**MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE – EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

**March 24, 2016**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requires minutes for all school committee and subcommittee meetings.  The recorded minutes are open to the public for inspection within 10 days of the meeting. Minutes recorded provide a brief overview that reflects the subject matter discussed and any decisions made.  If any motions are made clearly state the motion and indicate who made the motion and who seconded the motion.  Record who was in favor, opposed, or abstained.  The names of any person(s) appearing before the committee are to be indicated.

**Date:**  Thursday, March 24, 2016 **Time:** 9:30 a.m.. **Place:** Mohawk Superintendent’s Conference Room

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Kate Barrows [Colrain] and Martha Thurber [MTRSD School Committee]

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**  None

**School Committee Members in Attendance:**  None

**School Administration**: Michael Buoniconti [Superintendent], Lynn Dole [Mohawk Principal], Eric Glazier [Heath Principal], Joanne Giguere {BSE Principal], Sarah Jetzon [Curriculum Coordinator 7-12], Emma Liebowitz [Sanderson Principal], Amy Looman [Colrain Central Principal], Leann Loomis [Director, Pupil Personnel Services], Rachel Porter [Curriculum Director pre-K to 6]; Wayne Kermensky [Hawlemont Principal]

**Others in Attendance:**  Paul Cohen [Shelburne]

**Documents:** None

**Call to Order:** Martha Thurber called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**Citizen Comments:** Comments were entertained throughout the meeting.

**Mohawk Curriculum**

Kate Barrows presented for consideration and feedback several ideas that came out of the BEST Communication Subcommittee meeting of March 23, including:

• Creation of a one-page information sheet about each District school, designed to highlight that schools strengths and unique qualities – The Principals generally agreed that having a one-page piece on each school would be helpful and said they would think about which areas in their own schools should be highlighted. They also suggested more broadly distributing such material, e.g., at real estate offices, community events, senior centers, the community information center, etc. They also suggested incorporating the information into the existing school websites.

• Holding a “community open house” at each school to get more townspeople into the schools to see what the schools are doing and what activities the schools provide that might be of interest (e.g., art shows, theater productions) – Joanne Giguere suggested that teachers should have significant input into these open house events. The principals agreed that such events would be best held in early March, beginning in 2017.

• Creation of regularly scheduled press releases to highlight school activities, teachers and student achievements ­ Paul Cohen discussed his experience implementing this type of program in the Brattleboro schools. He said the releases he prepared were well-received and printed in local media.

• Creation of Facebook pages for schools that don’t yet have them as another way to inform the community and “market” District schools – The principals noted that some schools already have active Facebook pages, and that these are appreciated by parents. These pages are “view only,” eliminating the need for constant monitoring and concerns about malicious posts. Principals at schools without Facebook ages expressed interest in creating/maintaining such a page.

Martha Thurber reported to the DLT on several operational options currently under review by the Facilities/Finance Subcommittee and asked for their feedback as educators on the impact of separating lower and higher elementary grades; at what point such a break might have the least negative impact; and whether, if the 6th grade were to be combined in the Middle School, groupings of 6/7 and 8/9 modeled along the lines of the current Mohawk 7/8 interaction, make sense.

Paul Cohen then discussed several ways in which the Brattleboro schools maintained mutually beneficial relationships with local institutions. For example, some college-level courses were taught in the high school by high school teachers, but students received college credit; several different “academies” (e.g., fine arts, mathematics) have been created within the high school to provide a smaller group setting for students sharing common interests. He encouraged the BEST committee and DLT to consider these types of alternatives.

**Next Steps**

Willow Cohen will email principals with a deadline for providing information on their schools for the one-page marketing piece. Rachel Porter and the communication subcommittee will work on the format for the piece. Paul Cohen will provide the subcommittee with a sample press release to initiate the regular PR program. The BEST Communications Subcommittee will work with Virginia Wiswell (Mohawk IT) and principals on developing Facebook pages with appropriate security settings. The DLT will consider its feedback on the operational options. Superintendent Buoniconti will speak further with Paul Cohen about his work with Brattleboro.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Martha Thurber, seconded by Kate Barrows, the Subcommittee voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, April 14, 2016 at Mohawk

Submitted By:

Martha Thurber