

**MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE
June 22, 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: Wednesday, June 22, 2016 **Time:** 7:00 p.m. **Place:** Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School

Committee Members in Attendance: Kate Barrows [Colrain]; Karen Blom {Buckland}, Willow Cohen [Mohawk SC – Shelburne]; David Newell [Ashfield]; John Payne [Shelburne]; Erwin Reynolds [Hawlemont]; Sarah Reynolds [Charlemont]; Leslie Rule [Plainfield]; Martha Thurber [Mohawk SC – Buckland]; and Lark Thwing [Mohawk SC – Hawley]. Willow Cohen left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Committee Members Not in Attendance: Mick Comstock [Heath]; Sue Mitchell [MDEA]; Kim Orzechowski [Hawley]

School Committee Members in Attendance: Glenn Cardinal [Buckland]

School Administration: None

Others in Attendance: Bill Knittle [Buckland]

Documents:

June 22, 2016, Agenda

June 7, 2016 MTRSD Mohawk's BEST Committee Draft Minutes

Preliminary Report on the BEST Focus Group Discussions on a Combined 6/7 Cohort Housed at Mohawk Middle School

Call to Order: Martha Thurber called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Review and Accept the Minutes of the May 25, 2016 Meeting:

On a motion by Leslie Rule, seconded by Sarah Reynolds, the Committee voted to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2016 meeting

Subcommittee Progress Reports:

• **Education – Discussion of Parent Focus Group:**

Leslie Rule led a discussion of the three “6th grade to Mohawk” Focus Groups held on June 9 and passed out her preliminary report on the sessions. She noted that the key issues brought up by participants included:

- A desire to “keep children “young as long as possible”
- The loss of the 6th grade year – a key year for leadership and special programs
- What happens to the culture of the elementary school when 6th graders leave
- Social interaction with much older students
- Playing sports with much older students
- Riding buses with older students

Leslie noted that many parents also supported the concept, but all participants were very concerned that there be adequate planning and support systems in place should this be implemented. She also noted the importance of including staff in these discussions, perhaps by attending a staff meeting to

provide information on the idea and listen to staff ideas and concerns. This will be arranged, if possible, in the fall.

- **Facilities & Finance – Building Consolidation Scenario Analysis:**

Lark Thwing told the group that Business Manager Mike Kociela had prepared and presented analyses of BEST Scenario #1 (Pre-K through Grade 2 at all District elementary schools; Grades 3- 5 at Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School only; Grades 6-12 at Mohawk) and BEST Scenario #2 (Pre-K only at Heath Elementary School and Colrain Central School; Grades Pre-K - 5 at Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School and Sanderson Academy; Grades 6-12 at Mohawk). In-depth analysis of other options will await more information on the likelihood of Heath's joining the Hawlemont District.

- **Communications – Open Forums and Community Engagement:**

Willow Cohen gave an overview of the Communications meeting that immediately preceded this meeting. The group discussed final edits to the poster (adding Mohawk's award of a Silver Medal as one of the top US high school by USN&WR) and funding production of the poster through donations by local businesses. They also discussed asking some of the parents who attended to focus groups to consider hosting "neighborhood" gatherings to discuss BEST's activities and get feedback.

- **Fundraising/Revenue:**

Sarah Reynolds said the group had begun talking with a Facebook Mohawk alumni group about possible coordination for alumni/ae fundraising. She also said the group needed to enlist additional members.

- **Transportation:**

David Newell said the Transportation group had to cancel its most recent planned meeting, but noted the subgroup was continuing to work with the Two-District Transportation Committee to look at possible changes in routes/costs under Scenarios #1 and #2, as well as changes should Heath students only attend Mohawk. The group also will be looking at possibilities for the District buying/storing its own fuel and at the costs/opportunities of a District-owned transportation system.

Other:

Lark Thwing asked for an update on the Chromebooks fundraising effort. The effort has raised \$11,500.

Citizen Comment:

None. Citizen comments were welcome throughout the meeting.

Adjournment: On a motion by Sarah Reynolds, seconded by Lark Thwing, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted By: Martha Thurber

Next Meeting: July 12 at 7:00 pm at Mohawk