

**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**WORKSHOP SESSION**

**OF**

**OCTOBER 24, 2011**

**SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**AND**

**THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”**

**RECORDED BY:**

**MICHELLE TURCO, PUBLIC RECORDER**

**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD**  
**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WORKSHOP SESSION**  
**OCTOBER 24, 2011**

This meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Searles Building, Great Hall, and was posted for 6:40 PM.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Robert Vogler, Vice Chairperson  
Mr. Evan Chaisson, Secretary  
Ms. Barbara Grondine  
Mr. Kenneth Willette, Jr.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Jennifer Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Glenn Fratto, Business Administrator  
Michelle Turco, Public Recorder

**1. \*CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Robert Vogler called this meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, as listed above. Mr. Kenneth Henrick, Mr. Gary Marcoux and Mayor William Manzi did not attend the meeting.

**a. Flag Salute**

Mr. Evan Chaisson led the Committee in Opening Exercises of this meeting.

**2. Relays for Life – Awards Presentation:**

Superintendent asked Dr. Brandi Kwong, Principal, to introduce the CGS Group that received an award for the Kids Cancer Club, a month ago. Dr. Kwong spoke a bit and explained who was involved and introduced Ms. Mary Ann Fisher, Team Captain for Relay for Life for the CGS and also a preschool teacher at the CGS and Ms. Kelly Sullivan, a fourth grade teacher at the CGS. Ms. Sullivan introduced Zach Robinson, Emma Leblanc and Nyah Mazzone. They formed the Kids for Cancer Club. The children each explained a little about how they decided to form the club, how it worked and what it was all about. The children make items out duct tape, they sell the items and 100% of the monies go to the American Cancer Society. The Kids for Cancer Club was invited to a conference in Springfield where they got to go to the Summit; they were also voted the most creative regionally for the Relay of Life.

Ms. Grondine suggested that the Eagle Tribune and/or Methuen Life be contacted in order to get some good publicity for such a great cause. Ms. Grondine felt recognition should be given for all the hard work the children and teachers put into the project and maybe the publicity would get more people involved. Superintendent Scannell stated that on November 11, 2011 there would be a press release and a big celebration to recognize the Kids for Cancer Club.

**3. Unit B Contract - Approval**

Superintendent Scannell submitted a memo explaining Unit B Amended MOA. Attached are the new & the old contracts.

**MOTION:** Mr. Chaisson moved to approve Unit B Contract as submitted; Mr. Willette seconded the motion to approve as submitted.

**VOTE:** 4-0-0 APPROVED

#### 4. 2011 MCAS Report

#### 5. 2011 AYP

Dr. Smith put together a Yearly MCAS Report and gave a presentation briefly touching on the summary and highlighted main points. Dr. Smith also spoke briefly on AYP; reports attached.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Grondine thanked Dr. Smith for the report and was glad to hear that there was a task force and that the task force is looking into ways of helping the subgroups, which are the ones that probably have brought the test scores down over-all. Ms. Grondine stated that a lot of cities in the state have been dealing with the program for a long time. Ms. Grondine questioned if there were a way to reach out and/or find out ways others have been successful?

Dr. Smith explained that Methuen is a part of the DESC and confirmed there was a way to reach out. The DESC has a District School & Assessment Center that is regional and because Methuen is part of the DESC Methuen does have the opportunity to network with some of the urban districts and find out what their best practice was then they could share some ideas across the network. The District School & Assessment Center has also brought in consultants and that could also help out in dealing with some of the issues. Dr. Smith agreed with Ms. Grondine and said Methuen should take advantage of other communities that have already gone through the same kind of change. Dr. Smith has gone to a number of the DESC meetings and felt the group was run very well. Dr. Smith added that Methuen currently is in line for about \$62,000.00 in grant money for the support of the increase in student achievement at the high school level from DSAC.

Mr. Vogler was happy to see Dr. Smith mention that they were looking at students coming into the district and felt it was a great idea to assess early on. Mr. Vogler also commented on it being interesting that the student growth percentiles currently are moderate, even though AYP is not being met and the educational aspect of the children involved are. Growth is key. When the budget is developed Mr. Vogler would like to see each school prioritize the needs of their students academics first; if adjusted properly some growth would be seen. Mr. Vogler also commented on the graduation rate being up and commended the high school staff for their efforts and guidance, administrator and everyone. Mr. Vogler was told by somebody that Student Growth is more important than anything else and stated that last year 1,000 students, almost 15%, were transients and how difficult that made it to reach certain academic goals. Currently, this year, there are 11% transient. Ms. Grondine questioned if an outreach program had been looked into for those parents of the students who come into the district. Ms. Grondine said the parents may be able to speak some English but would probably be more comfortable with their native language. Dr. Smith said a parent outreach would be a big piece of whatever is put in place. Ms. Grondine would like more of an outreach program looked into.

Mr. Fratto stated that that under the School Committee Policy a copy of the City's Chargeback's had to be supplied as soon as the school got them. Mr. Fratto supplied the Chargeback packet to the members and stated it would be on the next agenda for discussion.

Mr. Willette wanted it noted for the record that because there are certain elements in this community that are saying, “we are not experiencing the healthcare crises that we stabilized the healthcare account, the charge back report counteracts that.” Mr. Willette seriously recommended that the community join the GIC sooner than later which could be done right now. Mr. Willette said he felt it very alarming and that it would take more dollars out of the classroom to pay for a healthcare beast. Mr. Willette was looking over Dr. Smiths report and questioned the incoming students and their age bracket. Superintendent Scannell said it was the younger children. Mr. Willette suggested that maybe within the school system there could be a promotion of middle and upper middle class households that have books within in their homes and after they have outgrown the particular age bracket they could donate the books. A re-alignment needs to be done over because a lot of the households do not have reading material and it has to be captured before grade 3. Mr. Willette suggested that a collection could be made and a distribution of books also could be done anonymously to respect the rights of the households and encouraging people of Methuen. Superintendent Scannell said she would speak to the PTO’s and also thought it would be a nice idea. Ms. Grondine said she thought it was a wonderful idea and said it is being done in Lawrence at the Community Action Group.

Superintendent Scannell thanked Dr. Smith and the principals for coming to the meeting.

**\*ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop Session, Mr. Bob Vogler entertained a motion to adjourn this meeting 7:30PM.

**MOTION:** Ms. Grondine moved to adjourn at 7:30 PM; Mr. Chaisson seconded.

**VOTE:** 4-0-3 APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Turco, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools

Methuen School Committee  
Month of October 2011 Meeting

October 24, 2011  
Workshop Session