

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WATERTOWN, MA**

**RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
149 MAIN STREET**

**MONDAY
NOVEMBER 13, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

I. Roll Call

The School Committee Chairman, Mr. John Portz, called to order the November 13, 2017 meeting of the School Committee at 7:00 PM. Present were School Committee members Ms. Kendra Foley, Dr. Guido Guidotti, Ms. Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Mr. Mark Sideris, and Ms. Elizabeth Yusem. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Ms. Mary C. DeLai, Director of Human Resources Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Student Services Ms. Kathleen Desmarais, and various members of the public. Dr. Guido Guidotti, School Committee member, was not present.

II. High School Student Advisors

Miss Lauren Petrillo and Miss Emily Koufos, student advisors to the School Committee, reported on recent goings-on at Watertown High School. They said the soccer, football, and field hockey teams had each won their respective north division titles. The school play *You Can't Take It With You* had gone well. They reported on the annual cheerleading competition, athletic awards, and Spirit Week.

III. Introduction of Mr. Brandon Rabbit, Director of School Nutrition

Ms. Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations, introduced Mr. Brandon Rabbit as the recently appointed Director of School Nutrition.

IV. Public Forum – Session I

No member of the public spoke.

V. Teaching and Learning Showcase

A. Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools (RIDES) – Professional Development Program

Dr. Deanne Galdston, Superintendent of Schools, introduced Mr. Lee Teitel, faculty director of a professional development program, through the Harvard Graduate School of Education, called Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools (RIDES). He explained RIDES as a support system designed to systematically address issues of inequity and disproportionality by identifying levers and clarifying core values, and thus develop a District-wide plan in support these values. Dr. Galdston gave a [presentation](#) on the RIDES program in Watertown.

Dr. Theresa McGuinness, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, & Assessment, said a survey regarding equity would be distributed to the Watertown community in December 2017.

The Chairman asked if most of the RIDES work would take place in a professional development setting, or if classrooms would be involved. Dr. Galdston said the program is currently in its planning stage, but she expecting to eventually implement improved equity within the schools and at the District level.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Teitel for his involvement in Watertown as the District partakes in the RIDES program.

VI. Presentation and Discussion

A. MCAS – Middle School and High School

Dr. McGuinness gave a [presentation](#) on MCAS scores from Watertown Middle School and Watertown High School.

Ms. Shirley Lundberg, Principal of Watertown High School, reported that WHS is considered Accountability Level 2, like approximately 80% of Massachusetts high schools, for not yet meeting its goal for narrowing the achievement gap. Ms. Maureen Regan, 6-12 Literacy Coordinator, said that the mobility rate of students moving in and out of the District is a major challenge with regards to MCAS scores; of three students who failed the English MCAS last year, one (33.3%) has already left the District and cannot be remediated. Mr. Daniel Wulf, 6-12 Mathematics Coordinator, said it may be helpful to make students aware of how math skills will help them in other subject fields. Ms. Amanda Muchoski, WHS science teacher, said results show Watertown High School consistently scores above the state average for science. Action steps for improving MCAS scores in grades 9-12 were said to include an expansion of the inclusion classroom model, MCAS preparation classes, a curriculum audit, student support in the Writing and Mathematics Labs.

Dr. James Kimo Carter, Principal of Watertown Middle School, reported on the middle school's MCAS scores. Action steps for improving the middle school's MCAS scores were said to include common assessment structure for grades 6-8, regular process monitoring, leveled reading instruction intervention, restructured math support classes, completed "spiraling" of science curriculum, and a curriculum audit.

Dr. McGuinness said District-wide actions to improve MCAS scores included continued assessment of student performance, commitment to improved curriculum, providing support interventions for students not meeting benchmarks, providing support to school- and grade-level teams, fostering communications with the Boston College Partnership for Family Engagement, and the Harvard Graduate School partnership with RIDES.

A School Committee member noted the small population of Watertown could mean on a few students are able to skew results more heavily than in a larger district. Various School Committee members thanked the presenters for their work in dissecting the District's MCAS scores, some stressing they feel test scores are not necessarily the most important skills of students.

VII. Action Items – Discussion and Vote

A. High School Mascot Options

Ms. Kendra Foley, Chair of the Mascot Screening Committee, reported a community survey regarding four mascot choices for Watertown High School had recently closed.

Various School Committee members spoke in favor of adopting the shield as the mascot for WHS. They spoke of the symbolism of a downward shield ("welcoming") and raised shield "ready for battle"). One School Committee member said she liked that the shield is gender neutral.

A motion was made to adopt the shield as the mascot of Watertown High School.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

B. Approval of Minutes:

1. May 1, 2017 School Committee Meeting
2. June 5, 2017 School Committee Meeting
3. June 28, 2017 School Committee Meeting
4. August 14, 2017 School Committee Meeting
5. September 11, 2017 School Committee Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the above-listed meetings.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

C. Approval of Gifts:

1. Watertown Savings Bank

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$500.00 from Watertown Saving's Bank for the Robotics Team.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

2. AutoZone

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$30.00 from AutoZone's battery trade-in program for the Robotics Team.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

3. Back to School Night Donation Jar

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$22.00 from the Back to School Night donation jar for the Robotics Team.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

4. Watertown Middle School PTO

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$500.00 from the Watertown Middle School PTO for the Watertown Splash Club.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

5. Ms. Helen Clinton

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$40.00 from Ms. Helen Clinton for the Watertown Family Network.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

VIII. Reports

A. WPS Projects and Activities:

1. Building for the Future

Ms. Elizabeth Yusem, Chair of the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee, reported a Town Council appropriation vote would take place in the coming weeks, cementing an architect for the elementary schools building project. The Superintendent said the District would know by December 13, 2017 whether the high school had been selected by the MSBA for state funding towards improved school facility.

2. Asbestos Abatement Project

Ms. DeLai said by November 27, 2017 work to complete asbestos abatement work at the high school. She said that the project was expected to last 60 (sixty) days. Inspection and air quality monitoring would take place during work and upon completion of the project. Ms. DeLai said the District anticipated using the existing maintenance budget to fund the project, but if additional funds were requires, the District would ask the Town for funding rather that cut educational programs.

B. Monthly Updates:

1. FY18 Budget

Ms. DeLai presented the [FY18 budget status](#).

2. Enrollment

The Superintendent reported on [student enrollment numbers](#) across the District.

3. Personnel

Mr. Craig Hardimon, Director of Human Resources, presented a [report](#) on recent personnel changes.

4. Warrants

The Chairman presented a [report](#) on warrants recently signed in the District.

IX. Public Forum – Session II

A member of the public said she expected better pedagogy and curriculum across all grades in preparation for increased MCAS scores in the future. She also said students require support during the school day, rather than being expected to come early or stay late for special

X. Reports

A. Chairman's

The Chairman reported Ms. Lindsay Mosca would begin her two-year term on the School Committee in the coming days. Two new members under four-year terms would be sworn in in January 2018.

B. Superintendent's

The Superintendent said she was thankful for and amazed by the high school performance of the play *You Can't Take It With You*. She recognized the new National Honors Society members. She said she was thankful to be apart of a community celebrating hard work.

XI. Next Meeting

The next School Committee meeting was announced to be scheduled for December 4, 2017.

XII. New Business

No new business was discussed.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM.

Meeting Documents:

[RIDES: Memo](#)

[RIDES: Information](#)

[RIDES: Presentation](#)

[2017 MCAS Accountability Data Presentation](#)

[FY18 Budget Status](#)

[Enrollment Report](#)

[Personnel Report](#)

[Warrants Report](#)

[2017 MCAS Accountability Data Presentation](#)

Minutes submitted by Christie Fisher, Administrative Assistant to the Central Office.