

FINAL

RICHMOND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, October 10, 2023 - 6:00 PM - Via Zoom

PRESENT: Beth Choquette, Superintendent/Principal; Ina Wilhelm, Chair; Tom Forstner; Nathan Steele; Kimmie Leeco; Mary Shook, SPED Director; Michael Sullivan, Superintendent Mentor; Michelle Smith, School Events Coord.; Julia Gregory;

Ina called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with a roll-call vote.

Review of the Minutes of September, 2023: Several changes to the language were made by Ina and Beth. No motion for approval was made and no vote was taken.

Approved minutes from 9/12/23

Principal's Report: Principal's Goals: Beth noted that her goals had not changed from those she reported at the last meeting but that more detail has been added to standards and indicators of what goals are focused on.

Professional Practice Goals: Management and Operations is the focus and the indicator is human resources management.

Student Learning Goal: Remains the same as reported at the last meeting. They fall under Standard 1 - instructional leadership and under Indicator E - data-informed decision making.

School Improvement Goal is the same for both roles (Super./Princ.): Standard 2 - Management and Operations and include 2a environment and 2c scheduling.

Update on School Improvement Plan: Beth plans to bring back family engagement and activities that were discontinued under COVID. In the works are plans for: Veterans' Day - luncheon scheduled for November 9th; the Thanksgiving Feast - no date set as yet; the Crafts Fair - scheduled for November 4th.

Michelle Smith - Noted that the Crafts Fair brings in \$7-8,000 each year. She is currently helping to recruit vendors, but would be grateful for new volunteers to help.

National Assessment of Education Progress. This year, Richmond was selected for testing, which will be done by the NAPE (the Nation's Report Card). Tests will be administered to the 8th grade in math and reading the month before MCAS testing begins (Feb. 2, 2023).

Updates on the School Improvement Plan - progress on strategies of the relationship goal. Beth sends out weekly letters on Fridays and a weekly communication on Sunday evenings for the staff.

Beth is trying to interact with as many students as possible in order to create a relationship with each one. The Student Leadership Team - Zachary Houle, a new SPED teacher, has volunteered to be the teacher facilitator for this team. The Triage Team meets weekly to discuss how to best support students and teachers.

Beth explained the difference between the Triage Team and the Child Study Team in response to questions from Ina.

The process of awareness of and education around celebrating and lifting the voices of historically marginalized populations. Beth uses a monthly newsletter to achieve that. Second Steps and Cares is part of the curriculum to encourage attendance of staff at community events in order to build relationships. Beth noted that there was a great turnout at the Open House.

MTSS Goals - Supports students who either need interventions or who are excelling beyond grade level. Beth is revising scheduling to include a WINS block into the class schedule: there are elective blocks and advisory blocks for morning meetings. We are working out the timing issues in order to get students (particularly the younger ones) into the building and settled in the classroom. In order to accomplish that, students are entering the building at 8:20 a.m.

Restorative Practice Training for staff continues from Restorative Justice Ed. Universal Design for Learning training will continue with Katie Novak in March.

Instructional Leadership Team, which is also the Data Team, meets on the fourth Monday of the Month, beginning on October 23rd.

The Child Study Process is in place. Beth has redone the forms for teachers to fill out and is trying to use the DCAP (District Accommodation Plan) data when a teacher comes to present at a Child Study Meeting.

Last year the school adopted a new reading program through grade 8 and adopted a social studies program in grades 5-8. This year we put together a math committee to look at new math programs.

Family and Community Engagement see under Principal's Report:

Increase culture of community and belonging within the school. Beth is working with Ina on a piece for the *Richmond Record*, which will be published shortly.

MCAS - Beth provided highlights: Richmond has done well in all three subjects for the past three years. There was a small decline of 1% in ELA and a small increase of 1% in math. In Spring: ELA - in grades 3 - 8 Richmond - 52% met or exceeded expectation

Overall in the State - 42% met or exceeded expectation

Math - Richmond - 48% met or exceeded expectation
Overall in the State - 40% met or exceeded expectation

In recognition of the learning loss in the last couple of years, it will take time to get back to previous results. Beth wanted to recognize that in the 4th grade, 75% met or exceeded ELA and 60% met or exceeded expectations in Math. In the 5th grade, 71% met or exceeded in Math; 6th grade, 70% met or exceeded in ELA and 6th grade, 62% met or exceeded in Math.

The Commissioner has reported that Massachusetts is out of the COVID slide and that Richmond reflects that pattern. He recommended that third grade classes will require special attention this year when considering interventions as they were in Kindergarten in 2020 and a lot of instruction may have been lost, particularly around social/emotional learning and behaviors.

Richmond has had its first cycle of benchmarking: Beth held broad data meetings looking for trends across grade levels and there is a lot of hope that, with the new reading curriculum, we will see continuity across grades with shared vocabulary as well as what WIN blocks can do with student achievement.

Math scores showed some gaps in curriculum and there is a lack of continuity due to the use of different programs at different grade levels. So Beth is looking at adopting new curriculums, hopefully next fall, that will create common language and continuity from grade level to grade level.

Across all grade levels, students had trouble with academic vocabulary such as “analyze,” “Interpret,” etc.. Beth will focus on academic vocabulary as a school. She also notes some gaps in fluency in math and reading, which raised the question about what can be done as a school, using UDL practices, to be sure the curriculum is accessible to all students, given the variety of ways in which students learn.

Accountability: The State showed that Richmond is making moderate progress, 46%, which means no assistance or intervention is needed. However, it is well to remember that the percentage desired for meeting all targets is 75%. Richmond, therefore, will want to make sure that those percentages increase.

Next steps around data: Beth needs to meet with individual grades during PLC time or Middle School time, to see how to dive deeper into the data. She has talked with the data team and with individual teachers about how to look at specifics to see where targeted instruction is needed at different grade levels and with different populations of students.

Karen reminded the committee of the past practice of using a “Word of the Week” program by posting it on whiteboards and using it frequently during the week.

Superintendent's Report: Beth introduced Michael Sullivan, her coach from the New Superintendents Induction Program. Michael provided some background on himself, stating that he retired from his position as a Superintendent of 8 years in a town north of Greenfield, near the Vermont border. He was Assistant Superintendent of the Longmeadow Public Schools and a Social Science teacher in Northampton. He was recruited as a mentor in the Superintendent Induction Program which is run and overseen by MASS (Mass. Assn. of School Superintendents) and supported by the Dept. of Education. The goal of this program is to see that new Superintendents use tools that are research-based to try to achieve improvement in teachers and learning and equity in all students (i.e. strategy, pre-planning, evaluations, dealing with conflict, management and building relationships). It is a three-year program that calls for Michael to meet with Beth for up to six hours per month and to provide feedback for her when attending meetings with Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees. In addition, once a month all Superintendents get together to learn from each other about the curriculum. The third year is mostly driven by Superintendents who create support groups, which are geographically constructed.

Ina moved to approve the Superintendent/Principal goals as presented. Kimmie seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll-call vote.

Update on the parking lot: Beth reported that the parking lot will not be repaved this year as there were no vendors available for the fall. Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator, has said she will send out the bids again as early as possible in the spring. Beth noted that at least the drainage problem has been dealt with so the parking lot can now be paved.

Special Education Director's Report: Mary thanked Beth for the excellent Data Meetings that were held last week.

Student Goals: Mary is working with Beth on her student goals to be more effective in Child Study Team Meetings.

Professional Goals: Mary is working with Rebecca Phillips on the 2023-2024 school year to increase parents' understanding of their children's educational and developmental needs and the various programs, services and resources available to them. She would also like to work with the Special Education Parent Advisory Council to strengthen a collaborative relationship through an active SPED Parents' Advisory Group. Mary is working with Rebecca to try to increase parent attendance from both Hancock and Richmond at those meetings.

Mary reported that an estimated rate of inflation for a SPED student attending an out-of-district private school has been taken into account by the State. The State will allow a \$4.69% increase for the fiscal 2025 year.

Finance Report: Beth said that the budget report is similar to last month when a few items were over-budget. Other than that, things are moving right along. She is preparing

for the next budget season by meeting with Sharon Harrison, Ina Wilhelm, Mary Shook and Amy Scott.

Nate: Wanted to add a philosophical note to the budget. It is better to pay for schools than jails.

Public Comment: None

Unforeseen Items: None

Ina moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 PM. She was seconded by Kimmie and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Submitted by Phyllis LeBeau