

## NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### Retreat

Friday, August 2, 2013

8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Atria Merrimack Place  
Meeting Convened at 8:30 PM

Country Kitchen Room  
Superintendent Susan Viccaro

**Present:** Bruce Menin, Steve Cole, Cheryl Sweeney, Mayor Donna Holaday, Nick deKanter, Audrey McCarthy, Dan Koen, Susan Viccaro

#### Here is a summary of what was discussed:

- Discussed were role definitions, norms of interaction and operating principles. It was agreed that the role of the school committee is to hire and fire the superintendent, to develop policies and the budget while working with the leadership team. It is the superintendent of schools job to run the school district. We are all on the same team, charged individually and collectively with making good decisions for kids.
- The committee was clear in their wish to receive timely information that is agenda driven, in order to appropriately prepare follow up questions.
- It was agreed that communication would be simple, direct and respectful.
- It was agreed to not surprise one another and to call/email with questions. When the superintendent responds with an answer, it will be sent to all SC members.
- It was agreed that SC meetings need to be shorter and more focused. To that end, public comment will be kept to 2 minutes, by designating a time keeper. The Vice-Chair will use the gavel, when/if needed. Everyone agreed that discussion by SC could be more limited and that meetings that last too long do not result in good decisions.
- It was discussed that Vice-Chair and the superintendent will meet on Monday or Tuesday of the week prior to the regularly scheduled business meetings to prepare the agenda.
- The committee clarified for the superintendent, the differentiation between administrative policy and the Carver Governance model which outlines SC operating procedures. The model has been modified from 700 pages down to 50. Some pieces of the model are missing.
- We discussed making sure that policies are up to date and the Policy Subcommittee will need to meet.
- We agreed to rename the Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee the Administrator Evaluation Standards Committee. It was further agreed that the sub-committee would meet with the superintendent in August to begin to identify the "Super Standards" that the superintendent will be evaluated on. Together we will create a timeline, goals, and identify the evidence to be collected. These will be reviewed with the full committee every 3 months.
- The discussion of professional development for the SC was raised. The superintendent will check with outside consultants on topics and availability.
- Community conversations should not be video-taped. Some of the public conversations have been themed and non-themed. The consensus was to continue these and to do more listening than speaking. The first public conversation will be an opportunity for the community to meet the new superintendent. There will be future consideration of utilizing a moderator.
- We discussed the importance of a positive attitude district wide.
- We discussed the importance of using common sense in decision-making at every level of the organization.
- The superintendent clarified that SC members could be part of School Councils as long as they stick to their role of parent. The parental role is narrower than the SC role where you need to be focused on what is good for all the children in the district and viewing an issue from 20,000 feet up.
- Future SC presentations will be 20 minutes or less. More background material can be provided up front in the form of executive summaries or outlines. Discussion will be limited and Robert's Rules will be utilized.
- Clarification was provided regarding all SC standing subcommittees. They are: Joint Ed., Policy, Finance, Communications, Negotiations, Administrator Evaluation Standards Committee and Stipends.

- The SC would like more detail in communications from the superintendent. It was agreed the superintendent will send information to all members on most Fridays (there will be exceptions) highlighting happenings for the week as well as upcoming activities.
- The superintendent expects to be spending a great deal of time in the buildings, especially during the first 3 months, in order to learn about students, staff, curriculum & instruction and school climate.
- The committee would like the superintendent, or any leadership team members presenting, to present a holistic overview of what is working and what is not. What is not working should have a proposed action plan.
- We discussed technology and what outcomes are expected. Technology is about flexibility and adaptability, not the platform.
- Community outreach staff from Atria Merrimack Place, asked how we could partner and involve seniors in events at NHS. The superintendent will contact the NHS principal and we will work with some school committee members to follow up.

Potential future topics for discussion at upcoming school committee meetings may include:

- District goals
- MCAS scores
- Technology (evaluation of what is currently in place, survey of what students have access to at home)
- School lunch program
- School Councils
- School Improvement Plans
- Special Education
- CPAC activities
- Lines of communication
- Superintendent's entry plan
- Update on Educator Evaluation
- Strategic Planning
- Common Core implementation

Meeting Adjourned 3:00 PM