

# OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes

8:00AM, Tuesday, October 18, 2022

### Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present: Kathryn Shertzer (Chair), Rizwan Malik, Kris O'Brien\*  
OB School Staff Present: Dr. Megan Farrell (Principal), Denitsa Alton  
Superintendent's Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Hope MacLeod, John Stevens, Marge Harris  
Public: Maura McGroarty, Juliet Mulinare (Recorder)

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:03am by Chair Kathryn Shertzer.

### Approval of Minutes

The draft minutes under consideration for approval are: September 20, 2022.

*MR. MALIK MOVED TO APPROVE THE 9/20/22 DRAFT MINUTES; MS. SHERTZER SECONDS. NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE:*

*MALIK – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE. Motion passes (2-0). O'Brien not present at time of vote.*

### Public Comment

None.

### Superintendent's Report

Mr. Smith reported that the Oak Bluffs School performed incredibly well on their MCAS testing; it had the highest growth of all the schools in the cohort (determined by the State based on similarities in funding, demographics, etc.). The Oak Bluffs School is operating in the top 30% of those cohort schools across the Commonwealth. The last time MCAS testing happened was in 2019, before the pandemic.

\*Kris O'Brien joins the meeting.

Mr. Smith continued that, when using MCAS, there are two areas that educators focus on: Composite scaled scores and student growth. Composite scaled scores are the overall scores the children make and Oak Bluff's composite score was in the high 400s, which is very good. Student growth between 40-60% is considered typical growth and Oak Bluffs School fell right into that range, which is very positive since it's been such an atypical time since testing last occurred. Mr. Smith congratulated Dr. Farrell on her leadership and her staff for this accomplishment.

- Assistant Superintendent's Positions Update:  
Mr. Smith informed the Committee that he has brought John Stevens and Marge Harris back on to assist with operations. Both Mr. Stevens and Ms. Harris are former employees of the island school system and Mr. Smith stated that their return has been an instant help. They will work through the school year to assist Mr. Smith in a variety of areas and also to determine what the needed staffing roles are moving forward. Ms. Harris will be serving as a resource to support curricular initiatives and for improving the school's cultural proficiency. She will also be looking at the entry plan Mr. Smith put together, as well as the Superintendent's checklist. Mr. Stevens will oversee the operations of the district including transportation and facility maintenance.

Mr. Friedman asked those present on the meeting to spread the word that more bus drivers are desperately needed. In order to be eligible to drive a large bus, one needs to hold a CDL license,

however the School does have instructors available and will pay for the training. The Committee discussed options for attracting more bus drivers.

The Committee discussed some of the current issues with the bus routes.

Mr. Stevens said he met with Dr. Farrell in early October to discuss the School's facilities and what is needed. He identified the 30 year old boilers as an item on his list as well meeting with the facilities manager to discuss storage, inventory and maintenance issues.

### **Special Education Director's Report**

Ms. MacLeod shared the monthly newsletter which highlights the professional development training that was conducted on October 7<sup>th</sup> regarding collaborative practices between ELL and Special Education and how to support kids at the intersection of those two areas. Over 50 people attended multiple sessions; other trainings on how to support homelessness and foster care were also provided, as was a session that focused on early childhood education.

### **Financial Report**

Dr. Farrell reported that the financials remain healthy and, like last month, she doesn't anticipate any surprise expenditures. She provided a rundown of the accounts and reported that the School qualified for free breakfast and lunch for students and staff for the next three years.

The School Choice fund, which funds the maintenance of the building, has a balance of about \$175k. Ms. Farrell informed Mr. Friedman that she would be reaching out to him for firmer numbers based on the updated teacher's contract as she begins to build her Fiscal Year 2024 budget. She will have to make some adjustments to a tight budget as the Superintendent has requested that the school limit any budget increase to 2.5%. Mr. Friedman responded that contract negotiations are almost complete so he is hopeful that he can get that information to Dr. Farrell very soon.

### **Principal's Report**

Ms. Farrell reiterated how proud she is of the students and staff on the positive test results. She highlighted the School's approach to supporting the children's growth by assessing and responding to their specific needs rather than using a generalized approach to learning. They have been implementing personalized learning tools and working to meet the students where they're at and it is a shift that is proving to be very successful.

Ms. Farrell spoke about the "chronically absent rate" for the State which, since Covid, has been around 25%. Additionally, the chronically absent rate for ELL students is around 28%. At the OB School, however, the chronically absent rate is 1.8% and for ELL students it's 4.8%. Ms. Farrell said she is very proud of this rate because it's an indication that students feel safe and welcome at school, and that they want to be there.

Finally, Ms. Farrell reported that the staff is also very satisfied with their working environment, based on surveys that were provided to them for feedback.

Ms. Farrell reported that the back-to-school night was a huge success with over 500 people in attendance, which is another indication of the welcoming culture the School has successfully built. The School play this year will be the Music Man, which will open on November 18<sup>th</sup>, This week and next week the School is hosting parent-teacher conferences.

- **OB School Committee Website Update:**  
The website has been updated and all the information that was requested has been added. Ms. Alton provided an overview of the new website. The Committee discussed an option to add a link to the minutes and meeting agendas on the MVYPS website. The Committee discussed where agendas and minutes are currently posted and how the public can access the information.

- **Solar Project Update:**  
Ms. Farrell reported that the solar project has been completed. She met with CVEK yesterday to get a better understanding of the billing cycle. There is already a reduction on what was spent this month last year, but since it's only the first month more data is needed to fully determine the savings that are realized as a result. Ms. Farrell will report back in December when she has more information. To address an issue with integrating the solar array system into the electrical system, Ms. Farrell said they had the engineer redesign the conduit that connects the battery to the panels thus mitigating the problem. There are also contingency plans and local support in place to make sure the school has power.

Ms. Farrell explained that the School is an emergency shelter so in addition to being on town sewer, they also have a septic system. The leaching field for the septic is aging and has been having issues. She is working with the Wastewater Department to redesign and relocate the system onto town-owned land, so it will be serviced and maintained by the Town, not the School.

**Personnel: Leave of Absence Requests**

The Committee reviewed a leave of absence request from custodian Mr. Hiltz who is requesting time off to serve as a family caregiver.

*MS. O'BRIEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST; MR. MALIK SECONDS. NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE:*

*O'BRIEN – AYE, MALIK – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE. Motion passes unanimously (3-0).*

**Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 8:00am. It will be a hybrid meeting held at the OB School.

*AT 9:06AM, MR. MALIK MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING; MS. O'BRIEN SECONDS, NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROLL CALL VOTE:*

*MALIK – AYE, O'BRIEN – AYE, SHERTZER – AYE. Motion passes unanimously (3-0).*

**Documents on File:**

- 10/14/22 Financial Reports
- October Newsletter
- Personnel Documents

Minutes submitted by: Juliet Mulinare