

OPEN SESSION

SHARON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 2006

Administration Building

One School Street

Sharon, MA 02067

Present: Mr. Mitchell Blaustein, Ms. Suzanne Gervais, Mr. Donald Gilligan, Mr. Sam Liao

Absent: Mr. Andrew Nebenzahl, Mrs. Jane Furr

Also present for the Open Session meeting: Dr. Claire Jackson and Dr. Barbara Dunham, Mr. John Brande, Social Studies Coordinator Gr. 6-12, Mr. Ralph Olsen, High School Principal, Mrs. Judith Whittemore, Guidance Coordinator, Mr. Alpert from the Finance Committee, a member of the community and a member of the press

Mr. Gilligan called the Open Session meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE/REGULAR ITEMS

Correspondence

Mr. Gilligan reviewed a letter received from a parent of a high school student supporting the proposal of the School Committee to consider a later start time for the high school. Mr. Gilligan, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed input from parents and the community regarding this matter.

Approve Minutes

MOTION: (Blaustein/Gervais) Moved to approve the Open and Executive session minutes for the January 4, 2006 meeting as drafted and submitted. Vote was four in the affirmative.

Student Representative

Lior Haas, Student Representative, updated the Committee on events at the High School: An ensemble concert was scheduled for this evening. Attendance at the basketball games is at a record-breaking pace. The team is to be congratulated for a successful and exciting season. The "alumni day" was a success with former graduates returning to the high school to visit with students and staff. The alumni shared their thoughts and impressions on how well they were prepared academically and socially for the transition from high school to college.

Announcements

There were no announcements at this time.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ITEMS

Presentation: Social Studies/History Learning Standards Grades 6-12 - John Brande

Dr. Jackson introduced Mr. Brande and commended him for the many hours he devoted to making these standards into a concise, cohesive document.

Mr. Brande reviewed and highlighted the revised Social Studies Learning Standards for grades 6-12. The files will be converted to PDF files and will be posted on the School District's web site.

There was a discussion on the integration of the philosophy of *Facing History and Ourselves* into the Social Studies curriculum.

Mr. Liao stated that the core ideas and philosophy were of key importance to the late Father Bullock from Our Lady of Sorrows church. The road race in his name was held last year and rendered \$6,000 being donated to the School Department for teacher professional development on this subject. The road race will be held again this year and the community is invited to support this worthwhile event.

Presentation: Sharon High School Course of Studies – Ralph Olsen, Judith Whittemore

Mr. Olson highlighted the changes and additions to the Program of Studies for the 2006-2007 school year:

- The cover of the booklet was designed by Sharon High School senior, Sam Chasin.
- The Program of Studies is addressed to the students rather than parents.
- Course selections are challenging yet a positive process.
- Prerequisites have been replaced by departmental recommendations.
- Credit system has been simplified – 5 credits will now be 1 credit; 2.5 credits will not be .5 credits
- Course numbers are now three digits.
- Students changing course levels (up or down) will retain any original earned grades.
- Timeline: 1/31/06 – Guidance counselors meet with high school students to explain course selection process. 2/3/06 – Guidance counselors meet with incoming gr. 9 students to explain course selection process. 2/9/06 – Introduce Program of Studies to parents as well as to new students. 2/3 – Report cards are distributed. 2/14 and 2/15 – scheduling will commence. Counselors will review proposed schedules and meet with students to review selections and answer any questions. Master schedule will be completed by April. Students will be given their schedule prior to the close of school in June.

Mr. Olsen and Mrs. Whittemore were commended for their hard work and dedication in completing the Program of Studies so early into the school year.

Overview: Anticipated Budget Reductions

This agenda item was tabled until the February 1, 2006 meeting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING/POLICY ITEMS

Budget: Second Quarterly Report

Dr. Dunham reviewed the FY06 Quarter 2 Budget Report that had been distributed to the Committee.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the escalating fuel costs (heat and electricity). The Committee requested Dr. Dunham to contact Mr. Puritz regarding the Town's contract for natural gas. Dr. Dunham will update the Committee at the February 1st meeting. Mr. Liao asked if it would be possible for Dr. Dunham to project the order of deficit through to the end of the year. Dr. Dunham will provide the projections at the February 1st meeting.

Dr. Jackson updated the Committee on the status of submission of grant proposals. At the present time, grant money is being awarded to low performing schools on the MCAS and Federal grant money has significantly dwindled over the past four years. Dr. Jackson anticipates this trend to continue.

Dr. Jackson will announce a grant given to the Sharon Public Schools from a private donor at the February 1st meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee had a discussion with a member of the audience concerning the proposed acquisition of a portion of the Horizons for Youth property for future school building needs.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Gilligan requested a motion to adjourn Open Session.

MOTION: (Blaustein/Liao) Moved to adjourn the Open Session meeting at 9:43 p.m. Vote was four in the affirmative.

The next meeting will be February 1, 2006.

Submitted on behalf of the School Committee by: Helen Campanario, Recording Secretary