

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

Present:

Board: Douglas Korb(Chair), Lissa Harris (Clerk), David Holzapfel, Dan MacArthur, Celena Romo
Administration: Wayne Kermenski (Principal)
Members of the Public: Celia Segar, Peter Barus (Recorder)
Faculty: Rachel Boyden, Emily Walsh, Pam Maile, Gail Greenleaf

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Changes to the agenda

Approve Minutes / Pay Orders

Minutes for 4/18/19 and 5/8/19

Mr. Holzapfel moved to approve the minutes for April 18, 2019. Second by Ms. Harris. All in Favor.
Mr. MacArthur moved to approve the minutes for May 8, 2019. Second by Ms. Harris. **All in Favor.**

Pay Orders

Mr. MacArthur moved to approve Pay Orders #22 dated 4/26/19 in the amount of \$67,668.24 and #23 dated 5/10/19 in the amount of \$214,719.00. Second by Mr. Holzapfel.

Anomalies were attributed to tuitions.

All in Favor.

Faculty Representatives

Faculty Representatives Rachel Boyden, Emily Walsh, Pam Maile and Gail Greenleaf introduced themselves.

Mr. Korb invited any and all remarks. Ms. Maile provided a spreadsheet she had circulated for faculty comments. Ms. Greenleaf asked about the benefits procedure (copy provided). Mr. Korb noted that executive sessions could be held on request. Mr. MacArthur explained that the Board will also welcome additional meetings with faculty representatives. There was discussion; it was noted that some faculty had been feeling hesitant to be candid.

Ms. Maile discussed the spreadsheet containing staff remarks, noting that staff had been asked to give feedback on several areas.

General:

Mr. MacArthur discussed the statewide protocol for dealing with parental complaints; Mr. Korb explained the steps as, parent to Faculty, and if not resolved, to administration, to Superintendent, to Board. The Mission Committee had been charged with developing that language (or adopting appropriate boilerplate). There was discussion, that this should be in the MES Handbook; that the policy is vague, doesn't detail steps explicitly.

Mr. MacArthur will make sure that the parental complaints procedure is added to the MES Handbook.

Work Year

The question was raised as to length of the workday for professional staff; if outside the workday, such as when required to attend events, how this is compensated. There was discussion; of a 7½-hour workday; that required attendance at events should be either part of the contract or optional; that field-research is in the contract.

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

Mr. Korb noted that the Board would take in information at this meeting and respond in writing. Further questions included: the increase to from 184 to 186 school days; Mr. Kermenski explained a calendar error and the corrections made, with salaries compensated accordingly; Ms. Maile cited a spreadsheet table; Mr. Kermenski explained that formulae in the spreadsheet adjust compensation automatically, in this case for one extra PD day and the erroneously omitted day; and offered to share a comparison to make this clear. He discussed how the pay scale is created, that the Board adopted the WCSU salary schedule except one year later, so that the SU negotiations would be complete and the data reliable; he explained that last year's WCSU schedule is adjusted in the spreadsheet table by embedded formulae. Mr. MacArthur explained that union negotiations are currently taking place that may impact this system.

In-service, PD days

Ms. Greenleaf cited per diem, not enumerated. Mr. Kermenski noted that past practice is per diem of \$120.00. Ms. Greenleaf noted that outside the contracted days, the scale is lower, for In-service/PD days non-professionals are not under the same expectations for PD. Mr. Kermenski explained that paraeducators are not MES employees, with one exception. Ms. Maile asked for clarification of "non-professional". Mr. Kermenski noted that there are licensed, non-licensed, paraeducators and instructors at MES. Mr. Korb noted that MES can also share SU employees.

There was discussion of dental and medical insurance; Mr. Korb noted that there were no non-professional staff representatives. Mr. Kermenski noted that this is currently under discussion. Mr. MacArthur explained that the state is setting up healthcare benefits to be similar statewide, possibly two years away.

Salary scale

It was suggested that the salary scale needs clarification, bus drivers are listed. Mr. MacArthur discussed the challenges of bus transportation and noted that probably there will not be just one schedule.

Contract renewal

Ms. Maile noted that the teacher contract for May 1 is late; most are done by April 15; those not offered contracts need to know in a timely manner. Mr. Korb explained that this would be addressed sooner next year, and he will let the reps know after the retreat; and that April 15 was proposed as being in alignment with the SU, where they must be offered by April 15 and returned by May 15.

Health Insurance

There was discussion of flexible spending, HRA, FSA; it was noted that teachers want to keep the current HSA; that it may be subject to change by the state.

Mr. MacArthur will keep everyone apprised of legislative changes.

Ms. Maile discussed the plan, how money is put into the HSA. Mr. Kermenski explained that MES adopted WCSU's plan, but changed from their HRA to HSA; that health insurance is 80%; that HSA is separate, depends on the type of plan chosen, 90% for the gold plan; that it runs on the calendar year, not the school year; that the current plan terminates on January 1 of next year; and that after another year it may be out of the Board's hands, meanwhile sticking with current procedures. There was discussion of possible future changes; of protection of salaries from rate changes.

Termination of employment

It was noted that the Mission Committee is working on feedback channels. Ms. Maile discussed grievance procedures. Ms. Greenleaf noted that the currently adopted "WCSU Supervision" doesn't address due process for teachers. Mr. Korb explained that the Board is willing to modify the procedures. Mr. MacArthur invited the Faculty and Administration to suggest language. Ms. Maile suggested that union

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

materials might contain appropriate language; this was generally favored by all present; and that the Board and staff can come to agreement on language over the Summer. Mr. Kermenski suggested that continuing to meet is important. Mr. Korb suggested assigning one person to research and develop language for the group to discuss. It was noted that Mr. Anton had wanted to be in this meeting but had a mandatory training at Lake Morey. Mr. Kermenski noted that he was invited to the discussion and can lend information, but that the matter is really between the Board and the Faculty. Ms. Greenleaf recalled from Mr. Anton that absent an agreement, there is no legally binding procedure, even if a handbook entry. There was discussion of grievance processes that would be binding; there was a distinction made between faculty complaints and parental complaints procedures, there being legal policy for one but not the other, and noting that policy is binding but has no procedures (per D-10 as posted on the WCSU website).

The Board will send a member to meet with the Faculty Representatives, and they can meet or email to develop language. Mr. MacArthur offered to represent the Board and invited faculty to communicate with him. Ms. Maile discussed Termination and reassignment.

Action:

The Board will direct the Superintendent to send language for complaints procedures to Mr. MacArthur.

Dental insurance

The question was raised as to whether domestic partnerships would be honored as with health insurance. Mr. Kermenski will check.

Paid release days

It was suggested that non-professional staff deserve the same consideration as professionals. There was discussion; of WCSU employees; that language had been improved; that paras used to get three days; that five sick/three personal is different; that professionals get ten sick/three personal.

The Board will look into this issue and respond.

Long term leave

There was discussion; that the issue of maternity leave is unclear; about emergency surgery; what sick days can be used for or how many; a sick family member. It was noted that the ten days may accumulate year to year to a maximum of 120. Mr. Korb cited the Family Leave Act, noting that family leave is not paid leave; that maternity leave was raised from thirty to thirty-five days; that it is forty days for maternity at WCSU. There was discussion. Mr. Korb suggested that family care leave should be reconsidered by investigating what other districts are doing.

Paid parental leave

It was noted that staff would like one year of parental leave; that this would not be paid. Mr. Holzapfel noted that the Board answers to the Town, that if leave were paid it would reflect the will of the voters, and it's important that this be understood. Mr. MacArthur explained that any decisions the Board makes that have financial impact affects taxpayers; that there is a state limit above which there are penalties. It was noted that by their nature maternity leaves cannot be planned in the budget; Mr. Holzapfel discussed the Board's fiscal responsibility.

Other

It was noted that religious holidays are centered on Christian holidays, others must use personal days, and how this stands in light of focus on social justice. Mr. Korb noted that this is a function of the SU calendar. Mr. Kermenski suggested implementing "religious days" to be used for any purpose.

This will be included in Mr. MacArthur's communications with Mr. Anton.

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

There was discussion of whether (and how long) a job would be held while faculty members raise children; and of WCSU Administration procedures posted on the SU website.

The question was raised as to what FTE percentage qualifies part-time staff for benefits, for example, long-term leave at 50% FTE, dental and health insurance, etc.; it was suggested that all benefits be adjusted to be proportional to FTE. There was discussion; of some possible state requirements and/or industry standards.

The Board will research this, Mr. MacArthur will ask Mr. Anton how other districts have dealt with FTE and benefits.

It was noted that most part-timers work less than 60%.

Ms. Boyden had written a letter to the Board and read it aloud, asking that it be appended (see Appendix 1). It was noted that Lauren MacArthur had written a letter to the Board (see Appendix 2).

Mr. MacArthur discussed the future of the relationship, suggesting that casting blame is not helpful but accepting it is, and that he accepted Ms. Boyden's statement. Mr. Korb noted that the first time there had been discussions was after a formal complaint, and that he understood that there are many things to discuss, that this had been brought up at a retreat, and that he apologized for not making it clear. Mr. Holzapfel noted that things have happened that had never happened before at MES; that the Board is ignorant about what is presented, and that Ms. Boyden's remarks were directly to the point.

There was discussion of difficulty speaking into an unsafe environment for expression when employment may be on the line, and the courage this takes.

Mr. Korb suggested that some difficult conversations need to happen out in the open. There was discussion. Mr. Korb suggested quarterly meetings with faculty. Mr. MacArthur noted that executive sessions for personnel, contract and legal issues may be requested at any time. There was discussion about how to handle perceived disrespect and imbalance of power.

Mr. Korb noted that in addition to the annual negotiations, all staff is welcome to any meetings. The Board expressed gratitude to the faculty.

Members of the Public

Celia Segar introduced herself and read a letter to the Board aloud (Appendix 3).

The Board expressed thanks for Ms. Segar's comments.

Mr. MacArthur read Lauren MacArthur's letter to the Board aloud (Appendix 2).

Building/Capital Improvements Update

Board Retreat / Summer Schedule

Mr. Korb noted attending a VSBA webinar on retreats and suggested taking a day at Colonel Williams, 8:30 to lunchtime, on goal-setting for the next year or two years, or on goals for the current budget cycle, categorized like the principal's reports as to what was accomplished, what was completed, what's going on, and timelines for completion. He suggested preparing by bringing ideas, the Administration bringing a "list of demands", on architects, attrition, etc.; then, as a side bar, bringing values for setting budget goals, level-or-less, spending threshold, etc.; like a CIP for the Board.

Mr. MacArthur asked for a list. There was discussion. Suggested dates were the last two weeks in July.

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

Principal's Report

Mr. Kermenski discussed his Report (Appendix 4)

He discussed students' perceptions of SBAC being mostly negative; and had discussed with students the idea of taking the test seriously. He discussed the graphics in his Report, arranged by grade-level with color-coded percentages showing scores by level; and noted that the scores reflect improvement. He discussed the Social Justice event, well attended by faculty; the Principals' PD workshop on organizing oneself as an educator. He noted that getting distracted takes about 25 minutes to refocus. He discussed the music survey results and the AMP food program support; e-finance, keeping the QB system for a while, a new company taking over HSA after adverse experiences with the previous company.

Mr. Kermenski had sent a Preschool document to all families with preschool-age children in town, noting that MES can only take 20 students, and must know family's intentions by June 10 if the children are expected to attend; and that there is now a waiting list.

He discussed health requirements, noting a vaccination rate for Pre-K at 67%, overall at 79%; and that he is calling parents regarding program changes and attendance.

Capital Improvements update

Two proposals were noted from Black River, and Banwell Architects; Mr. Korb had asked Gordon Bristol to look them over, each asking about \$20,000.00 for similar services; both probably could do a cafeteria; Mr. Korb had met with contractors about the heating system, and they had found a wrong valve installed forty years ago, suggested MES should probably complete retrofits first. There was discussion.

Executive Session (Contracts)

Mr. MacArthur moved to enter Executive Session. Second by Ms. Harris. All in Favor.
The Board entered Executive Session at 8:27 PM.

The following kindness of Ms. Harris:

Out of executive session at 10pm.

The board made the following statements:

- The board supports Wayne posting a newly structured music program position.
- The board support restructuring the art program position.
- The supports adding two support staff to meet student needs for the 2019-20 school year

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Celena, David 2nd, meeting adjourned at 10:07pm.

Important dates

- Graduate Portfolios May TDB (Library)
- Graduation – June 13 @ 7 p.m. (Outback)
- Regular School Board Meeting Thursday, June 20 @ 6:00 p.m. (Library)

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, May 18, 2019

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

Appendix 1

(Ms. Boyden kindly provided the text of her remarks before the Board)

May 16, 2019

To Members of the Marlboro School Board of Directors:

Since your April 18th meeting I have been trying to articulate some of my feelings about the staff's current situation. I left the meeting very disappointed because I believe that the board doesn't fully understand the depth of discontent much of the staff is currently feeling.

I do not want to be a representative to the board as we move forward because I do not feel I can accurately represent a staff that is so splintered in its opinion about our current situation and desire for the future. I do, however, want to share with you my feelings because I am so disappointed that the relationship among the board, the principal and the faculty has become so difficult.

While at the meeting listening to Doug and Wayne discuss Marlboro School I felt as if I was listening to a discussion about a fantasy school. The ideals you presented are wonderful and seem to have very little to do with the way currently much of the staff is worried for their jobs, feels under acknowledged in their work, and frustrated by unclear communication.

The subordinate and adversarial position of the staff as we look toward the future of Marlboro School makes me want to cry. They are currently exploring becoming unionized because they do not feel the board will be their advocate if there are conflicting ideas with the principal, and there are many. Just recently a lack of judgement on his part led him to share with only some of the staff truly unpleasant feedback from our parent survey. People were hurt, people were angry, and rather than work to mend the situation he chose to reprimand those who spoke out.

I have watched Wayne now in many meetings and he appears kind and articulate. He has many impressive ideas about what he thinks Marlboro School can be and paints a rosy vision. Unfortunately, it has little to do with the actual situation here and people who work so hard every day teaching the students. I do not know if the situation can be repaired. I personally do not think unionization will help but will only create a deeper gulf between teachers, and the principal and the board. I know that it is important to many because they feel they need the protection and advocacy a union offers. In the current climate this is completely understandable. Yet, I can't imagine that if we rely on this formal process, we will be able to continue working and creating this crazy, lovable educational experience that allows me to put in the extra time and energy to take students to Costa Rica for field research. I don't need more money to teach like this I need to feel that my principal and board are my allies and advocates.

So, because of what you and our principal have created, we will become a school that turns to a union rather than our own board for support. We will list our needs and ask for monetary compensation so as not to feel exploited. Because we have an excellent staff, the school will continue to be a good one despite the changes that have happened in the past two years, but it will be despite, not because of, our relationship with the administration.

Sincerely Yours, Rachel Boyden

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

Appendix 2

(Lauren MacArthur's letter to the Board)

To the MES School Board:

I realize that much of what has happened recently at the school is considered a confidential matter, but we live in a small town where very little is actually confidential. Most people seem aware that the school is facing some internal personnel challenges, and this has a marked impact on the morale and energy of the school, not to mention its reputation in the wider community.

As I trust very much that this dedicated School Board is using this challenging time as an opportunity for careful reflection and positive changes, I urge the Board to keep the community informed to the extent possible. This seems like an excellent opportunity for growth and change, but that forward momentum will continue to be hindered if rumors fester, trust is hobbled, and community members feel disconnected from a process that may or may not be happening. I hear people saying, "The School Board doesn't care. They are not doing anything." But knowing the thoughtful individuals serving on this Board, I very much doubt that this is true.

Any transparency (that still protects the privacy of those involved) might help to alleviate some of the stress and miscommunication that seems to be weighing heavily on many members of this community.

MES is the heart of this town and people care about it deeply, as you clearly know. The missive posted by the School Board in response to some initial discussions on Facebook was "professional", but cold and bureaucratic and did not address the damage done to townspeople's trust in the school and its administration. I kept hoping there would be some sort of follow-up but have not seen or heard anything since. I understand the delicate balance of confidentiality that must be maintained, but I do believe that more robust communication is needed on all fronts to make this a positive, transformative moment instead of a black mark.

Your hard work is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for listening,
Lauren B. MacArthur,
Parent and Community Member

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

Appendix 3

(Celia Segar kindly provided the text of her remarks before the Board)

We moved to Marlboro in 1978 and, like many other people here, it was primarily because of the school.

Our children attended Marlboro School for 16 years. Since I retired, I have volunteered regularly at MES, 6 hours a week, for at least 20 years.

Before retiring I was a school-based pediatric occupational therapist and spent significant time in most of the schools in WSESU, WCSU, and Franklin County, MA. As a result, I have broad experience of the variety of schools and their teachers. In my opinion, MES always came out on top, above all for the attention and investment it gave individual students, each of whom comes with individual learning styles, skills and obstacles, diverse backgrounds. The whole community at MES embraced every child in the school. The teachers and staff had the flexibility to be creative in their approach to individuals and to curriculum. Collegiality among them was high and there was a sense of collective passion for their profession, for the children in their care, and for the school. We always prided ourselves that we didn't need a union because communication was open; individuals felt their voices were heard.

I worry we are losing all of that, and very quickly. Lately, when I go into school, the atmosphere feels heavy and somewhat oppressive. And, I should state now, that I have not discussed my concerns with any teachers, my impressions come from my direct experience rather than any hearsay.

I am concerned about the changes I see and respectfully ask the school board to investigate the underlying issues that are causing this change and take steps to address them.

Celia Segar
May 16, 2019

**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

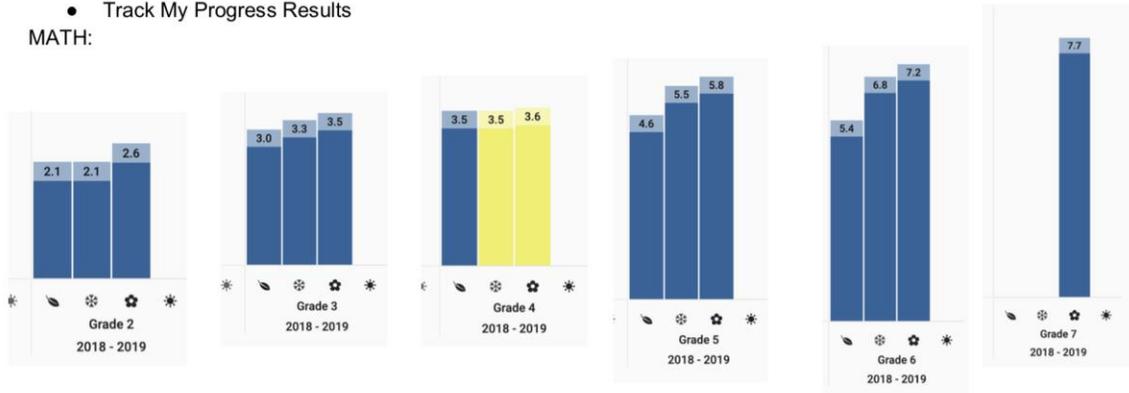
Appendix 4

**May 2019
Principal Report to Board
Wayne Kermenski**

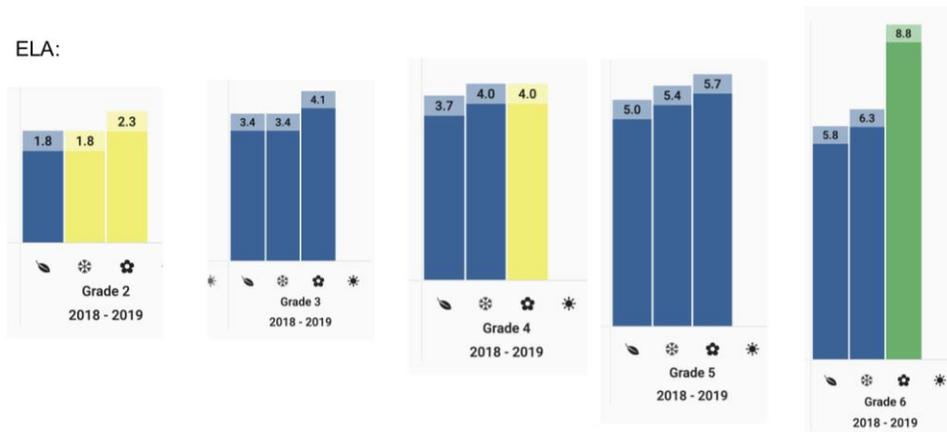
Academic Proficiency:

- SBAC preparation consisted of reviewing test prep questions, speaking with $\frac{3}{4}$ classroom and the 6th grade math (others soon) and discussing test taking skills.
- Track My Progress Results

MATH:



ELA:



Personalized Learning:

- Faculty participated in the last of our 5 social justice sessions on May 13th. We found this PD to be very informative and there was consensus to continue to work with them. Next year, we would like to

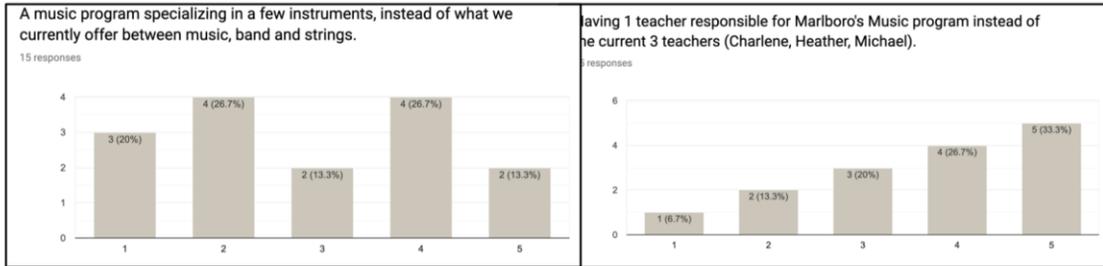
**APPROVED MINUTES
MARLBORO SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

consolidate our time to winter sports and focus our attention on creating a Social Justice Initiative for our whole school.

- I participated in one of the best PD workshops ever. VPA co-sponsored the organization [The Together Leader](#). This PD is specific to how principals can organize their life to be productive and balanced. It was also nice being in a room with about 50-60 other principals who have similar challenges and hearing their stories. One bit of research that really resonated with me was, "On average, it takes our brains 25 minutes to recover from a distraction." My two takeaways were: creating a weekly worksheet, blocking off weekly Wayne time, and scheduling 2-3 hour blocks of time at a time when I am at my most productive and creative. These seem so obvious and yet so hard to do.

High Quality Staffing

- Music Survey Results.



Safe, Healthy Schools:

- AMP has organized a Food Program Committee. The focus is to provide high-quality mostly organic foods at or below the current budget. I am very excited about this and look forward to seeing where this work goes.

Financial Efficiencies:

- E-fiance is moving forward and on schedule. Will be keeping quickbooks well after July 1 and will slowly be phased out.
- A new company will be taking over our HSAs, hoping to get better service.

OTHER:

- [Preschool Procedures Document](#) - Review and adopt.
- WCSU is changing all of our emails to windhamcentral.org

Enrollment: 100