

Plymouth School Committee New Business/Old Business School Year 2019-20

SY 2016-17:

Item 2017-01.0 – Health Curriculum

07-11-2016 – Dr. Sorensen requested that the revitalization of health education be considered for advocacy similar to the successful full day kindergarten initiative last school year. Mr. Begley acknowledged that Dr. Maestas had this on the list for discussion at the upcoming retreat. Dr. Campbell acknowledged this discussion at the last Policy Subcommittee meeting, and indicated it as a goal of his to conduct a health audit of programs, practice and wellness. He proposed a timeline.

09-12-2016 – Dr. Maestas, referring to the presentation reviewed during the recent Retreat, noted the timeline established for a team coming together with a presentation forthcoming once ready. Dr. Sorensen, checking for his understanding, asked for the purpose and who would sit on the committee. Mr. Begley explained the Committee's wish that it not be a complicated process. Dr. Campbell explained his recommendation to look at all components of the health curriculum utilizing the health index put forth by the CDC as a self-assessment that can be used to set some goals. Dr. Campbell assured the Committee that the process would be pretty straightforward, very objective utilizing rubrics, and structured by his office.

01-09-2017 – Dr. Maestas noted concerns about the overall curriculum, and Dr. Campbell indicated current efforts to revamp the health curriculum model with a number of areas that can be focused on. Mr. Begley allowed that this item should remain active.

05-15-2017 – Dr. Campbell described a few recent actions that have transpired, which includes looking at the CDC including the eight essential components of health. He reported on the benefits now that Director of School Health Services Carilyn Rains has reinstated the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), and further that this is a great group to look at the health curriculum through elementary, middle and high school. He said the district will continue with the new elementary health educator, with the recommendation down the road being an expansion to all elementary grades. He indicated that would require more staff for implementation and, not being in a place to do that currently, would keep this on a list for a future budget season. Dr. Campbell noted the continuing plans of looking at the health curriculum over the summer to ensure it is very well articulated across the grade levels. He shared his belief that beyond the health education piece, we have to look at practices and policies. Dr. Campbell indicated strongly his belief that Mrs. Rains and SHAC will be a great resource.

Mr. Begley noted the Committee's prior votes in support, indicated the importance given the recent drug and mental health issues that moving forward, the Committee needs to set goals, determine costs, and set a timeline for getting back to a robust health curriculum. Dr. Sorensen concurred. After review of this topic by Dr. Maestas, Mr. Begley determined that this item remain open.

12-18-2017 – Dr. Maestas noted the plan for implementation of programming with a change for the FY19 budget, as to when we will see those modifications.

05-07-2018 – Dr. Maestas, noting the ongoing work by Dr. Campbell, referred to the recently received \$25,000 grant to infuse health at the elementary level and look to a model going forward. Dr. Maestas told of working with a former health coordinator to perform an audit that will help guide moving forward and in preparation for the FY2019-20 budget cycle.

09-10-2018 – Ms. Badger, noting the recent accomplishments in assuring the district has full day kindergarten, a home for the alternative program, and South High athletes practicing on their new home fields, expressed the need to focus on health education with regular updates to assure that our students are receiving drug education and mental health education.

01-28-2019 – Ms. Badger wanted to revisit this topic and stress the importance for the district to continue to look at the health curriculum. She stressed the need to listen to all parents and all points of view. She wonders if the district needs a part-time coordinator for health. Dr. Maestas reminded the Committee that health education is currently under active review. He suggested we can perhaps immediately improve how we communicate to stakeholders and articulate what is being taught, citing the recent program at Plymouth South Middle School. Dr. Maestas said we have some responsibility to cover controversial topics and communication can really help educate about what we are teaching. It is challenging, as well, because a lot of the issues with these talks are not directly health-related. Dr. Sorensen concurred and stated we do a good job at what we are teaching, but we need to be sure we are also telling stakeholders why we are teaching the information.

02-04-2019 – Ms. Badger requested that the Committee continue to be updated on a regular or frequent basis on the progress with revamping the elementary-level health curriculum.

06-03-2019 – This item was reviewed at the 6/3/2019 PSC meeting and it was agreed that the item would remain on the old business list as the district prepares to work on the details of curriculum over the summer in order to roll it out in the elementary schools in September.

Item 2017-06.0 – Home Internet Access

02-27-2017 – Dr. Sorensen, referring to a set of minutes presented for review at this meeting, indicated that the West School Council talked about connectivity and restated his concerns that there may be some students with no internet access at home. He referenced a district survey some years ago, with the thought that the number of families that need support may not have changed in the ensuing years. Dr. Sorensen spoke to his struggle regarding how to collect this data. Dr. Maestas suggested adding this to the radar with administrative staff and perhaps investigating opportunities of how to access technology across the wide demographic of Plymouth. He noted in the past being happy with a 40% return for surveys, and the need to ascertain how to get a stronger response from parents. Dr. Sorensen referred to a school that opens the computer lab before and after school with students using them mostly for the labs printers, and wondered if a survey of students rather than parents would yield better results. Dr. Maestas noted the ease of that solution, and the discussion moved to the need for clarification as to whether access was through home Wi-Fi connectivity or cell connectivity.

05-15-2017 – Dr. Maestas indicated this topic had been on the radar for a length of time. He acknowledged that Dr. Sorensen provided some level of insight when he proposed surveying students next year for better data. He also noted the possibility of an exit survey of students to assist at the beginning of next school year in making a decision as to how to move forward. Dr. Campbell noted a recent meeting with Principal Brian Palladino regarding the PCIS plan of surveying students while still with us, not only about access but also about types of devices available-cell phone vs. tablet, how each is used and whether they are relied upon for school work-for a sense of true access beyond connectivity. Dr. Campbell indicated the possibility to learn from this building and replicate it for good sample across the district. Mr. Begley inquired if those on free and reduced lunch could be polled to see if this is one more item we could assist with, and if this could be used as a measure. Dr. Maestas acknowledged that free and reduced could be used as a cross reference. Mr. Begley stated the need to know first if there is even a problem. He prompted that in this town, the library provides free access, and that students can gain access by arriving to schools early or staying late. After review of this topic by Dr. Maestas, Mr. Begley determined that this item remain open.

05-07-2018 – Dr. Maestas referenced this as home connectivity, rather than internet access as many families view cell phone access as the same. He referenced offering a survey to all students with specific language at the start of next year to get accurate data not connected to cells. Dr. Maestas spoke to bringing this information to the Committee next year. To Ms. Badger's question, Dr. Maestas responded that at the elementary level, the survey could be administered through the schools' open houses. He also noted that the majority of principals have family email addresses and can send email blasts to inform parents.

06-03-2019 – Dr. Maestas said the district recently sent out a DESE questionnaire that included a question about access to home internet. Dr. Maestas said that while 90+ percent of the families have internet access, the question in the survey did not distinguish between wi-fi access vs cellular access. Dr. Maestas said this item should remain on the list since the district will need to follow up again with a similar question but will ask families to define the specific access they have in their homes. This is a priority since the district needs to be sure of the data before the district goes to a 1-to-1 model. Dr. Maestas said there are a few services/companies that the district can work with for providing very affordable internet access in the home for those that need it. He also said he foresees a time in the future when a fund would be set up to assist families in extreme need.

SY 2017-18:

Item 2018-05.0 – Selectmen's Request for Reactivation of Consolidation Subcommittee

01-22-2018 – Dr. Sorensen mentioned the request at the recent Selectmen's meeting for reactivation of the Consolidation Subcommittee that had met from 2010 to 2011. He further stated that he had resurrected all of the minutes from those meetings, read them and has copies available.

05-07-2018 – Dr. Maestas confirmed that he has not been contacted nor received any communications to the Committee from the Selectmen regarding formal reactivation of the subcommittee. Dr. Sorensen reported having delivered minutes from the previous subcommittee to Betty Cavacco of the Selectmen with no response.

06-03-2019 – Dr. Maestas said he recently had a discussion on this topic with the Town Manager and she told him that Town Hall is currently undergoing a Technology Department audit and the town is also going through a building audit and will be unable to continue any potential future discussions on consolidation until that process is complete.

Item 2018-07.0 – Continuation of Professional Development in the area of Customer Service

04-23-2018 – Ms. Hunt reintroduced the topic regarding professional development relative to a customer service approach. She remarked that it pertained to front desk staff in general, and stated her wish that the Committee revisit this subject occasionally. Dr. Campbell agreed, noted the training last school year of 60 secretarial staff, and foresaw the need to continue. Ms. Badger suggested including a survey with such questions as, "How do you feel about your experience upon entering building or on the phone?" Dr. Campbell referred to the climate and culture of a building, and noted that it should be looked at systemically.

05-07-2018 – Ms. Hunt referenced creating an environment of customer first, where our parents and students are our customers. Dr. Campbell explained the 12 hours of customer service training provided for the district's secretarial staff last school year, but acknowledged the ongoing need at the district level. He noted the intent to continue training and mentoring.

06-03-2019 – Dr. Maestas said the district offered a course on customer service for all support staff and it is important to continue to foster this model. Ms. Hunt said she feels this item should be ongoing and there was consensus that it should remain on the list as a continual reminder of how important this is. It was agreed to update the title on the Old Business to Continuation of Professional Development in the area of Customer Services from Customer Service Oriented Professional Development.

Item 2018-08.0 – Foundation Budget Review Committee Recommendations for Budget Formula Updates

06-04-2018 – Ms. Hunt, referencing the agenda item at the last meeting relative to MASC's efforts in support of the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Committee, ask the Committee for a vote to support. Dr. Sorensen noted the request as appropriate as it was on the last agenda as an action item and was tabled. Ms. Hunt explained the premise of supporting the recommendations, noting the passage of the bill in the Senate and not any further. She then noted the MASC message of timeliness of the Committee's support of MASC's efforts so they can then represent to legislators through the larger voice of a state association. She clarified that this is still referred to as Bill #S2525, and appealed to the Committee for support in the push in order to make it a priority.

Following a motion by Ms. Hunt and seconded by Ms. Badger, Dr. Sorensen indicated his intent to support the motion, adding that he noticed on the list of 60 cities and towns signed on there is one Board of Selectmen, and inquired of the Committee's interest in engaging the Plymouth Selectmen. Dr. Maestas referenced the discussions at budget time with the Selectmen relative to the Chapter 70 formula and funding, and concurred that if joined with the School Committee, Plymouth's support would add much more weight. BY a show of hands, Ms. Hunt's motion carried unanimously. Dr. Sorensen requested that Dr. Maestas send a message to the Selectmen, and Ms. Hunt requested a letter be sent to Tracy Novick, Field Director, at MASC.

06-03-2019 – Dr. Maestas indicated the foundation review of Chapter 70 is a highlight this year for School Committee. He said there is a great deal of movement with how the foundation budget is analyzed and calculated, and there is a lot of conversation about it. He noted that the problem, however, is not with the dollars that people are requesting per pupil but with the manner in which the foundation budget is calculated. Dr. Maestas said until that calculation is reanalyzed to include special provisions for valid inadequacies, especially for districts like Plymouth, it will be difficult for communities to realize significant increases per pupil from Chapter 70. Ms. Badger and other members agreed, that we should invite our House and State representatives to a meeting at least once per year.

SY 2018-19:

Item 2019-02.0—Mindfulness and Increased Social-Emotional Awareness and Programs

12-17-2018 – Ms. Hunt, referencing the Mindfulness Program she attended at the recent MASC Conference, combined with a tough month for students dealing with social/emotional issues and challenges, would like to further explore the possibility of incorporating a mindfulness program or workshop into the district. Ms. Hunt is aware that other districts are doing this or some modification thereof that have seen improvements. Ms. Hunt also mentioned she reached out to a friend that does this type of programming who has offered to send her some materials and/or resources that she can present at a future meeting.

Recognizing that teachers already have too much on their plates, Ms. Hunt would like to officially document this topic to New/Old Business so that the focus on this subject is on everyone's radar and with the hope that the district

can come up with a plan of action that will allow for incorporation of some of these mindfulness practices into our schools without too much of an additional burden on staff. Ms. Hunt also suggested she could arrange for a future meeting between her acquaintance and Dr. Maestas in an effort to get the ball rolling.

Ms. Truschelli, who works in health and wellness, concurred that this is a welcome, holistic approach that has the potential to benefit students today that are dealing with so many pressures and problems. The science behind meditation and mindfulness is strong in helping students to disconnect and better cope with all the social and emotional issues so many students are dealing with at the present time.

01-28-2019 – Ms. Hunt, noting the recent discussion on Mindfulness, has heard some teachers are utilizing the app CALM in the classroom and wanted to inquire about potential professional development in this area. Dr. Maestas confirmed there is tremendous interest to engage in mindfulness, and many teachers are utilizing or trying various techniques on their own. He said it is difficult to assess and analyze on this topic, and core curriculum takes precedent during professional development and common planning time. A lot of analysis, time and money would be required to get the data on techniques and the ultimate benefits.

06-03-2019 – Dr. Maestas and Dr. Campbell shared that work will continue throughout the summer with hiring and curriculum planning in preparation to roll out the new health programming in the fall. Dr. Maestas indicated that when this topic was first raised, we were not fully aware of how the new health model will incorporate a lot more tools and techniques, including Mindfulness and social-emotional awareness, that will be imbedded into the curriculum. Dr. Maestas is more comfortable about this as it ensures teachers will have the tools and training they need to teach and facilitate these practices, and it will also allow for much more consistency across the district. Mrs. Truschelli said she feels there is a movement in this area and feels there will be much more professional guidance and training going forward but she feels the need to continue monitoring the trends and the science so we can ensure we are supporting our students. Ms. Hunt inquired about the number of social-emotional-related incidents over the past year that drove some of the desire to look into these alternative strategies and techniques to support children. Dr. Maestas reminded the Committee that he has been providing them with more details in his communications related to social-emotional related incidents over the past year or so, and he shared that the numbers are and have been very consistent for many years, and he feels there is no high or immediate concern of a systemic issue in the schools or in Plymouth. Everyone concurred this is an important topic and area and should remain on the Old Business listing.

SY 2019-20:

Item 2020-01.0 – Recycling Better Through Reuse

06-03-2019 – After many years of recycling concerns across the district on the Old/New Business list, Committee members collectively agreed that the old recycling items should be removed from the Old Business list, and there will be a New Business item that will emphasize a goal and initiative of “reusing” as much as possible across the district.

Item 2020-02.0 – Student/Family Engagement and Safety

06-03-2019 – After discussion on the importance of making important connections with students and families, it was agreed this Old Business item will remain on the list but will be renamed (formerly named Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Florida School Shooting). Dr. Maestas indicated strong support and focus on the need for family and student engagement through safety and curriculum forums and programming to promote support and awareness, primarily at the building and grade level, for the best opportunity for meaningful engagement and success.

Item 2020-03.0 – Paycheck Issuance Delays / Town of Plymouth

07-08-2019 – For the third time in recent times, the most recent school department paychecks were not issued by the Town of Plymouth on time. There was approximately an 18-hour delay. Even though the Town of Plymouth has accepted 100% of the responsibility for the delay, the members all agreed to add this item to the Old Business list in order to officially document and go on record regarding the dissatisfaction with errors that are avoidable. All the administrators and many school committee members fielded calls of concern and frustration, and all agreed it is extremely important that this does not occur again. Dr. Maestas said he would relay the message to the Town Manager, and it was acknowledged that Tom Pinto recently went publicly before the Board of Selectmen to express his concerns as well.