



Haverhill School Committee – Special Meeting of June 17, 2014

Mayor James Fiorentini, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Present were: Mrs. Maura Ryan-Ciardello; Attorney Paul Magliocchetti; Mrs. Susan Danehy; Mr. Scott Wood, Vice President; Shaun Toohey, President; Mr. Joseph Bevilacqua; Dr. Mary Malone, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Mr. James F. Scully, Superintendent of Schools.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the PARCC Testing Program.

Mr. Scully recommended the adoption of PARCC testing in the spring of 2015.

Dr. Malone made a brief presentation in support of adopting PARCC testing in the spring of 2015. Her recommendation was based on PARCC test is more difficult, rigorous and demanding; the test is tied to the Common Core which clearly delineates learning and expectations for each grade level and the test is a good preparation for students in 21st century careers.

Questions and Comments from the School Committee:

Mayor Fiorentini: Are there technology resources available to implement the test?

Mr. Scully: The district has been building capacity by wiring our schools and within three years this process should be complete, so that there are resources for on-line testing. If the PARCC is implemented – there will be the option for either on-line or paper-based testing. He noted that MCAS costs \$23 per student and PARCC costs \$15 per student to implement.

Mr. Wood: He has read the research and looked at both the cost and rigor of both testing programs. There is an educational debate among experts concerning both programs. Mr. Wood believes that MCAS is a demanding test and that there are too many variables that will be changing within the year – new governor – possible new commissioner. He also noted that MCAS (Massachusetts) has been a model for the country and that it challenging for students. Mr. Wood wanted to make the best decision for students.

Mr. Toohey: As the school committee president and as a parent, there were technology glitches during the field test this past school year. He noted that at this juncture, MCAS was pushing kids to excel; the system is not broken, therefore, the district should stay with MCAS.

Attorney Magliocchetti: It will cost \$8 less per student to administer PARCC and that savings could be used for technology improvements. He related that both tests were



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rigorous so there was no downside to changing to PARCC. Furthermore, the system would have an additional year to address the Common Core.

Mr. Bevilacqua: He stated that PARCC was the next generation of testing and in his capacity as Northern Essex Community College board member he discovered that many students were not prepared for college and needed remediation. Additionally, he supported PARCC's adoption in Haverhill because standard testing was going in the direction of electronic testing which students were very comfortable with because of their reliance on technology i.e., cell phones, iPads etc.

Mrs. Danehy: She related that MCAS tests were changed each year based on prior year's results. Mrs. Danehy supported PARCC based on recommendation of the educational professionals (Superintendent & Assistant Superintendent) that it is a challenging exam along with the potential for funding opportunities to address technology upgrades.

Mr. Scully: He noted that due to a dip in grade 4 MCAS Math scores the previous year, the test had been adjusted.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello: She indicated that she had researched the issue in addition, Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello had consulted with both parents and teachers about the PARCC vs. MCAS debate. She related that people were divided on the issued 50%/50% and that it appeared that there was potential for a new testing after 2015 that would replace MCAS.

Mayor Fiorentini: It is still uncertain what testing program will be in place after spring of 2015.

Mr. Wood: What improvements in technology will be needed to go to electronic testing?

Mr. Scully: He related that wiring in the schools was an on-going effort and that he had received \$50,000-\$100,000 in donations; the goal continued to be to wire all schools.

Attorney Magliocchetti: He asked about the effects of \$60,000 savings by switching to PARCC.

Mr. Scully: He responded that a cart cost \$25,000 each = 50 computers.

Mayor Fiorentini: He reported that the experts disagreed on PARCC vs. MCAS.

The Mayor asked for a motion.



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Moved by Attorney Magliocchetti and seconded by Mrs. Danehy to accept the Superintendent's recommendation and sign up for the PARCC test.

A roll call vote was held and the results were the following:

<i>Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Attorney Magliocchetti</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Danehy</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Bevilacqua</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Wood</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Mr. Toohey</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Mayor Fiorentini</i>	<i>No</i>		

Motion passes; 4-3

Moved by Mr. Wood and seconded by Mr. Toohey to suspend the rules in order to go into executive session.

A roll call vote was held and the results were the following:

<i>Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Attorney Magliocchetti</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Danehy</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Bevilacqua</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Wood</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Toohey</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mayor Fiorentini</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

Motion passes; 7-0

Moved by Mr. Wood and seconded by Mr. Toohey to go into executive session.

A roll call vote was held and the results were the following:

<i>Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Attorney Magliocchetti</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mrs. Danehy</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Bevilacqua</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mr. Wood</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Mr. Toohey</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Mayor Fiorentini</i>	<i>Yes</i>		

Motion passes; 7-0

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.