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

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### Topics of Discussion:

#### I. Call to Order

Chair Robinson opened the meeting and announced the School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via Microsoft Teams, practicing social distancing and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on RCTV. The Chair called attendance:

Mr. Parks – here	Dr. Doherty – here
Mr. Wise – here	Mrs. Kelley – here
Mrs. Nazzaro – here	Mrs. Dowd – here
Mrs. Gaffen – here	Dr. Stys – here
Mr. Brandt – here	Mrs. Allard – here
Mr. Robinson – here	

Mr. Robinson reviewed the agenda. The presentation on the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) would be postponed. Dr. Doherty said the state has moved the deadline to May 15<sup>th</sup> or later in light of everything that is going on.

Mr. Robinson said the next meeting will be April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### A. Public Input



Mr. Robinson explained that public comment would be held at the end of the meeting allowing the public time to email questions to [dgschoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:dgschoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us)

B. Consent Agenda

None

C. Reports

Student Representative

Student Representative Maura Drummey reported on remote learning from a student's perspective. She shared that assignments are given on Monday and are due on Friday. The assignments are available on Google Classroom. She said that she appreciates having a week to complete the assignments.

Ms. Drummey updated the committee on Senior activities. The class officers have been working diligently promoting virtual spirit. Seniors have decorated their doors around town. The annual fundraiser – MIISTER RMHS – was cancelled. The group is working hard to have this video livestreamed at some point. The senior slideshow is being put together as well. She said that as the class gift, seniors were asked to read a children's book aloud and record it to be shared with students at the elementary schools they attended. This activity has been well received.

Director of Student Services

Dr. Stys thanked Ms. Drummey for her inspiring report. The Special Education staff have made over 5000 contacts with our families. She thanked her staff for their hard work ensuring our families stay connected. She said that she and Ms. Wright are virtually meeting with the SEPAC every Friday. Continuation of Learning plans have been created for all students on IEPs. These are not the IEPs. They are plans that describe how we will focus on three tiers of support. There have been office hours, instructional meeting time and IEP meetings are being held as much as possible. There is a parent training planned – What an IEP looks like – via Microsoft Teams. Dr. Stys and Assistant Director Allison Wright have been holding parent drop in sessions. Dr. Stys and HR Administrator Jenn Allard are working on a community mental health website with resources and emergency protocols.

Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Dowd began by thanking Ms. Drummey for her report. She updated the committee on meal distribution and thanked Food Service Director Danielle Collins for stepping up to the challenge. We are seeing an increase in need. We have received a food donation from Boston Bean Co., Woburn that can be used to supplement our offerings.

The MOA with the RTA has wording to allow our nurses to assist on the town side. The town nurse left a week ago and our Director of Nurses Mary Giuilana and other nurses have stepped up to assist the town side. The Board of Health and Fire Chief are very appreciative of their efforts.

Our technology department is working with the building principals to ensure students receive the technology they need.

Mrs. Dowd shared that capital project management and monitoring is a little trickier now. There will be an update at a future meeting.

#### Assistant Superintendent

Mrs. Kelley shared that she is impressed by how the senior class has rallied through this crisis and loves the idea of the class gift.

Mrs. Kelley outlined the remote learning plans which have begun at all levels and are going well. She thanked the Reading Public Schools teachers and staff for their efforts. We are looking at learning globally and continue to focus on equity and supporting all.

Her team continues on solidifying the curriculum work done to date and will be receiving more information from the state in the coming weeks on next steps. Our staff is still learning to use the technology tools and the teachers are working very hard and putting in a lot of effort.

#### Superintendent

Dr. Doherty thanked Ms. Drummey for her report. He went onto read an email from the SEPAC that was missed last week. He also read an email from resident Kevin Sexton.

He said that the 20-21 calendar may need to be adjusted due to the Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> Boston Marathon date. It more than likely will be a state holiday. There should be information coming from the Governor regarding this school year. He pointed out that MIT did a survey on all remote learning plans and Massachusetts ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the quality of remote learning plans.

The Superintendent said that the FY21 state budget will have to begin from scratch stating that a version of a unified budget may come out in the next few months. MCAS testing has been cancelled for this year and an updated FAQ document was sent out to the families.

#### Liaisons

Mr. Robinson reported that the Select Board voted to move Town Meeting to June 15<sup>th</sup> and are working on the logistics. There have been budget discussions focusing on a 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget at this point.

Mrs. Gaffen reported on the SEPAC videoconference with Dr. Stys and Ms. Wright. She was impressed at how much is going on behind the scenes and the collaboration between the Board and the Office of Student Services.

#### D. New Business

##### 2019-2020 School Year Calendar

Dr. Doherty shared that there will be 2 days of school during April vacation week. The RTA is in full agreement as we are gaining momentum with remote learning. He recommended that June 19<sup>th</sup> be voted as the last day of school.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Gaffen, to approve the continuation of remote learning on Tuesday, April 21st and Wednesday, April 22nd and to change the last day of school to Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

## Northshore Education Consortium Agreement

Dr. Doherty provided a brief overview. Anytime there are changes to the Articles of Agreement the member school committees are required to vote to approve the change(s).

### **Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to approve the proposed changes to the NEC Articles of Agreement.**

The committee asked clarifying questions on the proposed changes.

### **The roll call vote carried 5-1. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson voting in favor. Mr. Wise voting against.**

## RISE and Kindergarten Tuitions

Mr. Robinson said letters went out to RISE and full day kindergarten families outlining the plan for tuitions. It was not meant to create angst.

## Kindergarten

Mrs. Dowd said that we would forego and forgive the final tuition payments or issue refunds to families that have made the final payment. We feel this is the right direction to go in light of what families are facing. This will create a \$113,920 in lost revenue.

There will be a finance update at a future meeting. We continue to pay teachers and they are doing a great job reaching out to the students. We may have to come back to the committee to ask for a decrease in the offset.

Next year's kindergarten numbers are down, and several students are on IEP that recommend full day kindergarten. She also expects to see an uptick in free and reduced lunch applications. This is not a one-year issue, it is a multi-year concern for incoming revenue.

## RISE

There has been positive feedback from families regarding remote learning. As with kindergarten, it is the right thing to do to forego and forgive or refund the last tuition payment. This will result in \$33,595 of lost revenue.

### **Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro, to authorize the refund of one month's tuition for RISE and full day kindergarten.**

Mr. Parks asked if we were looking at furloughs for teachers. Mrs. Dowd said no, the teachers are still working.

Mrs. Gaffen asked about the current revolving account. Mrs. Dowd said there is \$1.6M in the account with a \$1.1M budgeted offset and a \$5.5K ending balance.

### **The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

## Tuition and Transportation

Mrs. Dowd began by saying that we are monitoring all contracts with our vendors and have been in touch with our vendors. We want to be sure our vendors are ready when/if we return to school. In conversations with DESE, they are recommending the

continuation of payments. Mrs. Dowd has also had conversations with area district business officials. Out of District tuitions are a bit trickier. She thanked Allison Wright, Dr. Stys and the team chairs who have been reaching out to our OOD sites. Mrs. Dowd has been in constant contact with DESE Finance Department and will come back to the committee with any new information.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to authorize the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer to negotiate rates for transportation and tuitions.**

Dr. Stys added the schools are required to do continuation of learning plans and we have been in contact with our families.

Mr. Robinson asked about hidden costs. Mrs. Dowd said she is reviewing financial statement line item by line item. There are no extracurricular expenses being paid and she is working with METCO. She said we will be prudent and fair in all negotiations.

Mrs. Nazzaro asked about expense structures and the state stimulus packages and if we were doing it individually or as a group. Mrs. Dowd said we are doing it as a group of business managers. Special education transportation is done through SEEM and we are able to provide more information as a group.

**The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

**Superintendent Evaluation Process**

Mr. Robinson explained that the previous committee voted to go to a two-year cycle in December. He added, with no disrespect to the previous committee, that with the turnover of the committee he felt it was appropriate to revisit this process.

Dr. Doherty reviewed the two-year evaluation cycle saying at the end of the first year the committee would provide a formative review with the full evaluation at the end of year 2.

He reviewed the options:

1 year cycle – Complete in June. He would present evidence and what it looks like at the next meeting.

2 year cycle – the 19-20 SY would be year 1 with the committee providing a formative review. The 20-21 would be year 2 with the committee providing a full summative evaluation in June.

2 year cycle - the 19-20 SY would be year 1 with the committee providing a formative review. The 20-21 would be year 2 with the committee providing a full summative evaluation by election day 2021.

1 year cycle – Summative evaluation done in April 2021.

Mr. Brandt is conceptually comfortable with a 2 year process but asked how the committee believes the process should be going forward.

Dr. Doherty pointed out that the evaluation should be completed by June 30.

Mrs. Gaffen asked how we would evaluate without seeing the goals and how much was driven by former committee members. How have other new members gone about this process? Mr. Robinson said new members should evaluate on what they are comfortable with.

Mr. Parks referred to the MASC Charting the Course program as being helpful in this process. MASC recommends that a School Committee member evaluate on what you have seen.

Mr. Wise also felt the Charting the Course was valuable. He pointed out that contractually the Superintendent be reviewed annually on or before June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Brandt referred to the recent MASC Covid-19 FAQ that says to delay the evaluation into the summer/early fall.

Mrs. Gaffen asked if the Superintendent could provide a better picture of what the formative assessment would look like. Dr. Doherty said it would include ratings on each standard and a narrative. Mr. Robinson added that it would be a broad narrative. Dr. Doherty added there would be a midpoint check-in with the opportunity to make adjustments as related to the feedback.

Mrs. Nazzaro asked if the Superintendent's contract was modified when the committee voted a 2-year cycle. Mr. Robinson said it was not and feels the formative satisfies the requirement. He will ask counsel to review the contract. Mrs. Nazzaro asked if the formative evaluation is written. The answer was yes.

Mr. Brandt asked how the annual goals would support a 2-year cycle.

Dr. Doherty said he would provide 2 sets of goals. The goals can be multi-year depending on the depth of the goal. Goals need to be fluid. The evaluation involves the progress of the goals, each indicator – all standards and an overall rating.

Mr. Parks said the district improvement plan is generally a 3-year plan, this year it is a 1-year plan.

Mr. Wise said the committee should have a 3-year goal discussion. The committee should complete a 1-year cycle in the June time period and then look at what we want to do realistically, this year.

Mr. Brandt agreed that the committee should have a clean break and align goals with the new process, looking at a July or August completion. Mrs. Nazzaro agreed that this is a viable option.

Mr. Parks said that the committee will have to vote on the contract extension by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Robinson doesn't believe that voting or not on an extension doesn't necessarily go on the basis of the most recent evaluation.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to return to a one-year cycle with the intention of completing the summative evaluation by June 2020. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

E. Public Comment – emails received during meeting

Dr. Doherty read the emails that were sent.

*“Hi school committee:*

*Glad to see you are well. I have a question and a comment for tonight's meeting. The question does not have to do with any items on the agenda, but the comments do pertain to several items.*

*When will the MOA/MOU that have been signed with RTA be made public?  
My understanding is that they are supplemental to the existing RTA contract, which is a public document.*

*Also, regarding agenda items:*

*I support not charging RISE and full day K parents for the May tuition. This is in line with what other local districts, like North Reading, are doing.*

*I support a one year evaluation timeline for the superintendent, which is consistent with past practice, with the current superintendent contract, and with what is done in nearly all other districts.*

*I fully trust the three newly elected school committee members, and the existing members, to provide fair and thoughtful input. I know that these three individuals have been following school matters very closely for the past several years and have been very engaged. They are fully ready to participate in an evaluation, which was the original plan back when the school committee approved the annual goals on 10/28/2019."*

*Thank you,*

*Marianne Downing  
13 Heather Drive.*

*Emails from Alicia Williams*

*"Could you please provide the revolving account balances? For rise and kindergarten"*

*Thank you  
Alicia*

*"Could a copy of MOA be made available to the public?  
Where would we find it?"  
Thank you  
Alicia Williams*

*Answers:*

*MOA questions*

*Remote learning plan is the MOA and we will put both on the website.*

*Revolving Account for RISE*

*\$219K Balance*

*\$119K ending year*

*\$90K beginning balance for next year. This will need to be refined based on current events.*

*1. Routine Matters*

*a. Bills and Payroll (A)*

Warrant S2039	3.26.20	\$90,239.08
Warrant S2040	4.02.20	\$15,936.52
Warrant S2041	4.09.20	\$18,801.01
Warrant S2042	4.16.20	\$116,303.20
Warrant P2020	4.03.20	\$1,668,044.85

b. Calendar

2. Information/Correspondence

Mr. Wise asked if the postponement of the SOA agenda item needs to be voted on. Mr. Robinson said it was not an action item.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro, to indefinitely postpone the SOA feedback to such a time that we need to provide to the state. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

3. Future Business

Mr. Robinson said the next meeting will be on April 23rd.

4. Adjournment

Adjourn

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to adjourn. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mr. Wise, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

**NOTE:** The minutes reflect the order as stated in the posted meeting agenda not the order they occurred during the meeting.

Link to meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDphbwreSYY>

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Marianne Downing <mariannedowning@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 8:54 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** public comment - here is the voting record of "new" SC members  
  
**Importance:** High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

New ones who did reviews right away: Elaine, Linda, Nick, Tom, Gary|

New who did not: Sherri John Parks



## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Marianne Downing <mariannedowning@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 7:29 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** public comment question on the memorandum of understanding/agreement with RTA and also comment on the Supt eval timeline

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Hi school committee:

Glad to see you are well. I have a question and a comment for tonight's meeting. The question does not have to do with any items on the agenda, but the comments do pertain to several items.

When will the MOA/MOU that have been signed with RTA be made public?

My understanding is that they are supplemental to the existing RTA contract, which is a public document.

Also, regarding agenda items:

I support not charging RISE and full day K parents for the May tuition. This is in line with what other local districts, like North Reading, are doing.

I support a one year evaluation timeline for the superintendent, which is consistent with past practice, with the current superintendent contract, and with what is done in nearly all other districts.

I fully trust the three newly elected school committee members, and the existing members, to provide fair and thoughtful input. I know that these three individuals have been following school matters very closely for the past several years and have been very engaged. They are fully ready to participate in an evaluation, which was the original plan back when the school committee approved the annual goals on 10/28/2019.

Thank you,

Marianne Downing  
13 Heather Drive.

## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Alicia Williams <cordelephotography@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 7:23 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** : MOA

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

>  
> Hi  
>  
> Could a copy of MOA be made available to the public?  
> Where would we find it?  
>  
>  
> Thank you  
> Alicia Williams  
>  
> Sent from my iPad

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 4:23 PM  
**To:** kevinmsexton@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: one parents perspective

Hi Kevin,

I hope all is well and thank you for the email. We appreciate and respect your feedback.

Stay well.

Chuck Robinson

---

**From:** Kevin M. Sexton <kevinmsexton@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 6:17 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** one parents perspective

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.
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Dear School Committee Members,

First let me say...WOW! Our new, while temporary way of life sure happened fast! And as such, you've had to adapt on the fly to a new way of educating our kids. I can only assume you have received mixed reviews from parents, but usually in a crisis those reviews can mainly be angry ones. So I wanted to reach out to you as a Woodend and RISE parent to give my perspective, for what it's worth.

My guess is, that this type of crisis had no formal step-by-step plan for our kids to be out of school for this period of time. From my perspective, what the Superintendent, staff and teachers have rolled out to my kids has been a good experience considering. While not perfect, I can appreciate that they did not let "great" be the enemy of "good." In the time of an unprecedented crisis, one in which no one alive has ever experienced. Which brought the complete stop to our way of life in a instant and for an uncertain period of time, I appreciate all that has been done for my kids.

While some may not have liked the speed at which we got up and running, and again I can only speak for Pre-5, I found it absolutely necessary for us to digest. Lets face it, it's a big learning curve for all us parents. For my wife and I, we are still working and easing into a new way of doing things with our jobs on top of recently being promoted to teachers (you all rock BTW! and can absolutely have the job back when this is over!). As the weeks went by, more and more information came out for the school departments, adding to what the previous week had done. To me, this slow but consistent roll out of where we are today was essential to making it all work under the "new norm."

As a committee, you have a monumental task before you and I'm confident that you can work your way through this. Just remember, this was the ultimate of unknowns and there will be plenty of time to reflect on the good, bad and indifferent later. Just keep pushing through!

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Sexton  
20 Emerson St

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
Fax: 781-942-9149



Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Gail Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: April 27, 2020

TOPIC: Presentation by Legal Counsel

At our meeting on Thursday evening, our legal counsel Colby Brunt will present to the School Committee on their roles and responsibilities.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

# Reading School Committee Workshop: Rules, Roles, & Responsibilities

Colby C. Brunt  
April 30, 2020

**S|C|M** STONEMAN, CHANDLER  
& MILLER LLP  
Attorneys at Law

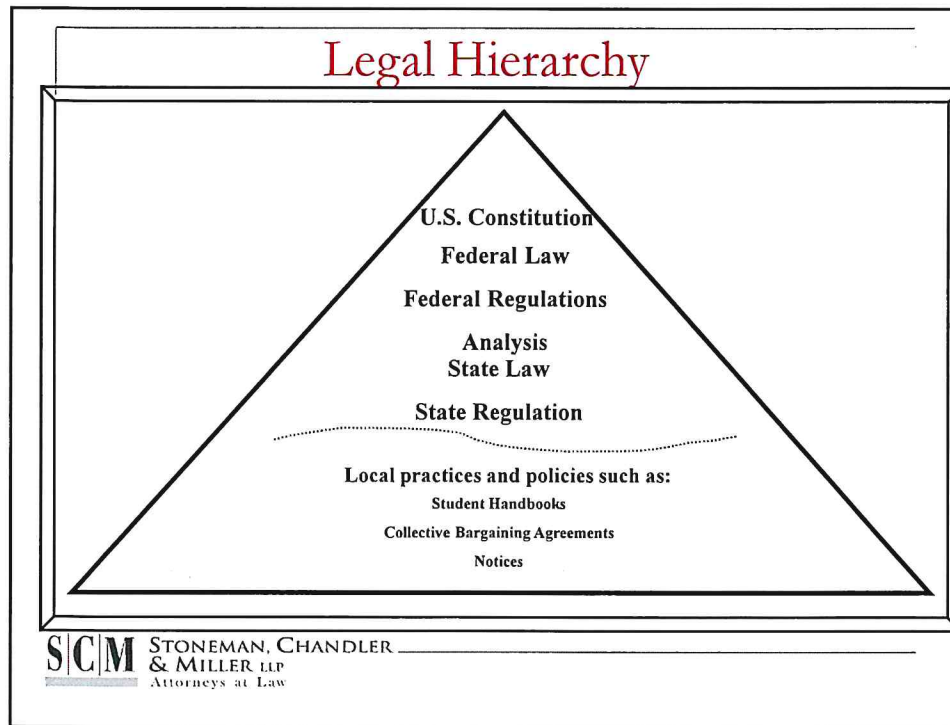
1

## Rules Overview of Laws Related to the School Committee

Statutes – by the Commonwealth  
Regulations – by DESE (generally)  
By Laws – by the Municipality  
Policies – by the School Committee

**S|C|M** STONEMAN, CHANDLER  
& MILLER LLP  
Attorneys at Law

2



3

## Legal Foundations of School Committee Authority

**c. 71 § 37.** The school committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall have the power to select and to terminate the superintendent, shall review and approve budgets for public education in the district, and shall establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education.

**S|C|M** STONEMAN, CHANDLER & MILLER LLP  
Attorneys at Law

4

## Legal Foundations of School Committee Authority

- Fundamental Responsibilities:
  - Setting the goals and policies  
*school committee...shall establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education... c. 71 §37*
  - Choosing the leader  
*school committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall have the power to select and to terminate the superintendent... c. 71 §37*
  - Approving the budget  
*vote of the legislative body of a city or town shall establish the total appropriation for the support of the public schools, but may not limit the authority of the school committee to determine expenditures within the total appropriation... c. 71 §34*

**S|C|M** STONEMAN, CHANDLER  
& MILLER LLP  
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## Statutory Foundations of School Committee Authority

### **Personnel matters:**

- c. 71 §59 – confirming the position of assistant superintendent upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and setting compensation
- c. 71 §41 – contracting for the position of business administrator
- c. 71B §3A – confirming the position of Special Education administrator  
**Note:** DESE Advisory on school governance discusses the shared authority between the Superintendent and the School Committee over these and other positions.

- c. 150E §1: Negotiating with personnel unions

### **Budgetary matters:**

- c. 71 §34 – line item authority
- c. 44 §33B – budget transfer authority

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## Committee's Responsibility

- Acting as a body: the authority of the Committee comes from the whole Committee and not an individual.
- The Committee can authorize a single member or members to do the following:
  - Sign contracts on behalf of committee
  - Negotiate terms of a contract as tentative agreements
  - Act as a spokesperson

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## Superintendent's Authority

The Superintendent is vested with broad statutory authority in order to administer the school district on a day-to-day basis.

- c. 71 §59B confers upon the Superintendent broad appointment authority over most school department personnel.
- c. 71 §38 confers upon the Superintendent broad authority to evaluate the performance of all school department personnel.
- c. 71 §42 confers upon the Superintendent broad authority to dismiss any employee of the school district.

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## DESE Regulations

- The superintendent shall be evaluated by the school committee pursuant to **603 CMR 35.00** and such other standards as may be established by the school committee.

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## Massachusetts General Laws

- **c. 150E** – Labor Relations
- **c. 30A** – Open Meeting Law
- **c. 66** – Public Records
- **c. 268A** – Conflict of Interest

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## Labor Relations: c. 150E

- Section 1: *In the case of school employees, the municipal employer shall be represented by the school committee or its designated representative or representatives.*

## Open Meeting Law: c. 30A

- Public Body – include subcommittees, ad hoc committees, etc.
- Meeting Notice, Agenda, Quorum, & Minutes
- Prohibition on “Serial” and “Revolving Door Deliberations”
- Executive Sessions – Permissible purposes

## Public Records: c. 66

*Every record that is made or received by a government entity or employee is presumed to be a public record unless a specific statutory exemption permits or requires it to be withheld in whole or in part.*

Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth:  
A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law

Important/relevant exemptions:

- ❖ Personnel information
- ❖ Student records

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## Conflict of Interest: c. 268A

- Applies to ““Municipal employee,” a person performing services for or holding an office, position, employment or membership in a municipal agency, whether by election, appointment, contract of hire or engagement, whether serving with or without compensation, on a full, regular, part-time, intermittent, or consultant basis...”
- The Massachusetts State Ethics Commission is charged with enforcement of the conflict of interest statute.

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**EVOLVING ISSUES IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

**MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE**

**NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

**AND THE**

**MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES**

**As part of the**

**DISTRICT GOVERNANCE SUPPORT PROJECT**

**2016**

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Certain sections have been highlighted in red because they were specifically cited during 2015 and 16 school years as particularly important issues in Massachusetts school districts.

This compilation includes some of the emerging and most frequently raised issues on roles and responsibilities of school committees presented by members and stakeholders in Massachusetts and around the country. It has been developed specifically for Massachusetts School Committee members.

MASC welcomes member comments and recommendations for additional content.

We are grateful to our colleagues in the National Organization of State School Boards Associations Executive Directors for helping to compile this information.

As with all MASC resource material, this is provided without cost to our members and is not to be offered for sale.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Personnel and Policy – Chain of Authority, Personnel, and Confidentiality**

The role of the school committee relative to contracts with professional personnel has several dimensions. They include:

#### **Hiring and Contracting:**

- **Hiring and contracting with the superintendent for up to six years (Ch. 71, Sec. 37).**
- **Confirming and setting compensation for Associate/Assistant Superintendents (Ch. 71, Sec. 59)**
- **Confirming and contracting for up to six years with School Business Officials (Ch. 71, Sec. 41)**
- **Confirm the appointment of a Special Education Administrator (Ch. 71, Sec. 53)**
- **Negotiating collective bargaining agreements with unionized staff (Ch. 150E, Section 1).**
- **Establishing compensation parameters for administrators not subject to collective bargaining, including principals (Ch. 71, Sec. 59B).**

#### **Setting Compensation:**

Compensation refers to anything of value and is not limited to salary. For example, compensation may include vacation, paid and unpaid leave (i.e., sick time, vacations, bereavement leave, and professional days), fringe benefits, “buy-out” provisions, “severance” clauses, and other items. In addition, the school committee, through its policy making role, may establish district rules governing items like school closing, accumulation of unused leave, retirement or severance “buy back” provisions, leave for professional development, and other provisions.

#### **Establishing District Policy**

Many district policies impact personnel contracting and employment and range from recruitment and retention policies, collective bargaining, fringe benefit applications, due process requirements, and other areas.

#### **Executing Contracts**

The school committee retains the exclusive authority to hire, contract with, evaluate, and terminate a superintendent.

The school committee confirms and approves contracts with the School Business Official. Subsequent contracts would require school committee approval.

Contracts for other administrators would be developed by the superintendent based on the policy and budget parameters set by the school committee. However, the authority to evaluate and terminate a contract remains with the superintendent for all employees except the school business officer. The school committee may, through its policy or budget deliberations, eliminate a position. Every contract in the district is a public document, but names of people entitled to confidentiality may be withheld.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Contracts and Contracting: Appropriate Roles for School Committee Members**

**Acting as a Body and Not as an Individual.** The authority of the school committee comes from the body, not from any particular individual. School committee members have no special rights or privileges other than those of parents and citizens. Individual members have no role in negotiating contracts without specific authorization. However, the full board may authorize a single member or members to execute that authority. For example:

- The school committee may authorize the chair to sign a contract on its behalf, or for another member to negotiate tentative agreements.
- Contract provisions that may be negotiated by the school committee in executive session or in private meetings must be approved in public by the school committee.
- The board may authorize a single member to act as its agent or spokesperson.

**Access to Information.** School committee members do not have access to confidential information related to students or employees, except for specific circumstances where a need-to-know applies. However, all personnel contracts are public documents regardless of who has negotiated or signed the agreement. No employee contracts, including principals, are exempt from this requirement. (Annual or periodic evaluations of all employees except for the superintendent are confidential documents and not subject to public disclosure.)

**Visits to Schools.** School committee members must remember that their visit to a school is quickly noticed as most employees will know who they are. Even if you are a parent or citizen-at-large as well as an elected official, your appearance can be intimidating to a school employee. It is all too easy to allow yourself to be perceived as making an official visit when you are, in fact, dealing with your own children or another appropriate matter outside the scope of your board role.

**Unannounced Observations.** As with school visits, observations of teachers or students during the school day are subject to the same standards that apply to all school visitors. It is generally not permissible for School Committee members to be observing classroom instruction unless such observation follows the district policies or the collective bargaining agreement as it applies to all members of the public.

**State Ethics Laws.** State ethics laws forbid you from:

- Using your position for personal gain or advantage.
- Using public resources for private purposes.
- Using your post to act in an inherently coercive manner.
- Acting on behalf of an immediate family member, employer, potential employer, business partner or person with whom you are doing business.

Members put themselves at risk if they engage in practices that extend beyond their scope. Here are some common examples of problematic situations:

- Pressuring the superintendent to hire a particular employee.
- Demanding a faculty member write a reference letter for a constituent or to provide special assistance for a student.
- Getting involved in advocating for someone else's child in a special education placement or assignment.
- Using school supplies for private purposes.
- Usurping the authority of the faculty.

**Collective Bargaining (Failure to Bargain in Good Faith)**

The school committee negotiates (or delegates the negotiation) of union contracts as one of its most important roles. It is important to understand how the formal rules for negotiations apply to avoid problems. Here are some of the more common problematic circumstances:

**End-Running the Bargaining Process**

Bargaining must take place in the appropriate setting and under carefully described circumstances. Private meetings with union representatives outside of the bargaining process are unfair labor practices. Taking a union leader aside, or being taken aside for a friendly ex-parte discussion violates the standards of good faith bargaining.

**Failure to Recognize Bargaining Agent**

Bargaining without the union's chosen representative present can be an unfair labor practice. It is always wise to leave the side bar discussions to the appropriate setting.

**Threats**

Genuine threats are highly problematic since discussions and actions in the bargaining process are protected from retaliation.



#### Disclosing Confidential Information

Bargaining takes place in executive session under the provisions of both labor law (Ch. 150E) and the state's Open Meeting Law (Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(3) and (7)). Disclosing confidential information is an unfair labor practice.

#### Failure to Follow Protocols

Employees in unions who believe they are victimized by a violation of their contracts may file grievances that the union will advance on their behalf. In many cases, school committees may hear the grievances as part of the steps in the appeal process. Attempting to interfere with a matter that should rightfully be grieved formally, or something that is in the grievance pipeline must be left to the formal process. End running the chain of command is both an unfair labor practice and, in an important recent case, a state ethics law violation.

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Personnel and Policy – Supervision, Personnel Policy and Privacy**

##### **Personnel: Non-Union Administrators/Principals**

School committee members do not supervise administrators, including principals and teachers. Here are some of the more common problems that occur related to these personnel.

##### **Failure to Follow Protocols**

##### **Violating Chain of Authority**

In addition to the other items noted above, failure to follow the district "chain of authority" puts school committee members at risk of both labor contract and ethics law violations. District employees do not report to the school committee and, therefore, school committee do not have the authority to supervise, assign tasks, or otherwise direct the staff. To do so may violate any one of several restrictions under the law.

End running the chain of authority to benefit an individual is an even more serious violation because it

involves a member using one's position for unfair advantage.

#### **Unannounced Visits to Schools/Buildings**

School committee members who are parents do not relinquish their rights as parents and citizens. They may visit any public school or public building under the same conditions as the public at large or parents may do so.

When a school committee member visits a school, that member should follow the protocol for everyone else:

- report to the principal's office,
- sign in, and
- get permission to visit the school.

A school committee should not appear in a school and expect an unscheduled meeting, tour, or access to information.

It is common practice, but not required, to inform the superintendent's office prior to a school visit, but as a parent, you have the right to visit the school on family matters without asking permission of the superintendent. MASC strongly advises that school committee members explain immediately to the principal, teacher or other school personnel that "I am here as a parent," or "I am here as a member of the neighborhood," or "I am here as a citizen," when they are not in an official capacity.

#### **Unauthorized Visit to Schools/Classrooms**

A classroom visit by a school committee member follows the same protocol as does a general school visit. Moreover, because classroom visits may appear to be "observations," it is essential to differentiate the appropriate visit of a board member/parent from the visit of a school committee member seeking information in an official capacity.

#### **Directives to the Faculty**

Issuing a directive to a faculty member is a likely violation of state ethics laws if it comes from a school committee member. Members do not supervise staff

and, therefore, put themselves at risk if they issue an order to a staff member. Frequent areas of problems occur when:

- Members intervene on behalf of constituents to seek special consideration for a parent or student.
- Members asking faculty to perform work for them that is not a service available to any other resident of the district under the same circumstances.
- Members directing staff to perform any professional duty.
- Members directing staff to attend community meetings or school committee meetings or subcommittee meetings, especially during budget time.

#### **Building Supervision and Maintenance**

Under Massachusetts law, the school committee has “general charge” of buildings which refers to policy setting, but the superintendent has oversight of the school buildings in particular including administration and logistics. The exception to the superintendent’s authority is in those cases where by charter or ordinance, certain facilities may be under the oversight of the municipality in which they are located.

Under the “general oversight” doctrine, there are several areas in which building oversight and supervision may involve policy of the school committee. For example:

- The school committee sets policy for building usage for non-school purposes such as rentals and fees.
- The facilities budget for maintenance, supplies and equipment is set by the school committee.
- Through the collective bargaining process, other provisions related to building usage may be negotiated including, for example, location

of a faculty room, planning rooms, parking allotments, vending machines in faculty areas, and other purposes.

- The school committee may review faculty grievances filed through the collective bargaining process related to building issues provided the bargaining agreement includes an appeal to the board.

Other situations need to be reviewed carefully to avoid intruding into the administrative sphere of activity.

For example, there is no ambiguity about some of the following:

- Administrative support staff and building custodians are supervised by the school principal and superintendent.
- Building maintenance is overseen by the principal or central office staff.
- Building logistics are also the purview of the building principal or central office staff as they relate to educator assignments (which may be subject to collective bargaining agreements), office designations (also possibly subject to collective bargaining or individual contract arrangements), and any locally-set building requirements such as zoning.
- Evacuation of school buildings in an emergency or during a drill is the responsibility of the building principal.
- School grounds are usually the responsibility of the school principal or central office staff unless a local ordinance or charter gives the responsibility for grounds and playing fields to the municipality.

It is not uncommon for school committee members to receive complaints about building conditions. These

complaints should be referred immediately to the superintendent.

## Fiduciary Responsibilities

In addition to its roles under the MA Education Reform Act, the School Committee has a fiduciary responsibility that has nothing to do with education governance reform. Elected local officials have a fiduciary responsibility to their constituents that includes a “Duty of Care,” a “Duty of Loyalty,” and the responsibility to ensure that district finances are sufficiently transparent so as to protect the public interest.

The school committee has the responsibility to act in the best interests of the school district and to protect its integrity and strength. This includes the transparency of its finances. Moreover, since the peoples’ money cannot be spent without the consent of the people or its representatives (i.e., the school committee), the fiduciary responsibility is an inherent and constitutional responsibility.

It is for this reason that school committees confirm the appointment of the school business official, approve warrants for payment, and set the budget and cost centers for managing the annual financial plan.

Since the school committee acts as a board and not as a set of independent individuals, fiscal questions should be directed at the appropriate time to the appropriate person – usually the superintendent. However, under the principles of fiduciary responsibility, all questions related to budget and finance from the school committee as a body are considered valid and should be respected and answered.

## Respecting Privacy Disclosing Confidential Information

The privacy rights of administrators, teachers and students are similar to those of the physician/patient or attorney/client in that their employment evaluations and records as well as student records are confidential,

with access limited only to those with a legitimate need to know.

A school committee member who seeks confidential information about a student, family or faculty member is violating the privacy rights of those individuals. The superintendent, principal, teacher or other employee may not discuss information about another person's child with you without the permission of the parent or guardian.

Similarly, school committee chairs should be extra cautious to avoid violating the privacy rights. In addition, they need to advise parents and teachers about the risks of discussing their own children or students in public to prevent them from giving up the confidentiality to which young people are entitled. Similarly, discussions of professional staff may require confidentiality, depending on the nature of the discussion.

#### Special Requests

Special requests can be touchy. A parent who asks you to expedite a letter of recommendation from a teacher may put you in the position of intimidating that faculty member. Accompanying a parent to a Special Education meeting on behalf of a child can put you in an equally inappropriate position. Asking the superintendent to secure for you a special privilege for yourself or a constituent violates the state ethics law.

#### Threats/Coercion

Threats are both inappropriate and illegal because you could be perceived as using your position in an inherently coercive manner. The problem with threats is that a listener may interpret what you believe to be a statement of fact or an innocuous caution as a genuine threat to his/her employment.

#### Terminations/Contract Non-Renewals

One of the most common "contracting" problems for school committee members comes when a popular faculty member is terminated by the superintendent or a principal. This often occurs at the end

of the school year, usually in May and June. Parents and community members usually want to know why the termination is occurring.

Moreover, it is common that the terminated individuals may mobilize colleagues and parents to engage in protests on their behalf. Blogs become active, letters are written to editors, and public comment period becomes a focal point at the next school committee meeting. In fact, parents and terminated employees often turn directly to the school committee because they do not understand or wish to follow the law on school district personnel management.

Complicating the situation is the unrestricted right of parents and citizens to petition the school committee to hear their concerns.

Exacerbating the circumstances are the privacy rights of the educators who lose their positions. Personnel evaluations and personnel records of discipline, improvement plans, and steps a district may have taken prior to the termination are strictly confidential. An employee who discusses them in public set out on a disastrous path and lays out a trap to ensnare the school committee and superintendent who may not disclose the record of an individual staff member.

### **Options for School Committee Members Who Object to Personnel Decisions**

School committee members often ask about their recourse if they believe that inappropriate or unwise personnel decisions have been rendered.

1. Use the superintendent's annual evaluation process to address personnel management.
2. Base superintendent contract renewal decisions upon performance.
3. Address problems through the bargaining process and collective bargaining.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Evolving Issues: Agendas, Meetings, Minutes and Member Priorities**

Several new issues have emerged over the past few years that deal with governance and board operations, largely due to the high volume of regulation, unfunded mandates, and other task-oriented responsibilities that challenge everyone's ability to get their work done. These issues also come to light as the MA District Governance Support Project, a joint initiative of MASC and the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, has begun to focus on specific strategies that School Committees can use to improve student achievement.

The major issues involve:

- Role of the Chair.
- Making Meetings More Effective and Purposeful.

- “Vanity” Projects.
- Public Participation
- Meeting Minutes

## ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The chair is, according to *“Robert’s Rules of Order,”* the servant of the assembly, not the master. The chair is responsible to the members present and those who cannot attend the meeting. The chair is also accountable to the public in the meeting room and those at home. The chair must ensure that the meeting is fair and impartial. Unless provided with special privileges or rights in your by-laws, the chair has no more advantages than the rest of the board except for the responsibility to run the meeting, call upon speakers, administer votes, and open and close the meeting.

The chair must keep the meeting focused and on a relevant topic.

Other than presiding over the meeting which includes entertaining motions and ruling on points of order, the chair has no more authority than the school committee grants under state law.

## COMMUNICATING THROUGH THE CHAIR

Some school committees develop a communications chain that puts the chair at the center. Depending on local preferences, the role of the chair may extend to:

- Acting as official spokesperson,
- Appointing committee members to subcommittees,
- Acting as the agent of the school committee,
- Channeling communications from the members to the superintendent,
- Directing the superintendent evaluation process,
- Assigning liaisons or communications to other stakeholders or district staff,
- Overseeing the protocol for accessing the district’s legal counsel.

Many board members do not prefer to go through the chair to communicate with the superintendent but others find that process a more efficient alternative. Local tradition often sets the procedure and has years of history behind it. It is the responsibility of the school committee to set an operating protocol for communications with the superintendent. This is a delicate matter as it can be difficult to explain to locally elected officials that they are limited in their ability to speak to the superintendent who reports to them as a board. (Also, see Vanity Time, below.)

(MASC counsels its members not to put this protocol into a contract of employment with the superintendent as it is not always practical. However, members should always be considerate of the



limited time that a superintendent may have to handle calls from school committee members during the day.)

## ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE OR SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR

Many districts use subcommittees to help make work more efficient. Most common are Budget/Finance, Policy, Facilities, Personnel/Collective Bargaining/Negotiations, and Curriculum. It is also common practice for the school committee chair to make appointments with the first person named to the committee to serve as chair. Often, but not always, the chair of the school committee is an ex-officio member of other committees.

Recently, the Attorney General released an important guideline called the “Robey Rule,” after the person who raised the issue. It deals with non-subcommittee members who wish to attend subcommittee meetings but whose presence would create a quorum of the school committee. For example, on a seven member board that has a three person Budget Subcommittee, one of the school committee members who are not on the Budget Subcommittee wishes to attend, but his/her presence would cause a quorum of the full board to be present in the room in violation of the Open Meeting Law. The Robey Rule allows any member to be present in the room as a private citizen with the right to speak or ask questions only if that same privilege is provided to the general public.

In a subcommittee, the Chair remains the servant of the group, not the master, and has only as much authority as granted by the school committee by-laws or the subcommittee members themselves. There is no inherent additional authority to the chair. For example, the Personnel Committee chair who wished to change the bargaining strategy with the teachers union without the consent of the school committee, was exceeding his/her authority. The Policy Committee chair who authorized the printing of a student handbook with a provision allowing principal of a high school to seize the cell phone of a student suspected of possessing a controlled substance exceeded her authority by acting as an individual. The Curriculum Committee chair who demanded that a principal halt printing of an advisory to parents interpreting a new policy on sex education approved by the school committee also exceeded the given authority.

## AGENDAS

*Robert's* also advises that the agenda is the property of the assembly, in your case, the School Committee. The board, by majority vote, may change the agenda subject to the requirements of the MA Open Meeting Law<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An important requirement is that the public posting of the meeting must include those items that the chair may reasonably anticipate arising at the meeting. If your posting does not include such items, they may not be raised. The key is that, in order to be discussed, the chair must not reasonably anticipate them.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law was revised in 2010 and provided more clarity on meeting minutes. In brief, minutes must now contain a summary of matters discussed where previously the minutes needed mention only the subjects raised, motions made, and actions taken.

School committees vary in terms of the level of detail in minutes. Most currently provide a brief summary that is sufficient to meet the standard that a citizen-reader will be able to understand what was discussed. It is not necessary, nor expected, that minutes will be verbatim transcripts, report on every school committee member's comments, or summarize every public comment made during public comment period. Board Secretaries are encouraged to create minutes sufficient for a lay person to capture the sense of the meeting and all actions taken. This demands a skillful and delicate balance between the need for brevity and the demands of others to see lots of details.

## BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

The same standards that apply to School Committee members apply to the public. Certain behaviors are considered "out of order" based on Robert's Rules of Order. Most frequent of these include:

1. Making a personal or ad-hominem attack against a member or another person.
2. Attacking a member's motives (as opposed to the purpose of a motion).
3. Overt rudeness.
4. Disturbing the assembly, including being disruptive.

In a society where freedom of speech is an honored tradition, the chair of the school committee should be particularly careful in ruling a member out of order, and members should understand the consequences of some of the disturbing behaviors that diminish their credibility. Some of those behaviors common in public boards that have brought unwanted attention include:

1. Returning continuously to a point that has been addressed or dismissed.
2. Self-promotion before the audience or a special constituency.
3. Promoting oneself at the expense of other members (For example, a member who insists that, "I'm the only person on this board who cares about children.")
4. Lack of attentiveness to colleagues or speakers by diverting to electronic diversions like computers, cell phones, pads and other devices.
5. Inability to stop talking.

Members would be well advised to note that the meeting audience and viewers at home watching a broadcast of the meeting are very quick to note and dismiss individuals and comments who take too long to make their point or monopolize meeting time with unnecessary remarks.

## LEGAL COUNSEL

School Committees often retain legal counsel and may use several attorneys or law firms to handle special areas of law such as collective bargaining, special education, litigation, or purchasing. The client of legal counsel is the school district and, more specifically, the School Committee. On occasion, because a legal matter may involve confidential information about a student or employee, the client becomes the superintendent or special education director. In those situations, because of the confidentiality at hand, the administrators may not be able to share all information about a case or situation with the school committee.

School Committees also experience problems managing the utilization of their legal counsel. Most boards will establish a policy requiring that contact with district legal counsel be authorized by the chair or be limited to stated criteria. Without this important management control, individual members can incur significant charges for legal services that may duplicate the efforts of others or which may not be worth the time, energy and cost.

## MAKING MEETINGS PURPOSEFUL

In her recent book, "The Essential School Board Book," Nancy Walser cites "varied, purposeful meetings" as a key strategy that School Committees use to focus on student achievement. One Massachusetts district scheduled one academic presentation every month with clear instructions for the superintendent, department heads, and principals that each session must focus on what they are doing to improve student achievement, rather than a "vanity session" to promote individual educators or to exploit someone's agenda.

For example, the music educators were instructed unambiguously to present their program in a way that made the link between music and student achievement: through the skill building of listening, reading, and repeating; understanding tone and timbre, composing; harmonizing and knowing musical intervals; memorizing; conducting; and understanding rhythms. The teachers presented and explained how each skill is different and how these individual skills challenged a different part of the thought process, stimulating the brain for the rest of the school day's diverse academic challenges. Video of student performances at various grade levels demonstrated their competence. The teachers then presented research that showed how their particular learning strategy had resulted in student achievement that exceeded expectations based on similar cohorts. This was far more useful than simply putting children in front of the School Committee to sing a song or two.

Similarly, the physical education teachers and athletic coaches had to explain the direct link between their activities and curricula and learning as well as life skills, as opposed to having athletes parade through the room holding their recently won medals or trophies, as has been done elsewhere.

As noted above, however, the chair has a special responsibility to protect people from themselves, including the obligation to protect the privacy rights of students and faculty and to ensure that public discussion and debate are run in an orderly way.

A particularly important part of a purposeful meeting is attentiveness to colleagues and others. When faculty, experts, students or community members appear to address or make a presentation, they will be especially sensitive to the kind of attention they receive from the School Committee. Members who get up and leave, take out their reading material, get on their cell phones, or start inputting messages to their computers or pads can have a negative impact on your speaker, audience, viewers, or public in general.

#### **STAFF CONTACT BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Contact between employees of the district and School Committee members is unavoidable. It is also perfectly appropriate in most cases. However, there are situations where contact with members of the faculty can be problematic. They include:

- Issuing directives to the faculty. School Committee members gain their authority acting as a board and not as individuals. Members do not have the authority to issue directives to faculty members who report to the principal, department heads or superintendent.
- Seeking information from faculty members. Asking for information that is more than routine can fall into this category as well, especially if faculty members must take time away from their duties to fulfill the requests.
- Dangerous conversations. This is America. Constituents have an unrestricted right to speak to you, and you to them. While you can speak to anyone you want, the conversations can be risky and you have no control over your words once they leave your mouth.

Because board members do not supervise faculty, they need to be careful that teachers or principals to whom you speak do not also abuse the ability to speak to you. Information you obtain from faculty members, like that you hear from parents, may not always be objective or accurate.

People may be intimidated by you as an elected official and may feel uncomfortable with a discussion. More importantly, what you actually say may not be what the listener hears. For example, as careful as you may be about dealing with a problem presented by a teacher or parent, your considered response may be interpreted differently. Your promise to “refer this problem to the superintendent,” could be interpreted as “School Committee Member X is going right to the superintendent to be fixed right now.”

## SOCIAL MEDIA

More and more, public officials make productive use of social media and the Internet vehicles to reach out to their constituents with public information, including opinions. Generally, these are unrestricted vehicles for communication provided that you do not distribute legally confidential information. Elected officials have an unrestricted right to use their personal Internet or e-mail accounts to establish blogs, social media sites, or other vehicles. However, they should be mindful that:

- All communication made electronically in your capacity as a public official can be considered public even when you are using your personal e-mail account or blog. This includes responding to constituents with your personal, rather than public, e-mail account.
- Using social media to mobilize opposition to your colleagues or to undermine their credibility, while allowable under the principles of free speech, may undermine your ability to serve effectively with them on the board.
- While public figures like elected officials, including the School Committee, are subject to the most outrageous criticism and attack in various forms of media, most of the school district employees are not public figures and comments constituting libel or slander could result in action against the public office holder. (In addition to elected officials, the superintendent is a public figure.)

School Committee members must be prepared to deal with the consequences of their blogs, Facebook pages, letters to editors, or other items distributed electronically. This may include losing the respect of your colleagues or diminishing your status with the public.

VANITY TIME – “Homework” assigned to superintendent by individual members or by the board that doesn’t really need to happen.

Superintendents across the nation have begun to raise the problem of “vanity time,” or “vanity issues” which are tasks or responsibilities taken up because an individual person demands that they be raised or addressed even when the majority does not want or care about them. Anyone who has dealt with colleagues who “won’t change their mind and won’t change the subject” or who have plenty of time on their hands to think of tasks for others to do will understand this. Examples include:

- Issues and problems that are irrelevant to board work are referred to the superintendent for resolution in order to please a constituent or individual member.
- A member with a personal issue requires additional personal help from the superintendent. (MASC has been informed that a lot of irrelevant “research” is sometimes done on issues that someone is interested in.)
- A member of the school committee makes direct contact with a district employee and assigns them a task which distracts them from their normal responsibilities.

- E-mail requests from individuals to administrators that distract them from their key work.
- Cell phone callers who have no sense of urgency during a long drive while the receiver of the call is at work trying to complete tasks.
- A bright new thought is pushed to center stage because someone just thought of it, and everyone must now participate in a discussion of an idea that is having its “15 minutes of fame” at your expense.
- Public comment period turns into a meeting agenda when someone else hijacks your meeting to turn the spotlight on a special issue.
- Or, worse, unhelpful amendments to motions are attached simply to shut someone up.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Most School Committees now host a public comment period where any member of the public is permitted to address the board. Public comment period usually happens at regular meetings. Some districts permit it during special meetings and subcommittee meetings, while others have more than one opportunity for public comment at various meetings. MASC has recommended several protocols for public comment period:

- Most importantly, all speakers must be recognized by the chair and should stop talking when their time is up as informed by the chair.
- Individuals should be limited to a set period of time, and usually three minutes is enough. The chair needs to be discreet in enforcing the time limit in order not to appear unreasonable, but the speakers must be respectful of others wishing to speak, or those who want to get to the meeting agenda. Remember, most speakers are indifferent to the time limits or the impact that repetition has upon listeners. They will generally speak to the limits of any time threshold. As a result, some chairs will ask people not to repeat what has already been said by another speaker.
- “Ad Hominem” attacks should be avoided. Public comment period is not a time to attack an individual.
- Some boards limit public comment to those items on the meeting agenda, while others allow any public comment. Your policy should clarify what is best for you.
- Individuals speaking should be informed that the School Committee will not respond, but will only listen and consider public commentary.
- The chair should prevent individuals from discussing information that is legally confidentially, including information about a particular child or faculty member.

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Areas of Ambiguity: When the Lines Blur

The lines that define the legal, legislative, and fiduciary responsibilities of the School Committee as well as the parameters that clarify the administrative and operational responsibilities of the superintendent of schools are sometimes unclear. The law gives the School Committee responsibilities over policy making which are broad in scope. Statutes also define the fiduciary responsibilities of the board over budget making and financial oversight. In addition, special statutes, including the collective bargaining laws as they link to public schools, provide special obligations and authority School Committees. However, when there is ambiguity, or varying circumstances and facts to go with them, the interpretations are not always clear.

Moreover, so many interpretations depend upon the particular facts or issues at hand. When, for example, is the line drawn over curriculum development when statute authorizes the School Committee to approve textbooks for use in schools but requires the superintendent to oversee day to day operations that would include drafting specific curriculum adaptations of the state's master frameworks to address local needs. Neither the law nor the occasional judicial interpretations resolve many complex and arguable questions over authority and obligation in these instances.

Further, there are instances where the law permits more aggressive involvement by the School Committee, but does not necessarily require it, leaving it to the board to delegate its power to its chief executive who may have the expertise to deal with it.

Some of the most frequent areas of role conflict include:

1. Budget Related issues (including budget development, approval, oversight, and line item transfers).
  - What you need to know?
  - How to develop an appropriate monitoring system?
2. Parent complaints that are brought to a school committee member.
3. School Committee member contact with School District Administration and Faculty.
  - *Principals*
  - *Teachers*
  - *Special Education Cases*
4. Authority Delegated to Superintendent (i.e., general policy, budget, personnel policy)
5. Protocols for accessing the superintendent for routine or meaningful discussions.
6. Anonymous Complaints Against Staff
7. Problem Principals or Administrators about whom there are Complaints (valid and invalid).
8. Setting the Meeting Agenda and/or Rules of Order
9. Personnel Decisions of the Superintendent and Administrators
  - *Hiring*
  - *Promoting*

- *Assignments*
- *Reorganizations/Staff Restructuring*
- *Layoffs*

10. Crafting Policy (Initial Drafts and Working Documents)
11. Curriculum (Entire Sphere of Issues)
12. District Grading Systems
13. Communicating with the Public
14. Dealing with confidential information.
  - Information you want to know, but legally do not have to know.
15. Line Item Budget Management and Change During the Fiscal Year
  - Budget Development and Finance
16. Legal Counsel – Who’s the Client?
17. Use of School Facilities.
18. Opening or Closing a School
19. Collective bargaining: What is appropriate to bargain and what is off the table under the Education Reform Law.
20. Remediating grievances: who hears and/or resolves grievances and how.
21. Criticizing a public employee in public.
22. School Redistricting
23. Staff Restructuring.
24. School Committee meeting rules of order.
25. Use of electronic devices during meetings (cell phones, pads, computers)
26. Hiring the Legal Counsel.
27. Handling or Receiving Confidential Information.



John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee  
FROM: Gail Dowd  
CC: John Doherty, Superintendent of Schools  
Robert W. LeLacheur, Jr., Town Manager  
Joseph Huggins, Director of Facilities  
DATE: April 22, 2020  
RE: Update on Birch Meadow Capital Project

As discussed during previous School Committee meetings we plan to provide the School Committee updates throughout the year as to the status of the various large-scale capital projects. We have prepared the following high-level summary of the progress since the last update provided to the committee during the FY21 Budget presentations. We are also providing this high-level summary memo to the Town Manager.

## **Birch Meadow Modular Classroom Project**

November 2019 Town Meeting approved the request of capital funding of \$1,250,000 out of free cash for the procurement of 2-3 Modular Classrooms to be located at the Birch Meadow Elementary School.

- Bid Process
  - Base bid is for 2 Modular classrooms at Birch Meadow with a 3<sup>rd</sup> Modular Classroom as an add/alternative.
    - Bid specifications were completed by Gienapp Design Architecture, working in conjunction with Facilities, School Department and Town Procurement. Specifications include site preparation, footing/foundation, delivery and installation costs. DPW will be assisting with site preparations.
      - Bid structured for 2 Modular classrooms with a 3<sup>rd</sup> as an alternate due to current bidding environment and desire to ensure at a minimum two would be purchased.
  - Bid procedures followed Chapter 149 Section 44E94 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended.
- Timeline:
  - Bid package for Birch Meadow Modular Classrooms released on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Development Review Team (DRT) Meeting held Wednesday, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>
    - Meeting had representatives from Police, Fire, DPW, Health, Facilities and Schools
  - Pre-bid conference and walkthrough of site were held Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>
  - Sealed bids were received and opened March 5<sup>th</sup>

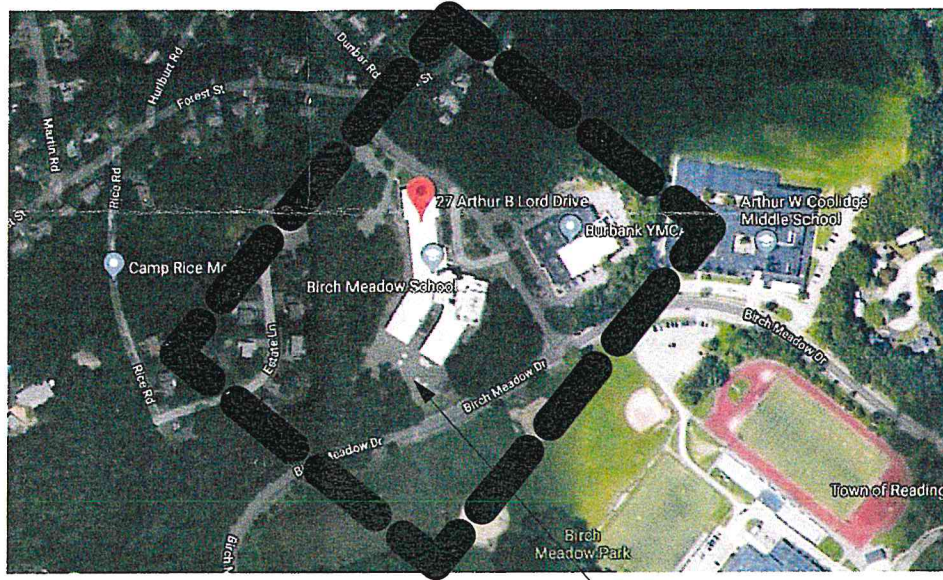
- Bid Results
  - The following is a summary of the bid results:

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Base Bid</b>	<b>Alternates</b>	<b>Total Bid</b>	<b>Comparison to Appropriation</b>
Vanguard Modular Building Systems	\$ 557,686	\$ 206,547	\$ 764,233	\$435,767
Triumph Modular Inc.	\$ 882,983	\$ 262,779	\$ 1,145,762	\$104,238
Avatar Construction Corp.	\$ 1,184,000	\$ 393,000	\$ 1,577,000	(\$327,000)

- Based upon a review of the proposals by the Review Committee (comprised of Allison Jenkins, Town Procurement Officer, Joe Huggins, Director of Facilities, Kevin Cabuzzi, Assistant Facilities Director, Dale Gienapp, Architect and Gail Dowd, School Department CFO), the contract was awarded to Vanguard Modular Building Systems.
  - A modified Health and Safety Plan (HASP), as adopted by the Reading Board of Health, will be required prior to the commencement of work by Vanguard Modular Building Systems. The requirements have been provided to Vanguard and we currently are awaiting their HASP.
  - Due to COVID-19 the Procurement Office has modified contract language to allow for flexibility in timelines due to this period of uncertainty. We anticipate delivery to be on time of a final product.
  - Furniture, fixtures and equipment will follow 30B procurement and are not included within the Modular proposals or pricing outlined above.
- Construction Phase:
  - Prior to the start of construction, DPW will be extending the blacktop surface and Facilities will be extending the domestic hot water lines to a predetermined location for the contractor to tie into (this process was agreed to in advance of the bidding process to help reduce overall costs of the project).
  - Construction is anticipated to occur July – mid-August with completion prior to beginning of the FY21 school year.
  - The Director of Facilities will be the Project Manager on the Project (value is below \$1,500,000 so we do not need to procure a project manager) and will work closely with the Architect to review all submittals.
- Communication:
  - Communication will be sent to the Birch Meadow Community once construction timeline is finalized

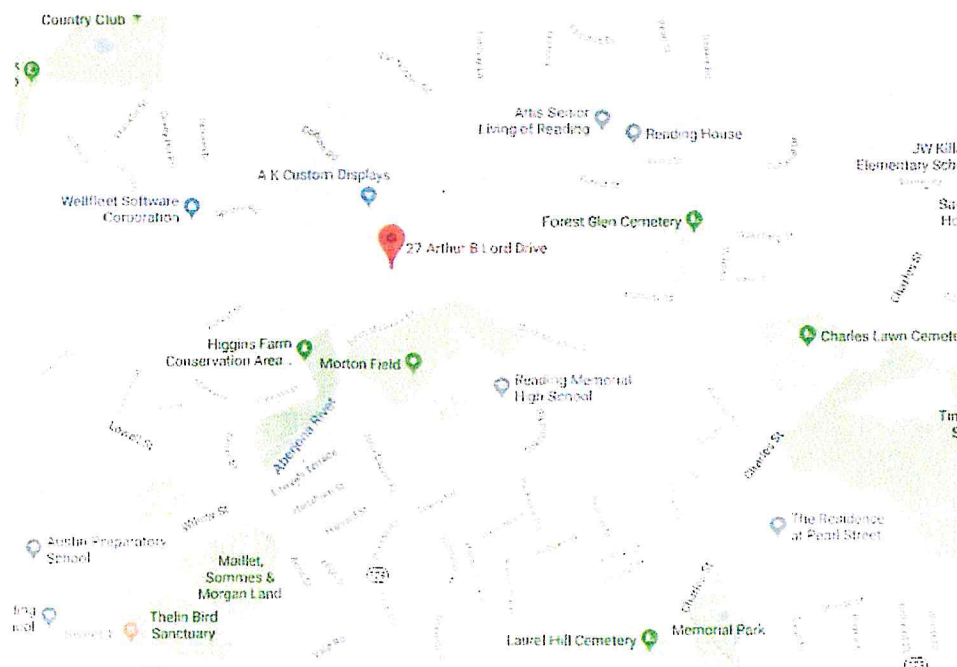
## Project Summary

Project includes concrete foundations, utilities and 3 modular classrooms. Also included is a wood ramp, stairs, a deck and a canopy.



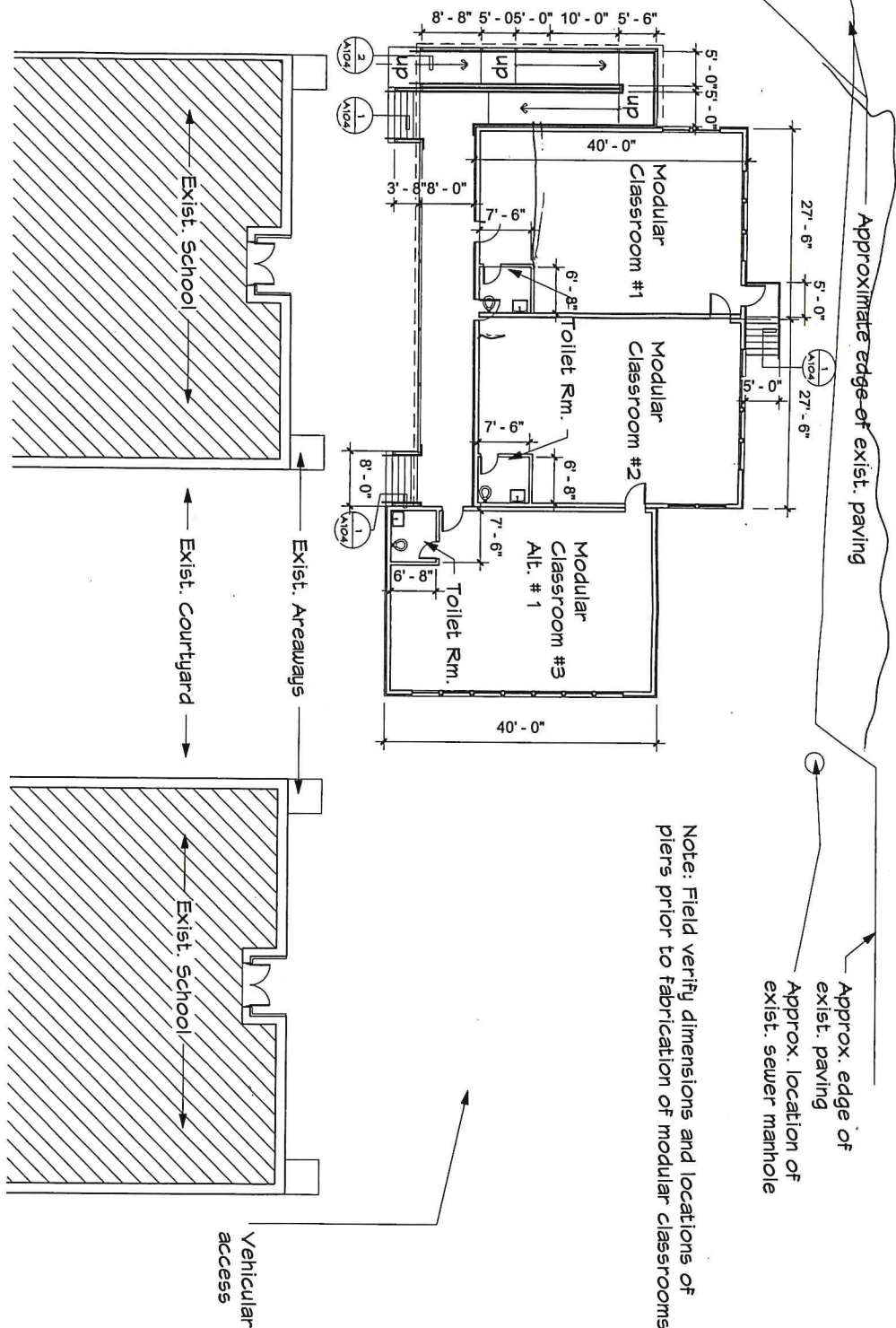
**Building Aerial View**

Area of Work



**Locus Plan**





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Chief Financial Officer

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: April 27, 2020

TOPIC: Transportation Contract Update

At our meeting on Thursday evening, Mrs. Dowd will provide an update them on the status of the transportation contracts.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Mrs. Dowd.

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: April 27, 2020

TOPIC: Presentation of Evidence

At our meeting on Thursday evening, I will provide a review of the 2019-20 goals with a progress update for the summative evaluation.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

# District Improvement Plan Superintendent's Educator Plan 2019-20 School Year

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Reading Public Schools

John F. Doherty, Ed.D.

4/30/2020

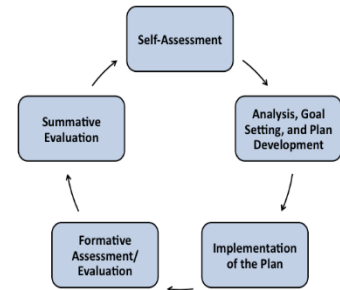
Update for Summative Evaluation



## Overview

I am pleased to present to the School Committee and the Reading Community the District Improvement Plan and the Superintendent's annual goals for the 2019-20 school year. The Superintendent's annual goals are aligned to the 2019-20 District Improvement Plan goal and action plans which focus on improving student learning for *all* students.

The evaluation process as outlined in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Evaluation regulations, is as follows:



### Annual Five-Step Cycle of Continuous Improvement (Source DESE)

The Model System for Superintendent Evaluation describes a one-year evaluation cycle with a formative assessment occurring at mid-cycle. At the discretion of the School Committee, the evaluation cycle can be two years for experienced superintendents, although annual goals are still recommended. A typical annual cycle aligned with the school-year calendar<sup>1</sup> includes the following steps:

Late Spring/Summer	<b>Step 1: Self-Assessment.</b> The superintendent conducts a <u>self-assessment</u> using the performance Standards and <u>rubric</u> , data about student learning, past progress on the district improvement plan and goals (when available), the prior year's evaluation (when available), input from the administrative leadership team, staff feedback, and other relevant evidence. Based on that assessment, the superintendent identifies goals to propose to the school committee: one professional practice goal, one student learning goal, and two to four district improvement goals. In addition, the superintendent identifies six to eight focus Indicators aligned to the goals—at least one from each Standard—to focus the school committee's assessment of performance on the Standards.
Summer/Early Fall	<b>Step 2: Analysis, Goal Setting, and Plan Development.</b> During a public meeting, the school committee and superintendent review the proposed goals, key strategies, and progress benchmarks, along with the proposed focus Indicators. <sup>2</sup> In consultation with the superintendent and with the objective of achieving mutual agreement, the committee revises as needed and approves the goals and related focus Indicators. These goals—along with key strategies and benchmarks of progress—become the Superintendent's Annual Plan. <sup>3</sup> The plan also outlines the evidence that will be used to assess goal progress and determine performance ratings on each Standard and overall.
Throughout School Year	<b>Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence.</b> The superintendent implements the Superintendent's Annual Plan, with assistance from the committee, as appropriate. School committee members and the superintendent collect, share, and regularly discuss evidence of progress on goals and performance against the focus Indicators.
Mid-year	<b>Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation.</b> At a mid-cycle public meeting (or series of meetings), the superintendent reports on progress made on the goals in the Superintendent's Annual Plan. The school committee reviews the report, offers feedback, and discusses progress and possible mid-cycle adjustments with the superintendent.
Late Spring/Summer	<b>Step 5: Summative Evaluation.</b> The superintendent prepares an End-of-Cycle Report on goal progress and performance against the focus Indicators for each Standard. In a public meeting, the school committee completes a performance review and <u>End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report</u> assessing attainment of the goals and the superintendent's performance against the Standards.

<sup>1</sup> School committees and superintendents that align the evaluation cycle to the election year should adjust dates accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to the revised Open Meeting Law (c. 28, s. 18 2009), this must take place in a public meeting.

<sup>3</sup> The Superintendent's Annual Plan is not the same as the District Improvement Plan described in MGL CMR 69 11. One or more of the district improvement goals that appear in the superintendent's annual plan also may appear in the district plan, but the superintendent's plan is not intended to include every goal the school committee has identified in its district plan. Instead, the superintendent's plan identifies the two to four goals that will carry the most weight in assessing the superintendent's performance in that cycle. That said, school committees and superintendents are encouraged to coordinate these two planning processes.



**Reading Public Schools District Improvement Plan**  
**Strategy and Goals for Improvement of Student Outcomes (2019-2020 School Year)**

***Our Mission***

***Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow***

***Our Vision***

It is the vision of the Reading Public Schools to instill a joy of learning by inspiring, engaging and supporting our youth to become the innovative leaders of tomorrow. We will accomplish our vision by focusing on a few key strategic initiatives that lead to a meaningful and relevant curriculum, innovative instructional practices, strong analysis and thoughtful dialogue about evidence, a collaborative and team approach to learning and teaching, and a safe and nurturing learning environment. The overall physical and behavioral well-being of our children will be our top priority as students will not learn if they are not physically and psychologically safe. Education will truly be the shared responsibility of both the schools and the community, with families playing active roles in the schools and being full partners in ensuring the success of their children. In the interest of the entire Reading community, the school district and town government shall work cooperatively and collaboratively. As educators and members of our community, we believe that implementing this vision is our ethical responsibility to the children of the Town of Reading.

***Our Theory of Action***

If the Reading Public School District strategically allocates its human and financial resources to support high quality teaching, prioritizes a commitment to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students, emphasizes the hiring and support of effective staff who have the capacity to collaboratively learn, thoughtfully analyzes measurements of school performance and provides differentiated support, then students will make effective progress and be appropriately challenged, graduating from high school ready for college, career, and life as contributing citizens in a global society.

***District Goal for 2019-2020 School Year***

During the 2019-20 school year the Reading Public Schools will improve data systems, provide training and support for staff, and enhance a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. The success of our students will be evidenced by the following:

- an increase in student engagement (through survey and observation)
- improvement in academic achievement (through state testing and other identified assessments)
- a decrease in the average number/month discipline referrals
- a decrease in the proportion of students with 10 or more absences
- an increase in teacher efficacy as measured by survey data.

***Strategic Objectives***

**Strategic Objective A**  
***Data Systems***

**The school district will refine and support a data system built to inform our work. The system will monitor instructional supports, and appropriate interventions for students.**

**Strategic Objective B**  
***Coherent Instructional Systems***

**Based on data analysis, the school district will evaluate and refine standards-based instructional systems to meet the needs of all learners.**

**Strategic Objective C**  
***Supportive and Safe Learning Environment***

**Based on data analysis, the school district will monitor student social emotional growth, and refine systems of support to ensure a healthy and successful learning community while meeting the unique needs of students.**

***Strategic Initiatives***

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify data that will be used for analysis and select district baseline data to establish targets for improvement (C)</li> <li>• Conduct data analysis at student, building, and district level. District level analysis will include cohort analysis on performance and enrollment (C)</li> <li>• Implement data analytics tool to facilitate collection and analysis of data (C)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and begin implementation of a five-year curriculum renewal cycle in all curriculum areas. (IP)</li> <li>• Develop a five-year special education program review cycle. (IP)</li> <li>• Continue completion of curriculum guides, PreK-12. (IP)</li> <li>• Develop and implement curriculum in middle school social studies. (IP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete PK-12 SEL curriculum guides (IP)</li> <li>• Align K-5 SEL report card standards (C)</li> <li>• Provide Professional development in SEL, trauma, equity and diversity (C)</li> <li>• Develop plan for family and community awareness and engagement of SEL standards and practices (IP)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a quarterly data review cycle for the district (IP)</li> <li>• Implement a continuous student support cycle: identify at risk students, select evidence-based interventions, enact interventions, and monitor student progress/growth (IP)</li> <li>• Continue NEASC work at RMHS (IP)</li> <li>• Begin analysis of current Student Information Management System (P)</li> <li>• Convene a district data team to review YRBS data and recommend next steps (IP)</li> <li>• Work with stakeholders to develop a vision of the graduate (November, 2020) (IP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and pilot curriculum material in Grade 7 and 8 mathematics. (IP)</li> <li>• Commit resources to focused and aligned professional development opportunities on meeting the needs of diverse learners for administrators, teachers and support staff. (C)</li> <li>• Align teacher induction and mentoring program to reflect district expectations (C)</li> <li>• Work with TAP Committee to review new teacher evaluation rubrics for implementation in 2020-2021 school year. (P)</li> <li>• Pilot Dyslexia Screening tool in Grades K-2 at Joshua Eaton. Develop a plan based on DESE guidelines for district implementation during the 2020-21 school year. (IP)</li> <li>• Revision of elementary standards-based report card and conferencing with completion in the 2020-2021 school year. (IP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an explicit decision-making process for determining student access to Tier 2/3 interventions for behavioral health (IP)</li> <li>• Build a more supportive school climate (PBIS) to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline while promoting a supportive school culture (restorative practices) (IP)</li> <li>• Coordinate resource list of state agency services for district-wide response plan for students (IP)</li> <li>• Continue to move forward on capital project focused on town and school security (C)</li> <li>• Continue elementary space needs and enrollment study and prepare recommendations to the School Committee and Community for approval. (IP)</li> </ul>
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### *Outcomes*

- A decrease in the achievement gap on state and local assessments between high needs subgroup (special education, English Language learners, and economically disadvantaged) and the general population of students. As a baseline use the first year of the next generation MCAS for each test.
- An improvement in state and local assessments including Next Generation MCAS state assessments (% meeting/exceeding and growth), SAT scores (using 2017 as baseline), AP Scores (% student participation and scores), and local assessments (elementary Fountas and Pinnell and AMC).
- A decrease in the average number/month of discipline referrals, including suspensions for all students, with special attention to different subgroups.
- An increased positive overall response in student learning environment scores as evidenced by the PRIDE survey and other student data.
- A decrease in the proportion of students who have 10 more absences as compared to the average of the last three years.
- An increased positive overall response in school leadership, shared decision-making, and school climate as evidenced by the PRIDE survey.
- By December, 2020, the following will be completed: publishing of Curriculum Guides in all grades/subject; creation of Centralized Teacher Resources that include, planning materials, pacing guides, common assessments and learning progressions.
- The development of five year cycle for special education program review and a curriculum renewal.
- Continued progress on capital project for school/town security (as measured by percent completion on timeline, funding dependent).
- Continued progress on elementary space needs and enrollment study (progress on plans to address issue, funding dependent).
- By November, 2020 a vision of the graduate for the Reading Public Schools will be approved and inform are work for the next District Improvement Plan.

**C-Complete:** The action step or initiative has been completed for this particular phase of the goal.

**IP-In Progress:** The action step or initiative has begun and is in the process of being completed.

**P-Planning:** The action step or initiative has not begun and is in the planning phase.

## **Superintendent's Goals**

### **Goal #1-Student Learning Goal (Aligned with Strategic Objectives A, B, and C)**

During the 2019-20 school year, I will lead the Reading Public Schools to improve data systems, provide training and support for staff, and provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. The success of our students will be evidenced by an increase in student engagement, improvement in academic achievement and access to higher level courses, a decrease in discipline referrals and student absenteeism, and an increase in teacher efficacy. This implementation will be done through three specific strategic objectives as evidenced in our District Improvement Plan: *Data Systems, Coherent Instructional Systems, Safe and Supportive Learning Environment*. The progress of this goal will be measured in the following areas:

#### **Measures of Progress Towards our Goal During the 2019-2020 School Year**

- A decrease in the achievement gap on state and local assessments between high needs subgroup (special education, English Language learners, and economically disadvantaged) and the general population of students. As a baseline use the first year of the next generation MCAS for each test.
- An improvement in state and local assessments including Next Generation MCAS state assessments (% meeting/exceeding and growth), SAT scores (using 2017 as baseline), AP Scores (% student participation and scores), and local assessments (elementary Fountas and Pinnell and AMC).
- A decrease in the average number/month of discipline referrals, including suspensions for all students, with special attention to different subgroups.
- An increased positive overall response in student learning environment scores as evidenced by the PRIDE survey and other student data.
- A decrease in the proportion of students who have 10 more absences as compared to the average of the last three years.
- An increased positive overall response in school leadership, shared decision-making, and school climate as evidenced by the PRIDE survey.
- By December, 2020, the following will be completed: publishing of Curriculum Guides in all grades/subject; creation of Centralized Teacher Resources that include, planning materials, pacing guides, common assessments and learning progressions.
- The development of five year cycle for special education program review and a curriculum renewal.
- Continued progress on capital project for school/town security (as measured by percent completion on timeline).
- Continued progress on elementary space needs and enrollment study (progress on plans to address issue).

### Goal 1-Student Learning Goal: Planned Activities

*Describe actions the educator will take to attain the student learning goal(s).*

*Activities may apply to individual and/or team.*

Action	Supports/Resources from School/District <sup>1</sup>	Timeline or Frequency	Status
1. Work with Central Office Administrators, Principals, and Directors to implement three strategic objectives as described in District Improvement Plan	FY20 Operating Budget Title I, IIA, IV, IDEA, SPED PD Grants	2019-20 School Year	In Process
2. Gauge progress through Central Office Leadership Team meetings, District Leadership Team meetings, Individual Principal Meetings, building visits, and other visitations.	Meeting times weekly with District Leadership Team, bi-weekly with Central Office Leadership Team, and bi-weekly for individual school visits.	Weekly	In Process
3. Focus District Leadership Team and Administrative Council meetings on improving instructional practices through supervision and evaluation, looking at and analyzing data, and using protocols to solve dilemmas regarding practices.	Meeting times weekly with District Leadership Team	Weekly	Complete
4. Conduct District Leadership Team walkthroughs or individual walkthroughs with building principals once a month at a different school each month.	Meeting Time	Monthly	In Process
5. Work with Director of Student Services and Assistant Director of Student Services to support development of 5 year program review cycle.	FY20 Operating Funds Grant Funds	Ongoing	In Process
6. Focus resources on the following teaching and learning areas for the 2019-20 School Year:	FY20 Budget Grant Funds	Ongoing	In Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of middle school social studies, including the development of a new civics class in Grade 8.</li> <li>• Piloting of new math curriculum material in Grade 7 and 8</li> <li>• Alignment of standards by grades, K-12.</li> </ul>			Complete
			Complete
			In Process



## Goal #2-Professional Practice Goal (Aligned with Strategic Objective C)

To improve the physical and psychological security of our schools through changes in policies, procedures, infrastructure, and safety drills. This will be measured by survey data of staff, students, and parents of perception of safety, updated policies and procedures regarding safety, improved drill practices by each school, and updated infrastructure to our schools.

<b>Goal 2-Professional Practice Goal: Planned Activities</b> <i>Describe actions the educator will take to attain the professional practice goal(s). Activities may apply to individual and/or team.</i>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Supports/Resources from School/District<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Timeline or Frequency</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Develop a District Wide Safety Committee which will include teachers, building level and central office administrators, and public safety. The purpose of this Committee is to review and revise, if necessary the Emergency Operations Plans for schools and building.	Title IV Funds	December, 2019	<b>In Process</b>
2. Work with Chief Financial Officer and Director of Facilities to conduct a Safety Audit of each school.	Time		<b>Complete</b>
3. Work with Chief Financial Officer and Director of Facilities to review Key Access Policy and Procedure for the School District and implement any necessary changes.	Resources for implementation FY19 and 20 budget	November, 2019	<b>Complete</b>
4. Work with building principals and public safety officials to conduct the following drills in each school annually. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 Fire Drills</li><li>• 2 Active Shooter/Intruder Drills</li><li>• 1 Shelter in Place Drill</li><li>• Sector Evacuation Drill (Once every three years for different schools)</li><li>• Canine Search (RMHS Annually)</li></ul>	Time	September-May	<b>Complete</b>

<sup>4</sup> Must identify means for educator to receive feedback for improvement per [603 CMR 35.06\(3\)\(d\)](#).

5. Conduct safety tabletop exercises with DLT and other administrators	Meeting Times	2019-20 School Year	<b>In Process</b>
6. Provide Professional development in SEL, trauma, equity and diversity	Inservice Days/Meeting Times	2019-20 School Year	<b>Complete</b>
7. Work with Police, Town, Community and School Officials to continue to educate and address school and community acts of hate.	Time	2019-20 School Year	<b>Ongoing</b>
8. Work with Town Officials, Director of Facilities, Chief Financial Officer, and Police Chief to develop an implementation plan for improved safety and security at our schools based on the based on the recommendations from the security audit.	FY19-FY22 Capital Plans	2018-23 School Years	<b>In Process</b>

### Goal #3-Professional Practice Goal (Aligned with Strategic Objective C)

To work with the Town Manager, Chief Financial Officer, and Director of Facilities to develop a multi-year capital plan to upgrade and improve school facilities. This will be measured by a completed plan for the project which has the support of Town Meeting and progress on project timelines, funding dependent.

<b>Goal 3-Professional Practice Goal: Planned Activities</b> <i>Describe actions the educator will take to attain the professional practice goal(s). Activities may apply to individual and/or team.</i>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Supports/Resources from School/District<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Timeline or Frequency</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Meet with Permanent Building Committee to identify their role in the elementary planning study process.	1. Time	1. January, 2018-August, 2018	<b>Complete</b>
2. Work with Town Manager to identify funding to develop an elementary planning and enrollment study.	2. Capital Plan Funding	2. August, 2018	<b>Complete</b>
3. Work with Town and School Officials to develop and get approval to adopt design selection procedures to secure design services for the different projects that require those services.	3. Time	3. November, 2018-February, 2019	<b>Complete</b>
4. Receive School Committee and Town Meeting Approval for Capital Funding request for elementary planning and enrollment study.	4. Capital Plan Funding	4. August, 2018-November, 2018	<b>Complete</b>
5. Work with Town Manager, Chief Financial Officer, and Director of Facilities to complete Town and School Building Security Study.	5. Capital Plan Funding	5. June, 2017	<b>Complete</b>
6. Pending funding and Town Meeting approval, work with Chief Financial Officer, Director of Facilities, and Town Manager to develop a plan for design study and implementation of design study for school building security.	6. Possible State Funding FY19 Capital Plan-Design FY20-FY22 Capital Plan-Implementation	6. November, 2018-April, 2019	<b>Complete (Town Meeting Approval to implement study)</b>

<sup>5</sup> Must identify means for educator to receive feedback for improvement per [603 CMR 35.06\(3\)\(d\)](#).



7. Pending funding, work with Town Manager, Director of Facilities, and Chief Financial Officer to procure design services for different projects.	7. Operational and Capital Funding	7. November, 2018-June, 2022	<b>Planned</b>
8. Secure funding at Town Meeting for School/Town Building Security Project.	8. Debt	8. April, 2019	<b>Complete (4.5 million dollars approved at Town Meeting)</b>
9. Execute School/Town Building Security Project	9. Approved funding from Town Meeting	9. April, 2019, June, 2022	<b>In Process</b>
10. Secure funding from Town Meeting to solve short term space issues at Birch Meadow	10. Free Cash	10. November, 2019 Town Meeting	<b>Complete</b>
11. Work with School Committee, Permanent Building Committee, Town Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Facilities to develop a proposal to solve long term elementary space issues based upon Elementary Enrollment and Space Planning Study.	11. TBD	11. TBD	<b>In Process</b>
12. Once funding is received, implement Elementary Enrollment and Space Planning Study.	12. FY20-FY22 Capital Plans	12. November, 2018-June, 2021	<b>Planned</b>

**Goal #4-District Vision of the Graduate (Aligned with Strategic Objectives A, B, and C)-Over the next two years, I will work with Reading educators, parents, local officials and community members to learn about and develop a vision of what skills, knowledge, and dispositions Reading students should attain and develop during their preK-12 years in our schools. Through these conversations, we will develop and receive approval of a district vision of the graduate which will be used to develop our next three year district improvement plan.**

**Essentially, we will ask our stakeholders these three questions:**

- What are the hopes, aspirations, and dreams that our community has for our young people?
- What are the skills and habits of mind that our children need for success in this rapidly changing and complex world?
- What are the implications for the learning experiences we provide in our school systems?

<b>Goal 4-Professional Practice Goal: Planned Activities</b> <i>Describe actions the educator will take to attain the professional practice goal(s).</i> <i>Activities may apply to individual and/or team.</i>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Supports/Resources from School/District<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Timeline or Frequency</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Build understanding and ownership among district's leadership team, School Committee, and Community as to the need and sense of urgency in this activity.	1. Meeting Time	1. November, 2019-January, 2020	<b>Complete</b>
2. Create a Vision of a Graduate Design Team from all sectors and stakeholders that will be involved across all phases to build a sense of urgency and create excitement across the community	2. Meeting Time	2. November, 2019-January, 2020	<b>Complete</b>
3. Define the overall timeline	3. Time	3. November, 2019-January, 2020	<b>Complete</b>
4. Convene the VOG Design Team	4. Time		
5. Study the implications for your students in light of the changing economy, workplace, and society	5. Meeting time for VOG Design Team	5. February-April, 2020	<b>In Process</b>
6. Draft a prioritized set of competencies, including		6. April-August, 2020	<b>Planned</b>

<sup>6</sup> Must identify means for educator to receive feedback for improvement per [603 CMR 35.06\(3\)\(d\)](#).

21 <sup>st</sup> century skills, mindsets, and literacies	6. Meeting time for VOG Design Team		
7. Draft visuals that convey a compelling story	7. Meeting time for VOG Design Team	7. April-August, 2020	Planned
8. Reach consensus about a selected visual to share with the broader community	8. Meeting time for VOG Design Team	8. April-August, 2020	Planned
9. Continue to discuss this work in the broader community and elicit their ideas for the Vision	9. Community Meeting Times	9. September/October, 2020	Planned
10. Collect feedback from the community and share with the Vision Design Team as they draft the Vision	10. Community Meeting Times	10. September/October, 2020	Planned
11. Decide what revisions are necessary	11. Meeting time for VOG Design Team	11. September/October, 2020	Planned
12. Submit recommendation to the School Committee for approval	12. Meeting Time	12. November, 2020	Planned
13. Publish and leverage the adopted Vision as the Compass for the development of the next district improvement plan, RMHS NEASC visit and the design of educational experiences for students	13. Time	13. November, 2020	Planned

## School Committee Calendar Topics

*Please note that this calendar may change depending on the status of the current health crisis and/or availability of presenters and topic material in consultation with the Chair*

*An Asterik\* indicates office half hour for this session at 6:30 p.m. All meetings will be in the RMHS Schettini Library unless noted.*

Date	Topic	Group
<b>July 11<sup>th</sup></b> <b>6:00 p.m.</b>	Approval of RMHS Handbook MASC Training School Committee Protocol Reorganization	Administration MASC Administration School Committee
<b>August 1<sup>st</sup></b> <b>6:00 p.m.</b> <b>Meeting cancelled</b>	Superintendent Evaluation Executive Session 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading of Policies CBI – Evaluation of the Superintendent	School Committee School Committee School Committee
<b>August 29<sup>th</sup></b> <b>6:00 p.m.</b>	New Teacher Introductions Adopt School Committee Operating Protocols Summer Update Capital Plan Update	New Teachers  School Committee Administration Finance
<b>September 11</b>	Financial Forum	Finance Committee
<b>September 12<sup>th</sup></b>	School Facilities Assessment Report 2019 YRBS Survey Results	Finance  Administration
<b>September 25</b>	RCASA Annual Meeting Jordan's Furniture	RCASA
<b>September 26</b>	Middle School 2019 YRBS Presentation Superintendent's Evaluation Appointment of Superintendent to Collaborative Boards	RCASA  School Committee School Committee
<b>October 16</b>	Financial Forum Reading Public Library – 7:30 p.m.	Finance Committee
<b>October 17<sup>th</sup></b>	MCAS Presentation Middle School Math/Social Studies Update	Administration Administration
<b>October 23</b> <b>5:30 p.m.</b>	School Committee Vacancy	School Committee & Select Board
<b>October 28</b>	District and Superintendent's Goals Dyslexia Screening Presentation 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading of Policy BHE-SM Social Media Policy	Administration Administration School Committee
<b>November 6<sup>th</sup></b> <b>7:00 p.m.</b> Town Hall Conference Room	Elementary Space	Administration
<b>November 7<sup>th</sup></b>	Elementary Space Update 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading of Policy BHE-SM Social Media Policy	Administration School Committee
<b>December 3, 4, 10 &amp; 11</b>	Finance Committee/Select Board FY20 Budget	
<b>December 12</b> <b>6:00 p.m.</b>	RMHS Guidance Presentation and Update School Calendar 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Social Media Policy School Improvement Plan review	RMHS  Administration School Committee Administration

<b>December 19*</b>	Quarterly Personnel Report Quarterly Financial Report FY21 Prebudget Presentation 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading of Policy BHE-SM Social Media Policy Superintendent's Evaluation Process	Human Resources Finance Finance School Committee Administration
January 2	Superintendent Contract – OML Violation	School Committee
January 6*	Public Hearing FY21 Budget FY21 Budget Discussion FY21 Capital Plan	Administration
January 16	FY21 Budget Discussion – Regular Day & Special Education	Administration
January 23	FY21 Budget Discussion Public Hearing on FY21 Budget Questions	Administration School Committee Administration
January 27	FY21 Budget Discussion Final Vote	Administration School Committee
February 6*	Kindergarten Update Portrait of Graduate Update School Committee Brochure	Administration Administration School Committee
February 26 (RMHS Schettini Library)	Finance Committee	FY21 Budget Presentation
March 3	Town & Presidential Primary Election	
March 11	Finance Committee Town Hall – 7:30 p.m.	FY21 Budget Meeting Vote TM Articles
April 9 Remote	Vice Chair Reorganization COVID-19 School Closure Update	School Committee District Administration
April 16 Remote	Changes to NEC Articles of Agreement School Calendar Change Kindergarten and RISE Tuition Relief Permission to Negotiate Rate Changes in Tuition and Transportation Superintendent Evaluation Cycle	Superintendent Superintendent District Administration District Administration District Administration School Committee
April 23 Remote	Superintendent Evaluation Process School Choice SOA Plan Presentation and Discussion	Superintendent Superintendent Superintendent
April 30 Remote	Presentation of Evidence for Evaluation SC Presentation by Colby Brunt Modular Project Update Transportation Contract Update	Superintendent School Committee Finance and Operations Finance and Operations
May 12 Remote	Finance Committee Meeting	Finance Committee
May 14 Remote	Intermunicipal Agreement with Wakefield (Food) Quarterly Personnel Report Quarterly Financial Report Capital Update Social Media Policy and Guidelines SOA Plan Discussion and Approval Executive Session with Michael Joyce	Finance and Operations Human Resources Finance Finance School Committee Administration District Administration
May 28	Curriculum Update REF Grants SEPAC Presentation Scheduling of Retreat for District Improvement Plan	Administration REF SEPAC School Committee
June 7th (RMHS Field House)	Graduation	School Committee

<b>June 11*</b>	Teacher Recognition FY 20 and 21 Budget Superintendent Evaluation	Teachers Administration School Committee
<b>June 15</b>	Town Meeting	
<b>June 18</b>	Declare Surplus Equipment Superintendent Contract Extension Discussion	Finance School Committee
<b>July 2</b>	Reorganization Discuss Elementary Space Plan	School Committee School Committee

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