

MINUTES OF MEETING
COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION
BLACKSTONE-MILLVILLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
February 7, 2008
FREDERICK W. HARTNETT MIDDLE SCHOOL
MEDIA CENTER
35 FEDERAL STREET
BLACKSTONE, MA 01504

At 7:00 p.m. the Community Resources for Education Meeting was called to order.

Members of the School Committee were present as follows:

Toni M. Harvey, Chairperson
Ann M. Lesperance, Vice Chairperson
Mark J. Almquist, District Treasurer
Lynn M. Landry, Member
Catherine A. Robinson, Member

Absent from the meeting were Thomas J. Conlon, and Joanne R. Forbes

Also in attendance was Superintendent, Dr. Herbert Levine.

Mrs. Harvey welcomed all in attendance. She spoke on the tentative FY08-09 budget. She asked for input from the building councils on their budgetary needs. She stated that the budget is a work in progress. A council member made a request to keep the class sizes small.

A parent asked if the number of kindergarten classes would increase. Dr. Levine stated that they have always had 5 classes at JFK and 2 classes at MES. The class size ranges between 22-23 students.

Another parent mentioned that if the class sizes remain large it is important to have an aide in the classrooms.

Dr. Levine stated that with full time kindergarten there will be a half-time aide in all classes. This would be mandated by the grant they are looking to receive.

Mrs. Harvey stated that to this point they have received the grant for the money to prepare for the full day kindergarten. They would need to apply for the implementation grant if they decide to actually move forward with the full day kindergarten.

Dr. Levine stated that it would cost the District \$47,000 to implement the full day kindergarten for the first year.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the School Committee will need to meet, decide and vote on the full day kindergarten.

Dr. Levine stated that with full day kindergarten the students are better prepared to go to 1st grade. He also stated that all curriculum frameworks are written with full day kindergarten in mind.

He feels that currently we are having difficulty with our MCAS reading scores and this would help in this area.

Dr. Levine also feels that within 10 years the state will mandate full day kindergarten. The District has to offer the full day to parents but the parents can opt not to send their child. By age 6 all children must be enrolled in school.

Principal Everett Campbell stated that to help our students we need to increase time on learning programs after school. We also need to implement the MCAS remediation program. The schools are asking for this in the FY09 budget.

Dr. Levine stated that the elementary schools are now piloting a new reading program. There are 2 different companies competing to be awarded the program for the entire elementary level. The cost to the District would be approximately \$175,000 for K-5 in both Blackstone and Millville. Both the teachers and the students are very excited about this. It should make a significant impact on reading scores. The types of questions our students are being asked on MCAS tests are quite difficult. This program should aid in improving those scores.

Mr. Campbell stated that they have received books at the JFK and MES schools. The books are being received well in the classrooms. There is a greater emphasis on non-fiction books which is needed. He and Principal Eileen Tetreault will make a decision which company to go with if it is placed in the FY09 budget. They are both thinking along the same lines at this time.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the School Committee was able to use the middle school surplus money for capital improvements for the high school, middle school and AFM School totaling \$331,727.

Mr. Almquist stated the following repairs are to be made with this money:

1. Loading dock at the rear of high school – estimate \$33,000
2. Construction of handicap accessible walkway @ the Molony-Sullivan auditorium- Estimate \$12,000
3. Crack filling and sealing of the driveways and parking lots at BMRHS – bid - \$25,480
4. Repairs to the high school cooler and freezer – Bid - \$37,669
5. Construction of classroom and handicap lavatory – estimate - \$15,000
6. Architectural cost for #4 above – actual - \$5,500
7. Roof upgrades – BMRHS – estimate - \$25,000
8. Designer costs for the athletic fields at the middle and high schools – actual \$13,000
9. Technology upgrades – BMRHS – actual - \$44,678
10. Future technology upgrades – BMRHS – projected - \$25,000
11. Exterior door replacement – BMRHS – estimate \$19,500
12. Replace carpeting in offices, media center and music room – BMRHS – estimate \$15,000
13. Funds for HVAC work @ BMRHS – estimate \$15,000
14. Legal Fees – estimate \$35,000
15. Consultant Fee – actual - \$10,900

It was mentioned at the meeting that the townspeople need to be aware that they need to get more school funding from the towns of Blackstone and Millville for capital outlay. The town of

Millville, according to Mrs. Tetreault, is very responsive to the needs of the Millville Elementary School and tries to help whenever they can.

The Capital Outlay Committee in Blackstone has told the school that there is no additional funding for helping with the needs of repairing buildings, etc. The District sent a detailed, prioritized list to the two towns and the Capital Outlay Committee will decide whether to fund these items or not. If the Town does not fund the repairs and the District does not have the funds in the budget, the repairs do not get done.

If citizens are interested in helping they could send a letter or go to a Capital Outlay meeting and voice their opinions on the importance of keeping up our schools.

One concerned citizen asked if the towns could be liable if they do not make certain repairs.

Mrs. Harvey spoke on reducing the vocational school applications that are being sent to various schools by our students. The applications to outside schools have been increasing. She would like to come up with a way to inform the 8th grade families about all the things that BMR has to offer. This will be discussed at future meetings.

Mrs. Harvey stated that they are in the process of developing a screening committee for the position opening for the Superintendent of Schools for FY09.

Mrs. Harvey also stated that there are currently 3 open School Committee seats for FY08-09. There is one 4 year seat available, one 3 year seat and one 2 year seat. All papers must be returned to the town by February 9th if anyone is interested in holding these seats. Mrs. Harvey stated that they are encouraging people to apply. They are in need of persons who want to help.

Mrs. Harvey spoke on the round table video proposal. The Committee would direct this and they are looking for people in the community who want to get involved. If anyone is interested they should contact Mrs. Harvey or Mrs. Lesperance. Having a discussion on cable television in the form of a round table would certainly help people who are not able to attend the School Committee meetings become better informed. It would not be a live call in show but a round table discussion.

Mrs. Harvey thanked all BMR School Council members and citizens for attending the meeting. Mrs. Harvey adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Joanne R. Forbes, District Secretary