

The Mohawk Trail School System
Mohawk Trail Regional School District | Hawlemont Regional School District

Michael A. Buoniconti, Superintendent of Schools
Michael Kociela, Business Administrator
Leann Z. Loomis, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

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**Mohawk Trail Regional School District
School Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 5, 2017
7:00 p.m. – Sanderson Academy**

Agenda

- I. Call meeting to order
- II. Statement of Trust
- III. Student/Staff Presentation/Reports
- IV. Approve minutes of the meetings of March 8 and March 27, 2017
- V. Presentation/Citizen Comment:
 - A. VEAC Presentation—John Sears and David Newell
 - B. Bill Diehl, Director of the Collaborative for Educational Services
- VI. School Reports
 - A. Principal Reports
 - B. Director of Pupil Personnel Services
 - C. Directors of Curriculum & Assessments
- VII. Subcommittee Reports – included in packets
- VIII. Action Items

- 1. Vote to approve a Regional Agreement Amendment to allow for closure of the Heath Elementary School and tuitioning of Heath students to Hawlemont**
- 2. Vote to approve a Regional Agreement Amendment that would admit the Town of Rowe as a 7-12 Member Town, effective July 1, 2018**
- 3. Vote to approve Field Trip Request for BSE School to Plimoth Plantation 3rd Grade classes**
- 4. Vote to approve donation from Mohawk Music Association of \$1775.00 to the Music Field Trip to NYC on April 26, 2017**
- 5. Vote to accept the Mohawk Athletic Association Treasurer's Report, July 1, 2016-February 28, 2017 of donations to MTRSD totaling \$5,790.94.**
- 6. Vote to establish a grant fund authorized by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53A for a MSSEF-GEMS Mini-Grant for the establishment of a sustainable science fair program**
- 7. Vote to approve the list of library books to be surplused**
- 8. KFA Community WiFi Use Policy—2nd Read and Adoption**
- 9. KFA-R Community Use of WiFi Regulation—1st Read and Adoption**
- 10. JLCE Head Lice Management Policy—1st Read**
- 11. Vote to approve MTRSD District Calendar for 2017-2018**
- 12. CD and/or Nilman Fund Transfer(s), if necessary**

- IX. School Committee Chair Report:
 - A. Planning for Annual Town Meetings—FY18 Budget
 - B. Day on the Hill
 - C. Shared services—next steps
 - D. Superintendent's contract renewal

- X. Superintendent's Report:
 - A. District Vision
 - B. Heterogeneous Math Program
 - C. Preschool Program
 - D. Planning Move of 6th Grade to Mohawk
 - E. MA Rural Schools Coalition Update
 - F. FY17 Operating Statement

- XI. Business Administrator's Report:
 - A. FY16 Audit Reports
 - B. FY17 Operating Statement
 - C. FY18 Budget Update
 - D. FY18 Local Aid Estimates Update
- XII. Unfinished business
- XIII. Correspondence/Handouts:
 - A. March 8, 2017, "Mohawk students win video award," in The Recorder's West County Notebook
 - B. March 11, 2017, "Hawlemont teacher wins Pioneer Valley award," by Diane Broncaccio in The Recorder
 - C. March 13, 2017, "Towns, schools unite over rural woes," by Diane Broncaccio in The Recorder
 - D. March 16, 2017, "A weekend of musicals: Three high schools perform three popular plays," by Miranda Davis in The Recorder
 - E. March 16, 2017, "Project takes student to new heights," in The Recorder
 - F. March 16, 2017, "Shrek Comes to Mohawk," in The Independent
 - G. March 16, 2017, "Hinds sponsoring school bus bill," by Virginia Ray in The Independent
 - H. March 16, 2017, "Singing School," Photo by Virginia Ray in The Independent
 - I. March 16, 2017, "We're the best! Mohawk wins silver medal," in The Independent
 - J. March 17, 2017, "What happens when Mohawk students really care," Editorial in The Recorder
 - K. March 24, 2017, "North Quabbin districts face tough choices to stay afloat," Editorial in The Recorder
 - L. March 29, 2017, "Officials sound off to legislators on broadband, schools," by Richie Davis in The Recorder
- XIV. Executive Session, if needed
- XV. Adjournment

School Committee Meeting Dates:
Next Regular Meeting – May 10, 2017 at Mohawk

DRAFT-Minutes

MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Sanderson Academy Wednesday, April 5, 2017

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requires minutes for all school committee and subcommittee meetings. The recorded minutes are open to the public for inspection within 10 days of the meeting. Minutes are recorded to provide a brief overview that reflects the subject matter discussed and any decisions made. Motions made are to clearly indicate who made the motion and who seconded the motion. Record who was in favor, who opposed, or who abstained. The names of any person(s) appearing before the committee are to be indicated.

The Mohawk Trail Regional School District School Committee met at Sanderson Academy on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Members present at the meeting: Poppy Doyle and Emily Robertson [Ashfield 8.5 each], Martha Thurber and David Parrella [Buckland 9.4 each], Julia Aron and Evelyn Locke [Charlemont 6.2 each], Joe Kurland and Nina Martin-Anzuoni [Colrain 8.2 each], Suzanne Crawford [Hawley 1.7 each], Budge Litchfield and Robert Gruen [Heath 3.5 each], Heather Davis and Leslie Rule [Plainfield 3.2], John Payne [Shelburne 9.3].

100 is the total weighted vote with 50 being half and 50.5 being the majority for a quorum. Members present at the beginning of the meeting total [90.7], which constitutes a quorum.

Members absent from the meeting: Jason Cusimano [Shelburne 9.3].

Administrators present: Superintendent Michael Buoniconti; Business Administrator Michael Kociela; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Leann Loomis; Director of Curriculum and Instruction 7-12, Sarah Jetzon; Director of Curriculum and Instruction PreK-6, Rachel Porter; Lynn R. Dole, Co-Principal Mohawk Trail Regional High School; Marisa Mendonsa, Co-Principal Mohawk Trail Regional High School; Joanne Giguere, Principal of Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School; Emma Liebowitz, Principal of Sanderson Academy; Amy Looman, Principal Colrain Central School; Jesse Porter-Henry, Principal of Heath Elementary School.

Staff/Students present: Sanderson Students Katie Osterman (2nd Grade), Abby Osterman (Kindergarten), Caleb Shearer (Kindergarten), Kaden Shearer (Preschool), Alaina Shearer (2nd Grade).

Others present: Dena Willmore, Buckland Select Board; Gloria Fisher, Heath Finance Committee/Educational Task Force; Sue Mitchell, District Nurse Leader; Lynn Dole, Marissa Mendonsa, Mohawk Co-Principals; David Newell, John Sears, VEAC; Bill Diehl, Executive Director of Collaborative for Educational Services; Joe Judd, Shelburne Select Board; Ginny Ray, *The Independent*; Diane Broncaccio, *The Recorder*; Kate Barrows, BEST; Erika Shearer, Jeremy McGeorge, Alex Osterman, Joe Osterman.

Documents:

Agenda MTRSD School Committee Meeting 4-5-2017
Memo from VEAC Clerk, David Newell to School Committee 3-30-2017
VEAC Proposed Amendment
Draft Minutes MTRSD School Committee Meeting 3-8-2017
Draft Minutes MTRSD School Committee Meeting 3-27-2017
Principals' Report-Mohawk 4-5-2017
Principal's Report-BSE 4-5-2017
Principal's Report-Sanderson 4-5-2017
Principal's Report-Colrain 4-5-2017
Principal's Report-Heath 4-5-2017
Director of Pupil Personnel Report 4-5-2017

Directors of Curriculum Report 4-5-2017
 Draft Minutes Budget Subcommittee 3-8-2017
 Draft Minutes 2-District Transportation 2-27-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 1-12-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 1-19-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 1-26-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 2-2-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 2-16-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 2-23-2017
 Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 3-2-2017
 Draft Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 3-9-2017
 Draft Minutes Heath Education Initiative Task Force/Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee 3-16-2017
 Draft Minutes Policy Subcommittee Meeting 3-16-2017
 Town of Rowe Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes 2-22-2017
 Draft Minutes Vocational Education Advisory Committee Meeting 3-7-2017
 Field Trip Request-BSE
 Donation from Mohawk Music Association 3-22-2017
 Mohawk Athletic Association Expenditures
 Document re. REAP Grants
 RLIS-SRSA Comparison Table
 US DOE State Eligibility Spreadsheets for FY16
 KFA—Community Wi-Fi Use Policy
 KFA-R—Community Wi-Fi Use Regulation
 JLCE—Head Lice Management Policy
 MTRSD 2017-2018 Proposed Calendar
 Superintendent's Report 4-5-2017
 MTRSD Vision Committee Meeting Notes 3-17-2017
 Collaborative for Educational Services Bio of Kate Lytton
 MTRSD Preschool Program 2017-2018 Flyer
 MA Rural Schools Coalition/Initiatives
 MTRSD Audit FY16
 MTRSD Audit FY16 Management Letter
 MTRSD FY17 Operating Statement
 Proposed Warrant Article
 Proposed Load and Unload School Bus Procedures

I. **Call meeting to order:** Chair Martha Thurber called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. **Statement of Trust:** Chair Martha Thurber read the Statement of Trust

III. **Student/Staff Presentation/Reports:**

Emma Liebowitz introduced 2nd Grade students Alaina Shearer and Katie Osterman who read poems they had each written in class.

IV. **Minutes:**

On a motion by Poppy Doyle and seconded by Suzanne Crawford, the Committee **voted to approve the March 8, 2017 School Committee Meeting minutes**. Julia Aron, David Parrella and Leslie Rule abstained.

On a motion by Emily Robertson and seconded by Robert Gruen, the Committee **voted to approve the March 27, 2019 School Committee Meeting minutes**. David Parrella and Leslie Rule abstained.

V. **Presentation/Citizen Comment**

A. VEAC Presentation—John Sears and David Newell

David Newell gave a brief overview of the history of the **Vocational Education Advisory Committee**. Mr. Newell explained that MTRSD had at one time played a more active role with the families who have students attending the vocational and technical schools in the area: Franklin County Technical School, Smith Vocational and Agricultural School, paying the tuition and assessing the towns accordingly. In the year 2000, MTRSD turned over that responsibility to the towns. Four years ago, VEAC formed and began working on behalf of these families. Despite the small number of students (30 currently), because they live in eight different municipalities, it requires a lot of cooperation and coordination for VEAC. Mr. Newell applauded the renewed assistance and cooperation that Superintendent Buoniconti has been willing to offer to the committee.

Providing transportation for these students is a critical part of VEAC's role, Chair John Sears added. This year they have made arrangements for one Buckland student to join the Ashfield bus and next year they expect 2 students from Shelburne. Working together as 4 towns, they have collectively been able to save some money by consolidating routes, he pointed out. In addition, Mr. Newell said, they have been able to reduce the cost of fuel by using municipal fuel from Ashfield, saving approximately \$25,000. VEAC has been meeting with DESE and with Superintendent Buoniconti, Poppy Doyle and Suzanne Crawford, he continued, and described their collective efforts as being very effective.

Mr. Newell and Mr. Sears were approaching the School Committee now, they said, because they wish to present a Proposed Revision to Mohawk Regional Agreement Pertaining to Vocational Education (see VEAC Amendment 2nd Draft) for approval before they take it before the towns. Mr. Newell asked for the School Committee to share their thoughts and questions at a future meeting. Chair Martha Thurber suggested that the discussion be continued at the June School Committee meeting and thanked Mr. Sears and Mr. Newell for their time.

B. Bill Diehl, Director of the Collaborative for Educational Services

Mr. Diehl began by thanking Superintendent Buoniconti and Suzanne Crawford for inviting him to come to the meeting, adding that Ms. Crawford has been "an amazing Board Member" on the Collaborative.

In his work with 36 school committees, Mr. Diehl said, he has specific goals when speaking about CES: to explain what its service provides, to let everyone know what events/workshops are in the future, and to take questions.

Mr. Diehl explained that collaboratives were formed in the 1970's in order to address the Special Education needs, at the same time that laws regarding Special Education were being changed. It has always been important, he added, to make sure that students are able to remain in their district.

Mr. Diehl reviewed materials in a packet that he distributed. The Collaborative does a lot in the area of technology, he reported, adding that they are currently working with Superintendent Buoniconti to build a website in support of the Rural Schools Initiative. Several on-line Professional Development courses are offered, Mr. Diehl said, making PD more accessible to teachers. He gave the example of a Webinar that had recently been offered on a snow day that addressed Fake News. The Collaborative and MTRSD also work together on cooperative food services, Mr. Diehl pointed out. In addition, CES provides grant-writing services to districts, Mr. Diehl explained and gave the example of a history project that was funded through a Federal Government grant. Robert Gruen added, that teachers gain something from being given the opportunity to meet with teachers from other districts in the Professional Development trainings and workshops.

The Collaborative took a leadership role in researching the impact of Charter Schools, Mr. Diehl noted and encouraged the Committee to check out the Facebook page they had set up: Proud of Western Mass Public Schools.

Upcoming events include a LEAP (Low-income Education Access Project) Workshop/Training.

Director Diehl then answered questions:

- CES is funded through grants
- MTRSD pays \$3.50 per student to be part of the Collaborative. Leann Loomis added that MTRSD pays their part of this through another grant.
- Children who come to the Special Education program at CES pay tuition
- When asked about the possibility of purchasing foods from local farms, Mr. Diehl agreed to look into it

The School Committee thanked Mr. Diehl for his time and for the good work of the CES.

VI. School Reports:

A. Principal Reports

Poppy Doyle complimented Principal Joanne Giguere on the growing population at BSE. Martha Thurber thanked all of the principals again for interesting and informative reports.

Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Joe Kurland asked Leann Loomis about the Federal Standards for “meaningful progress” with regards to students who are on an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and how MTRSD is meeting them. Ms. Loomis responded that she believes that MTRSD does more than what the “minimum progress” standards require, but expressed concern that the recent Supreme Court ruling calling for a “higher standard of education for students with an IEP,” is vague about who gets to determine what that is. In the Mohawk District, Ms. Loomis continued, teachers are very creative and supportive when it comes to going the extra mile for a student without having to raise the cost.

VII. Subcommittee Reports: Subcommittee minutes - included in packets.

VIII. Action Items:

1. **On a motion by Budge Litchfield and seconded by Robert Gruen, the Committee voted to approve a Regional Agreement to allow for closure of the Heath Elementary School and for the tuitioning of Heath students to Hawlemont Elementary School.**

Martha Thurber gave some background on how the Heath Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and the Heath Educational Task Force had reached this decision. In December of 2016 both groups came to the conclusion that it was in the best interests of the students and the towns to close the school. This amendment allows for an agreement between Heath and Hawlemont for Heath children to attend Hawlemont for the next 3 years (an initial term) after which Heath and Hawlemont make a decision to make a joint district or for Heath to return to MTRSD, Ms. Thurber explained.

Memorandum of Agreement allows for the buyout of the school, through July 1, 2026. The lease would end July 1, 2017 and the building would return to Heath, Ms. Thurber explained. MTRSD would continue to cover some costs, “mothballing costs,” Chair Thurber pointed out, saying that Heath would not want to end up paying more for a school that is closed than they had paid for an open building. Both sides of the negotiating teams had wanted to create an agreement that provided a clean break with

agreed upon parameters. Ms. Thurber expressed her appreciation to the towns for agreeing to hold open their warrants in order to add this article.

Budge Litchfield voiced his support for Ms. Thurber's summary. Mr. Litchfield added that it was possible that Heath would do a Withdrawal Amendment later, but that it would be a 5-year period of time before they could take that withdrawal step. In addition, Heath has a 5-year bond they need to pay off, he said.

Chair Thurber directed the Committee to refer to the handout from Mike Kociela re. proposed savings for MTRSD if Heath closes. Unemployment costs, Ms. Thurber pointed out, was an unknown figure.

Suzanne Crawford added that both sides of the negotiating teams had wanted to find a way to be fair to all of the towns, in working out the details of this agreement. Ms. Thurber said that one of the driving goals of the whole negotiating process was to be able to lower the cost to the towns, to bring to them assessments that they could afford.

Joe Kurland was told that he was correct in determining that the main reason that Colrain Central School had not been considered a viable option was because of the bridge between Heath and Colrain being closed and therefore, the bussing distance too great. If eventually MTRSD 6th Grade students are moved to Mohawk Trail Regional Middle School, under the tuition agreement, 6th Grade Heath students attending Hawlemont would be expected to move as well.

2. **On a motion by Robert Gruen and seconded by David Parrella, the Committee voted to approve a Regional Agreement Amendment that would admit the Town of Rowe as a 7-12 Member Town, effective July 1, 2018.**

Chair Martha Thurber explained that the District had been told that it was not possible to add a new member after the budget had already been decided. MTRSD had issued an effective date of 2017 but since DESE had not yet answered, a new date had to be decided. July 1, 2018 was the date agreed upon with the Rowe negotiating committee. Ms. Thurber thanked the Towns for being amenable to working with them on this negotiation. The town of Rowe would be holding a Special Town Meeting the following evening to decide whether to re-join the district or not.

3. **On a motion by Poppy Doyle and seconded by Budge Litchfield, the Committee voted to approve the field trip request from BSE for a school trip to Plimouth Plantation with the 3rd Grade classes.** Suzanne Crawford, Evie Locke and Julia Aron abstained.
4. **On a motion by Robert Gruen and seconded by Joe Kurland, the Committee voted to approve a donation from the Mohawk Music Association of \$1775.00, for the music students' field trip to NYC on April 26, 2017.** Emily Robertson abstained.
5. **On a motion by Poppy Doyle and seconded by Suzanne Crawford, the Committee voted to accept the Mohawk Athletic Association Treasurer's Report, July 1, 2016-February 28, 2017 of donations to MTRSD totaling \$5,790.94.** Evie Locke abstained.

Martha Thurber explained that if it were not for the Mohawk Athletic Association, every athletic program at Mohawk would look very different and she expressed appreciation for all of the hours so many volunteers had contributed to this fundraising.

6. **On a motion by Poppy Doyle and seconded by Robert Gruen, the Committee voted to establish a grant fund authorized by Massachusetts General Laws**

Chapter 44, Section 53A for a MSSEF-GEMS Mini-Grant for the establishment of a sustainable science fair program.

Sarah Jetzon explained that science teachers had applied for this grant in order to begin hosting the event the following year.

- 7. On a motion by Robert Gruen and seconded by Poppy Doyle, the Committee voted to approve the list of library books to be placed into surplus.**

Principal Lynn Dole explained that Mohawk's librarians Emily Willis and Gina Wells had carefully weeded out out-dated books. The surplus books will be offered up for bidding in the coming weeks.

- 8. On a motion by Evie Locke and seconded by Suzanne Crawford, the Committee voted to approve the adoption of revisions to KFA Community Wi-Fi Use.**

- 9. On a motion by Joe Kurland and seconded by Suzanne Crawford, the Committee voted to approve the adoption of revisions to KFA-R Community Wi-Fi Use Regulations.**

- 10. On a motion by Robert Gruen and seconded by Poppy Doyle, the Committee voted to approve the JLCE Head Lice Management Policy.**

District Nurse, Sue Mitchell spoke about the reasoning behind creating a policy and of the need to have unity in the schools about whether to allow affected students into school or not.

- 11. Leslie Rule moved and Suzanne Crawford seconded a motion to approve the MTRSD 2017-2018 Calendar.**

Superintendent Buoniconti pointed out that February 28, 2018 should be shown as a regular school day and not as a half-day.

On a motion by Poppy Doyle and seconded by Nina Martin-Anzuoni the Committee voted to approve the 2017-2018 School Calendar with the February 28th amendment to a full school day.

Leslie Rule and Joe Kurland noted the number of calendar days that reflect MCAS testing. Ms. Rule drew attention to the fact that not only were the students who were involved in the testing affected but that all students, staff and families were as well, since no outside visitors are allowed in the schools on those days. Ms. Rule added that she had hoped to see something about the testing included in the visioning discussions.

IX. School Committee Chair Report:

- A. Planning for Annual Town Meetings—FY18 Budget Rowe and Heath Amendments
Chair Martha Thurber suggested using the April Professional Development meeting to prepare for annual town meetings and asked that if anyone had materials they would like to add, to please let her know.

- B. Day on the Hill

Poppy Doyle encouraged School Committee members to join her on April 25th for the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' legislative advocacy day in Boston. Superintendent Buoniconti said that he already has a long list of students who are interested but that still more should be given the opportunity to join them. More drivers are needed, Ms. Doyle added and asked that anyone who wishes to attend would get in touch with her or with School Committee Secretary Patricia Donohue.

C. Shared services—next steps

Ms. Thurber proposed that more serious discussions need to take place regarding sharing services with other districts. Ms. Thurber and Superintendent Buoniconti suggested that as a next step toward furthering the process along, that Committee members could attend the School Committee meetings in other districts.

D. Superintendent's contract renewal

Chair Martha Thurber announced that the Personnel Subcommittee has been working toward finishing a contract to offer to Superintendent Buoniconti.

X. Superintendent's Report:

A. District Vision

Superintendent Buoniconti thanked Evie Locke, Suzanne Crawford, Joe Kurland and Budge Litchfield for their time reading through numerous existing mission/vision statements from all of the District schools, including Hawlemont, as well as those from some of the top performing districts in the country. The group then chose those that were most meaningful to them and used them as a basis for discussions with students, staff, parents and community members about what Mohawk's Vision, Mission and Core Values statements should include.

As part of the information gathering for the visioning process, a meeting had been held with 40 or more students the previous week. The students had given written suggestions and ideas that were being recorded by Executive Secretary Karen Totman. Mr. Kurland said that he was impressed both by how engaged the students were and by Superintendent Buoniconti's teaching skills.

Other meetings have been set up: the first one had taken place at Sanderson Academy the night before, but had not been well attended. Kate Barrows lobbied that the April 25th meeting in Colrain not be postponed even though it coincides with the Day on the Hill event, saying that a lot of publicity had already gone out. Suzanne Crawford explained that different times had been chosen for each of the meetings in order to make it possible for more people to attend.

B. Heterogeneous Math

Superintendent Buoniconti said that Heterogeneous Math remains a topic of discussion, including on-line, where currently a petition is being circulated. Mr. Buoniconti said that he did not want to make decisions based on anecdote and that he preferred to use data. At this point he is considering bringing in an outside collaborator, Kate Lytton (see information in packet).

Leslie Rule offered to ask a 10th grade student she knows if she would be willing to come to a School Committee meeting or an Education Subcommittee meeting, to share what she and other students she has discussed the topic with think about heterogeneous classrooms. The School Committee said they would welcome the student's input at either meeting.

C. Preschool Program

Mr. Buoniconti described some of the evolution of the preschool program, saying that originally it had been entirely tuition-based, then it had become partially grant-funded, until last month when the Department of Early Education and Care announced that the grant would be phased out. At this point they have restructured the program by reducing the number of days of operation and increasing tuition.

Joe Kurland expressed outrage that so recently the government made statements recognizing the value of a preschool education and pledging its support and then so quickly has taken it away. Mr. Kurland said that he did not want to see parents having to return to having to pay for preschool, that it could be a real barrier to low-income families.

Business Administrator Mike Kociela explained that financial aid was available to families who qualify and said that he has always been impressed by Sandy Gaffey's clear, cordial and thorough manner of relaying that information to parents.

Leslie Rule asked principals if they had strategies in place to ensure that parents knew that financial aid was available, in particular during Open House sessions. Emma Liebowitz reported that Sanderson Academy's Open House would take place on Friday April 14th. At that time, Ms. Liebowitz said that parents would hear about the program, the nurse and staff, the fee structure and how any financial information goes directly to the Central Office (Sandy Gaffey). Leann Loomis added that Melissa Pincus' CFCE Program also does outreach to parents of preschoolers. Ms. Loomis noted that children with IEPs stipulating that they need 5 days of services will receive 5 days of services.

Suzanne Crawford pointed out that some of the money being taken away from the District preschool programs was being re-directed into family day-cares.

D. Planning Move of 6th Grade to Mohawk

Superintendent Buoniconti reported that a subset of the DLT has been meeting to discuss the logistics and planning of a 6th Grade move to Mohawk. A meeting is scheduled for April 10, Mr. Buoniconti said, adding that he feels it is imperative that the work with teachers be completed by the end of this year. A regional agreement amendment will need to be made by next May, he continued, and urged that everyone be sure that they have some metrics to use to make the decision. Mr. Buoniconti stressed the importance of deciding two things to begin with:

- a. Is this a good idea?
- b. Would this move be able to do what we need it to do, with current and projected enrollment numbers?

Education and Communications Subcommittees will be working on this issue as well, Mr. Buoniconti concluded.

E. MA Rural Schools Coalition Update

Mr. Buoniconti reported that he had been speaking at several events on the topic of rural school and stressed that a lot of work still lay ahead. In a recent meeting with Massachusetts Secretary of Education Jim Peyser, Mr. Buoniconti was assured that Governor Baker is aware of the problem in Western Massachusetts and that they have been collecting data on the local economy. Secretary Peyser expressed interest in the idea of shared services and asked Superintendent Buoniconti to develop a business plan. Mr. Buoniconti said that he had tried to deliver a sense of the urgency of the issue to Mr. Peyser but that basically the governor is charging these groups (the Rural Schools Coalition) with coming up with a blueprint for how to move forward. The next meeting of the coalition is scheduled for April 26, Mr. Buoniconti added.

Superintendent Buoniconti announced that he has had conversations with GCC President Bob Pura about having college courses taught at Mohawk and that they will continue to talk about that possibility, but the initial conception is that such courses would be integrated into the school day here. Additionally, Mr. Buoniconti would like to pursue a conversation with Franklin Technical School about bringing programming here, for example, agriculture. All of this plays into our goals of having community involvement and authentic learning, Mr. Buoniconti noted and thanked Sarah Jetzon for laying the groundwork for collaborating with others in the community.

F. FY17 Operating Statement

Mr. Buoniconti said that this is possibly the tightest budget that he has experienced in all of the years he has been here and that the District will continue to be cautious.

XI. Business Administrator's Report:

A. FY16 Audit Reports

Business Administrator Mike Kociela referred to the three reports in the packet sent from Melanson Heath Accountants and Auditors office: a balance sheet, a management letter and an omnibus report. The District is required to have an Omnibus Single Audit Report when the Federal Grants exceed \$750,000.

Overall the report is positive, but it includes specific recommendations for next year with regard to changing certain policies and procedures in order to meet new federal regulations.

Mr. Kociela pointed out that the auditors did find that there were missing pieces in the record-keeping for the athletic department and said that he would speak to Fred Redeker and try to stay on top of it in the future.

Chair Martha Thurber reminded everyone that it was a great tribute to Mr. Kociela that there were so few recommendations for change or improvement made by the auditors and thanked him for his fine attention to detail. Mr. Kociela in turn, thanked the staff that he collaborates with—Sandy Gaffey, Judy Willis and Angel Bragdon—and expressed his appreciation for their very capable work.

XII. Correspondence/Handouts:

- E. March 8, 2017, "Mohawk students win video award," in The Recorder's West County Notebook
- F. March 11, 2017, "Hawlemont teacher wins Pioneer Valley award," by Diane Broncaccio in The Recorder
- G. March 13, 2017, "Towns, schools unite over rural woes," by Diane Broncaccio in The Recorder
- H. March 16, 2017, "A weekend of musicals: Three high schools perform three popular plays," by Miranda Davis in The Recorder
- I. March 16, 2017, "Project takes student to new heights," in The Recorder
- J. March 16, 2017, "Shrek Comes to Mohawk," in The Independent
- K. March 16, 2017, "Hinds sponsoring school bus bill," by Virginia Ray in The Independent
- L. March 16, 2017, "Singing School," Photo by Virginia Ray in The Independent
- M. March 16, 2017, "We're the best! Mohawk wins silver medal," in The Independent
- N. March 17, 2017, "What happens when Mohawk students really care," Editorial in The Recorder
- O. March 24, 2017, "North Quabbin districts face tough choices to stay afloat," Editorial in The Recorder
- P. March 29, 2017, "Officials sound off to legislators on broadband, schools," by Richie Davis in The Recorder
- Q. Warrant Article: Proposed Regional Agreement Amendment (Heath)
- R. Spreadsheet: Projected Savings re. Heath Elementary School Closure

XIII. Adjournment:

On a motion by Poppy Doyle and seconded by Robert Gruen, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

School Committee Meeting Dates:

School Committee Professional Development Meeting – April 24, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting – May 10, 2017, 7:00 p.m. – Mohawk

Patricia Donohue
MTRSD School Committee Secretary