

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
6:00PM, Thursday, October 19, 2023
West Tisbury School and By Zoom Cloud Conference**

Page 1 of 5

Present: Chair – Jim Newman, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette,
Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,

Others: Recorder – Marni Lipke, attendees included:
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Richard Smith, John Stevens,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
Staff: Katharine Barnes, Susan Conlan, Robyn Dori,
Jackie Guzalac, Mary Kuh-Ambulos, Mariah MacGregor,
Molly Martone, Ellen Rossi, Catharine Rykowski, Joan Rice,
Donna Swift, Rebekah Thomson, Bea Whiting,
Chilmark SAC: Co-Chairs – Jessica Mason, Jessica Seeman,
Nelia Decker, Laura Jordon Decker, Robyn Dori, Jackie Guzalac,
Corey Lazar, Mariah MacGregor, Susan Stevens,
Chilmark PTO: Katharine Barnes-Horenstein, Jessica Seeman,
Family/Community: John Stevens, J Bange, Cana Courtney,
Stephanie DaRosa, John Demers, Meghan Eisner, Jocelyn,
Skye MacDuff, Elizabeth Moriarty, India Whitcombe, Allison?
MV Agriculture society,
Towns: Marie Larsen – Chilmark Select Board,
Press – MVTV, Louisa Hufstader – Vineyard Gazette,
*Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC members

Call to Order (Agenda item #I)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order.
(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Susan Stevens Head of School Retirement (See documents on file.) (Agenda item #II)

The meeting praised Ms. Stevens leadership and engagement with children, going the extra mile with students and families like giving her private phone number. A cake was served and shared.

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT HEAD OF CHILMARK SCHOOL SUSAN STEVENS' RETIREMENT LETTER AS JUNE 30, 2024; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Administrative Model of Up-Island Regional School District (UIRSD)

(Agenda item #III) (See 10/16/23 Minutes p.4-5 #V B.)

Current configuration was a Chilmark Head of School with a 10 month contract and additional summer days, and year-round (260 days) West Tisbury School Principal and Assistant Principal. There was a proposal on the table for a single principal to oversee both schools with assistant principals or heads of school for the West Tisbury School (WTS) and the Chilmark School.

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD

October 19, 2023

Page 2 of 5

- As requested, Superintendent Richie Smith researched: Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Massachusetts School Administrators Association (MSAA) and Cape Cod Collaborative, about other 2-school regional models but no further information was available at this time.
- Supt. Smith repeated his guidance that an executive was needed to hire, discipline, budget and administer the Chilmark School.
- Alex Salop made the one UIRSD principal proposal to highlight regional collaboration which the District owed to its students, families, teachers, and administrators. However he was against having leaders of each school answerable to another administrator besides the Superintendent.
- WTS Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt was always busy with students, staff and the facility but she was not “maxed out”. She commended her excellent administrative team including Asst. Prin. Mary Boyd, and the Guidance Department. Ms. Stevens as Head of a small school filled in a number of duties (guidance, discipline, reading specialist, lunch). She and all School staff filled in various duties as necessary. Sometimes she had to work summers (the 2 unpaid months) and sometimes she did not. Both Administrators agreed the proposal depended on administrative structure, maybe rotating positions. There were situations in which one school was better than the other, as well as ones, such as the recent pandemic, where total collaboration was best.
- Robert Lionette expressed his appreciation and gratitude for such an engaged and participatory community, the UIRSC having received many comments from families, grandparents and the public. He noted that the 2 schools sometimes acted in very disparate ways and referred to previous conversations on the topic (see Minutes: 3/15/04 p.1 #III, & 10/20/08 p.3, & 11/17/08 p.2 #VII A). He advocated re-invigorating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Communities of Practice (COPs) to enhance administrator cooperation and support.
- Jim Newman stated the priority of any community was to provide the best possible education and that the Chilmark community had clearly shown they want a principal. Every school needed a present, dedicated principal that staff and families could go to for support.
- Skipper Manter preferred the model of a single UIRSC principal and with an administrator in each school—of whatever title: assistant/vice principal or head of school.
- Roxanne Ackerman considered that the UIRSC had ignored Ms. Stevens excellence by the head of school designation, salary and partial school year.
- If a Principal were hired, the job description should reflect the multiple duties needed. There was some debate on how to make the position more attractive. 10 months allowing a summer break or year round (260 days) as more lucrative and serious. A full year, rather.
- Chilmark staff and public made a number of points.
 - A 10-month contract allowed a summer break but a full year was more lucrative and signaled a serious commitment—it elongated the year but did not increase capacity.
 - Ms. Stevens was at the School most summer days.
 - The School was tasked with the same goal as a large school serving the best possible education to the community.
 - Were there situations or duties a Vice Principal could not handle? In a chronically under-staffed School, who would cope with a crisis if the Asst. Principal was absent?

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 19, 2023

Page 3 of 5

- ° A productive School Advisory Committee (SAC) conversation highlighted the School's growth, changes and needs.
- ° Financing a principal was moderated by not requesting an Assistant Principal.
- ° An exchange on taxpayer burden and per student cost emphasized all 3 UIRSD Towns.

The meeting debated setting a salary now that would be commensurate with other Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) principals (~ \$150,000). A number of factors were noted:

- size of school, staff and student numbers;
- administrative pay matrix based on qualifications, educational levels, etc.;
- comparison with other principals' and top teachers' salaries;
- possible new hire savings (Ms. Stevens started at \$85,000);
- possibility of setting a range;
- strong consideration on how to regionalize to save money and provide quality service;
- Superintendent purview to hire and set pay for administrators;
- lack of hard numbers and the \$30,000 impact on budgets that school committees and administrators constantly struggled to contain;
- housing and staff shortages.

There was a brief conversation on protocol;

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO HIRE A CHILMARK SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WITH LENGTH OF YEAR TO BE DETERMINED; ALEX SALOP SECONDED;*
- *IN A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT THE LENGTH OF YEAR WAS SET AT 260 DAYS;*
- MOTION WITH THE FRIENDLY AMENDMENT PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY—ROXANNE ACKERMAN, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADD \$151,000 TO THE UIRSD FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET; THERE WAS NO SECOND.
- Attendees thanked the UIRSC for the space to air their views.
- THE UIRSC RECESSED AND RECONVENED AT 7:54PM.

Superintendent's Evaluation (See documents on file.) (Agenda item #IV)

The UIRSC discussed the protocol for this evaluation and the tight timeframe due to the upcoming Personnel Subcommittee meeting. Supt. Smith sent out 25 p. of documentation including a breakdown of the entry plan and the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) survey. Those goals he deemed "Partially Met" referred to work on schedule but still in process. (He noted that he did not usually regard his job as parsed in this way.)

District Improvement Goals

- **Student Learning** – Dr. Smith did not complete formative assessment conferences for everyone but did do summative evaluations with Central Office staff and 6 principals—only shared by individual permission. His emphasis on social-emotional learning, did not preclude academic instruction. The UIRSD showed strong leadership in recovery from the pandemic disruption of standardized testing as well previous shifts from MCAS to PARCC to MCAS 2.

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 19, 2023

Page 4 of 5

- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS.
- **Professional Practice** – Dr. Smith completed the 1st of the 3 year training and exceeded his shift from Assistant Superintendent to Superintendent.
- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH MET THIS GOAL.
- **Maintaining Momentum During Transition** – Both UIRSD Administrators testified that Dr. Smith fulfilled his goal of frequent school classroom visits—he met regularly with the Personnel Subcommittee throughout the year and they could attest to his progress.
- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH MET THIS GOAL.
- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED THE BUDGET GOAL WAS NOT APPLICABLE.

Dr. Smith suggested they consult the UIRSC Administrators on his role in the budget process.

- **Culture, Climate and Effective Solutions** Although there had been previous Educational Data Systems School Climate Surveys (EDS-SCSs) Supt. Smith:
 - worked hard to get good participation;
 - showed follow-through by releasing the results to the Cabinet so Principals could respond;
 - attended Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt's first staff meeting so staff could see responses were valued.This resulted in culture changes that had not previously existed. Staff gave the UIRSD high scores and liked the survey and quick response.
- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH MET THIS GOAL.

Instructional Leadership - Instruction – Dr. Smith set high expectations on content and quality of work for all children and addressed individual needs. UIRSC members had differing opinions from “hard to evaluate” to “exceeds”.

- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH WAS PROFICIENT IN THIS STANDARD.

Management and Operations – Fiscal Systems – The UIRSC noted that Dr. Smith was familiar with the process and, given the constraints, demonstrated strong performance, providing excellent information and input as needed. He described the work of reducing Central Office operations to fund Shared Services growth and noted he was active not only by comments in UIRSC meetings but also in separate conversations with administrators.

- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH WAS A SOLID PROFICIENT IN THIS STANDARD.

Family Community Engagement - Family Concerns – There was general agreement that this was one of Dr. Smith's strengths. Robert Lionette requested supporting documentation but this would be difficult given confidentiality obligations, however all three UIRSD Administrators attested to extremely positive family feedback, and confidence in referring families to him for conflict resolution and support.

- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH EXCEEDED THIS STANDARD.

Professional Culture - Communication – The UIRSC thanked Dr. Smith for staying on Martha's Vineyard and commended him as a breath of fresh air, highlighting his willingness to engage students and families as well as administrators and school committees, his inclusiveness, enthusiasm and attention to detail. As constructive critique they suggested both his written and presented information sometimes exceeded audience attention span.

- THE UIRSC CONSIDERED SUPT. SMITH WAS PROFICIENT IN THIS STANDARD.

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 19, 2023

Page 5 of 5

- THE UIRSC RATED THE OVERALL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT GOALS AS MET, AND THE OVERALL SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE AS A SOLID PROFICIENT.

The UIRSC had confidence that their Personnel Subcommittee representative Alex Salop would convey their opinions.

Future Dates for UIRSD Budget Discussions (Agenda item #V)
(See below: Meetings/Events.)

Adjournment (Agenda item #VI)

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:54PM; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Meetings/Events

- **UIRSC Budget Workshop – 6:30PM, Wednesday, October 25, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**
- **UIRSC – TBD, Monday, November 20, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

Documents on File:

- Agenda 10/19/23
- Stevens email re: Retirement 10/24/23
- End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent (7 p.) 2019
- Chat:
 - Mariah MacGregor to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 6:59 PM) • I would like to comment at some point if possible, should I comment or speak through the video
 - You to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:00 PM) • raise your hand
 - mollymarton to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:00 PM) • Grrrrll say it
 - skyemacduff to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:16 PM) • That is a huge issue!
 - Mariah MacGregor to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:23 PM) • Yes, I had planned on also saying that making the job full time would hopefully make it a more desirable position. Finding someone able to move here is a challenge in and of itself.
 - Catharine Rykowski to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:32 PM) • Can someone ask what the overall administrative spending is at various k-8 schools? Bc Chilmarks total admin costs are bound to be less; and maybe even less per child!
 - Mariah MacGregor (Oct 19, 2023, 7:34 PM) • Raise your hand! I texted Jackie to see if she can ask but I don't know if she will see it
 - Allison's iPhone to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:38 PM) • We need to do whatever it takes to competitively attract a well qualified and accredited leader for our school. Nantucket has offered housing stipend for their principal position, we should consider this.
 - JBange to Everyone (Oct 19, 2023, 7:45 PM) • I agree Jessica

Minutes approved 11/20/23