

Petersham Center School Committee
Minutes
October 23, 2012

In Attendance: Superintendent Baldassarre, Chuck Berube, Dana Kennan, Russell Fontaine, Tari Thomas, Rebecca Phillips, Bridget Koetsch, Wendie LeBlanc, and Ann Degnan

Not in Attendance: Dr. Patricia Martin

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chuck Berube at 5:00 p.m. The minutes were approved as read and seconded with all in favor.

Superintendent Baldassarre informed the Committee that Ralph C. Mahar was looking into a Traveling Dental Program for Orange elementary schools and R.C. Mahar. The service would be through Franklin County School Dental and any student wanting/needing dental services would be eligible for those services during the school day. This would be very beneficial for lower income families. Superintendent Baldassarre offered to check into this service for Petersham and see if it would be a problem considering Petersham was in Worcester County and not Franklin County.

Wendie LeBlanc gave the Committee a Preschool Needs Assessment and explained that the input was just compiled today. After some discussion on the Needs Assessment plan, Dana Kennan moved to approve the Assessment, Chuck Berube seconded the motion and the motion to accept the Preschool Needs Assessment was passed unanimously.

Chuck stated that the warrant could be dealt with at a later time. The November 1st Bill Warrant was signed by two members of the Committee before the meeting adjourned. Superintendent Baldassarre informed the committee that the Teacher Evaluation was not completely finalized yet. Bridget Koetsch stated that they would be meeting with Dr. Martin regarding the chart and the last couple of pages. Wendie LeBlanc stated that there were a couple of different issues that Petersham had vs. other schools and they would be worked out soon.

Superintendent Baldassarre informed the Committee that he is not done finalizing the goals of the Superintendent Evaluation and wanted to know if the Committee had any District improvements that were needed. He told the Committee that he will get back to them on this matter.

The Preschool Needs assessment was discussed in further detail with Superintendent Baldassarre handing out pricing information for the Petersham Montessori program. There were two correspondences passed out from two different staff members at the Center School regarding feedback on the Preschool program.

Rebecca Phillips said that the reason that a Preschool program has not been implemented as of yet is due to funding. She also mentioned that she would like the Tools program for the Preschool as well and that is more costly than a regular Preschool program. As far as spacing at the school, there is a room that was originally dedicated to the Preschool. It would just take moving people around in the building. Chuck stated that what it really boils down to is the money aspect. He asked if 10 students at roughly \$5,400.00 would cover the program. Rebecca Phillips stated that this would probably not cover the program because a Paraprofessional would also be needed as well as a teacher for the program. Other things to look at would be whether program would be ½ day, full day, or possibly both. The initial start up costs would be more with a Tools program for the Preschool. Training and supplies for the Tools program are more costly.

Chuck asked if someone in Phillipston would be of help because he knows they have a Preschool program there. He did not think that it was a Tools program however. Superintendent Baldassarre told the Committee that Tari and I are members of the Preschool network and would check into grants, even though there are probably none available because of the socioeconomics of Petersham. Chuck asked the other members of the Committee if they thought that this was worthy of more study and both agreed it was. Superintendent Baldassarre said that he would look into upcoming students from ages 2.0-4.0 to see where the numbers might be.

Bridget Koetsch asked if the playground equipment at the school right now was safe for 3-5 year olds. It was decided that new age appropriate equipment would probably be needed for that and that would be another expense to think about.

The correspondence to the Finance Committee was not in the packet and Superintendent Baldassarre informed the Committee that this was the letter that he wrote to the Finance Committee regarding the School Choice numbers at the Center School.

Superintendent Baldassarre handed out a packet on MCAS performance and explained the results for each of the grades, as well as the content of the tests. He then asked the Committee to turn to the Considerations page of the packet which would help explain how a small school like Petersham is compared to larger schools. He explained that it was not fair to compare with the state numbers due to the small numbers in our classroom. With the new accountability standards being introduced, Petersham switched from a Level 1 to a Level 2 school. Mrs. Phillips explained to the Committee that Petersham met their target and that it was hard to understand why we are at a Level 2. She told the Committee that the target was missed by 3/10%. She gave the Committee the target numbers and explained that it was easy to fall into a Level 2 with so few numbers in our classes/school.

Chuck Berube handed out a sheet that he got online regarding 2011 MCAS results for Petersham and said that he thought people would be angry by the results and was afraid that there would be problems at budget time. He asked Superintendent Baldassarre if we do have a problem. Superintendent Baldassarre told Chuck that there was no problem. As he was looking at the handout he noted that it showed that 64 students were tested, but that 45 was the number that were actually tested and wanted to know where the other 19 came from. He asked Chuck if he had the 2012 results as these results were from 2011. Chuck did not have the 2012 results and said that these were the ones he had come across.

Chuck brought up the concern of the changing of the positions due to the Kindergarten teacher being moved and another position being added for her. He wondered why this position did not help with the MCAS scores. Rebecca Phillips stated that she believed that this position did help in ELA especially and that we were above our target in that area. She stated that if she pulled this position now that our ELA scores would suffer as a result. She went on to explain that Looping in grades 3 & 4 and 5 & 6 were happening this year and that even grades 1 & 2 were working closely together to help our scores. Chuck agreed that the staff was extraordinary and stated that he was just worried about the Finance Committee.

Tari Thomas stated that perceptual data is very important and that it lacks in both districts and there was a need to improve on it. Bridget mentioned that she would like for people to see our Dibels Scores and how well our students were doing. Tari suggested that our website might explain the data and that maybe this would be helpful. Chuck asked if a pre-emptive discussion with the Finance Committee would be helpful. Superintendent Baldassarre offered to publish his handout on the website to help inform people. Dana Kennan thought that a discussion with the Finance Committee could wait until budget time and Russell agreed.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday, November 27, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. Items to be placed on the agenda are Superintendent Evaluation; Feedback on Preschool; Education Evaluation, and Presentation of a Budget Timeline. Dana Kennan made a motion to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. The motion was seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m. with an all in favor.