

# UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 13, 2023

## Uxbridge High School Library

### School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair	X	
Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice Chair	X	
Mr. Ben Casper, Member		X
Mr. David Shinnick	X	
Mr. Aaron Lenart	X	
Mr. Ed Maharay	X	

### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Desruisseaux called the meeting to order.

### 2. Public Comment

Cassandra Greeno stated that she was concerned that if there is no in-person district representation at meetings where district topics were discussed as part of the agenda, that there might be a negative impact. She wanted to know what the standard was for administration or school committee members attending meetings with school committee topics. She also stated that she felt that if the Committee was not going to evaluate the Superintendent, that because an evaluation was part of his contract, that the Committee should have an agreement to not perform the evaluation put in writing.

Erica King said that, after watching the previous week's meeting, she was wondering if it was possible for the Committee to have executive session at the end of meetings and finish all regular business first. She said that, in regard to the Superintendent evaluation, if he was able to produce the evidence for his goals that had been agreed to previously in the year, she did not feel there was a reason to postpone the evaluation because she believed the Committee was capable of determining whether the evidence hit the mark or not.

### 3. Superintendent Update

Dr. Baldassarre spoke about several of the initiatives he and his administrative team had engaged in throughout the year.

He provided the Committee with a document that he and the department heads created that listed many of the achievements.

After he completed his breakdown, the Committee was asked for questions and/or comments.

Mr. Maharay said that the list was impressive but moving forward he really wanted the superintendent updates to focus on the academics. Dr. Baldassarre said he agreed and that he questioned whether the district was a mission driven organization. He said he believed the administrative team and the school committee needed to do work on a comprehensive strategic plan from which all their work and decisions would emanate to support teaching and learning.

Ms. Liscinsky appreciated the synopsis. She said she felt the Committee should be self-evaluating, which was something she had not seen happen previously and suggested that one of the school committee's goals should be to come up with a mission statement for going forward with the district (in alignment with the superintendent).

Mr. Shinnick said he echoed what Mr. Maharay said about tying things to academic achievement moving forward. He said he would like to get a recommendation from the superintendent on an appropriate time frame for updating the strategic plan.

Mr. Maharay mentioned that the Committee had discussed how they needed to agree on their goals and they could solicit feedback from the Superintendent about whether those goals were good/bad/indifferent. He stated he was a little leery about strategic plans because he had had them before and sometimes they did not work and he was worried about chewing up time that might be better spent dealing with solid data.

Mr. Shinnick stated that he wanted to make sure the district kept their eyes on the Corrective Action plan's expectations. Dr. Dwyer said the district had only one area left to address and that the district had until August 30, 2023 to comply with the corrective actions.

Mr. Lenart asked what the district's relationships were with other districts in terms of seeing and learning what things they were doing. Dr. Dwyer stated she is part of an Assistant Superintendent network that works together and that the district is part of the Blackstone Valley Consortium that works together similarly to trade ideas and professional development.

Dr. Baldassarre shared that this year's launch dates for the new school year will be August 16-18 and said he would send out the information to the Committee so they could attend.

#### **4. Approve IT Job Postings**

*Ms. Liscinsky made a motion that the Committee approve them as mentioned: digital learning team lead and instructional technology coach, the summer IT position, and the digital learning team instructional technology coach. Mr. Lenart seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

#### **5. Ed Davis Contract modification review**

Mr. Desruisseaux shared that he had sent out the modified contract to members of the Committee.

Mr. Desruisseaux shared with the Committee that he had spoken with the Ed Davis Group and that they were fine with making any modifications, but there was an issue with the date. The

person he spoke with said that although June 30 was the original expected completion date, people that did not want to be interviewed previously were now asking to speak and the group was currently setting up interviews that they would have to conduct and then process before they could produce a final report. Because of this, they could not nail down an exact completion date but would be able to have the report 30 days after they conduct the last interview.

Mr. Desruisseaux informed the Committee that he asked the group questions that had been raised by Committee members. He said he asked the Ed Davis Group about their access to student/child information. The group told Mr. Desruisseaux that “the Ed Davis Group does not have nor would ever seek to obtain information or records of a student from any school department.”

He said that the group also said they do not plan to mention any child’s name in their report. In addition they said that some people have spoken and asked for confidentiality. If they use any information from those sources they would redact any identifying information.

*Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to allow “me” to sign the contract for the Ed Davis Group. Mr. Maharay moved the motion. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

## **6. Review and adopt policy updates per MASC**

Dr. Baldassarre stated the Uxbridge School’s policy manual is listed on the MASC website and people can go on and search any policy topic.

He passed out the most recent update from MASC to the Committee. He then gave an overview as an introductory conversation that will lead into future policy removal, policy revision, and policy development work. He said once the policy subcommittee is established all he needs is for the chair of the policy subcommittee to give the administrative team notice as to what policies they would like to have them discuss first.

Mr. Maharay stated that he had read the policy manual. He said that while he appreciated the weight of the policy manual he was a little concerned that the policy manual could take up a lot of time and he wanted to make sure the policy manual examination was done in conjunction with the academic mission, and how it supports that mission. He also said he would love to hear not only from central office, but also principals and teachers in terms of how the policy manual affects their lives and how it can best administer the work they do. He said he would like to hear from the core groups what they believe are the most pressing areas of policy and work on those first.

Mr. Shinnick shared that he thought it might be a good idea to identify the areas within policy where there is consensus that attention is needed and where there are simple changes that might not need a lot of time to deliberate to get them updated. He said it would be great to have some recommendations on those areas.

Ms. Liscinsky said she appreciated how exhausting the work could be since she had previously served on three different policy reviews. She said the work is so critical, particularly for principals, because it serves as the governing document for the district.

## **7. Roles & Goals of the committee and processes**

Mr. Maharay said he has two goals. The first one was more minor and it is to get the issue with the Superintendent behind them. He felt they were headed in the right direction with that. The second is academics and how they can uplift every student who goes through the Uxbridge school system to help them become better educated and more prepared for life.

Mr. Desruisseaux said that he felt that if there were legal questions the Committee might have, that they should ask administration first, and if administration did not have an answer, then the Committee would speak to their attorney.

Ms. Liscinsky said she felt it is very important to have one voice doing the communication so there are not multiple versions or mixed messages happening. She said she would like to have communication emanate through the Chair.

Mr. Shinnick said he agreed with most of what Ms. Liscinsky stated. He did feel however, that in regard to legal counsel, they really need to think about whether they want to adopt a policy that says they "must" address issues through the administration first rather than a recommendation of "may" or "shall." He said he remembered reading guidance that it is the school committee's legal counsel and that it is a separate relationship between a school committee and its legal representation than between a school committee and staff as it pertains to administration.

Ms. Liscinsky said she didn't disagree but she did not think there should be a situation where 7 of the members of the committee might go to legal counsel. She thinks it should only be the Chair. Mr. Shinnick said he agreed with that.

Dr. Baldassarre shared that in regard to the legal bills the district has incurred this past year, there have been multiple people calling the attorney with questions that could have been answered by the administration and the bill has been higher than it needed to be. He thinks it is important that there is a protocol that is followed on how the legal budget money is spent.

Mr. Maharay suggested the Committee revisit the guidance given about the role of the Chair and potentially use that as a template to help address these areas.

Ms. Liscinsky shared that in her past district, the board used to have a summer workshop with an agenda to help set them up for the upcoming year.

Mr. Maharay said they needed to address the area of the superintendent's evaluation since the contract clearly states an evaluation needs to be done. Dr. Baldassarre said the information he presented in his update can be the first part of that. He said evidence can be easily supplied and he was happy to do that.

## **8. Appoint policy sub committee**

*Mr. Shinnick made a motion to appoint Mr. Casper to the subcommittee. Mr. Desruisseaux seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

*Mr. Maharay made a motion to suggest Ms. Liscinsky to the subcommittee. Mr. Desruisseaux seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

## **9. Academic Achievement sub committee**

Mr. Maharay said he felt that academics should be discussed at the full committee level because of its importance. Mr. Desruisseaux said he thought a subcommittee could be valuable so that a smaller group could work through some of the information to prepare for conversations at the full committee level. Mr. Maharay said he would prefer that the Committee have several full committee conversations at an in-depth level, decide what needs to be done, and then go from there.

The Committee decided to postpone creating this subcommittee.

At the next meeting, Dr. Dwyer will present the strategies the district is currently using and how they will be implemented in the upcoming school year.

## **10. Appoint facility sub committee**

*Mr. Shinnick made a motion to appoint Mr. Desruisseaux. Mr. Maharay seconded the motion. Mr. Maharay made a motion to appoint Mr. Lenart. Mr. Shinnick seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

*\*\*\*Mr. Maharay made a motion the Committee add the budget subcommittee to the agenda. Mr. Shinnick seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

## **11. Appoint Budget subcommittee (new agenda item)**

*Mr. Desruisseaux made a motion to appoint Mr. Maharay. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. The Committee voted 4-0-1 in favor of the motion. Mr. Maharay abstained. The motion passed.*

*Mr. Maharay made a motion to nominate Mr. Shinnick. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

## **12. New business**

Mr. Desruisseaux suggested that at the next meeting the Committee discuss the superintendent's evaluation and its process. Mr. Maharay said they should discuss how to evaluate the superintendent for this current year and then discuss what the goals are in terms of moving forward. Mr. Shinnick said a self-assessment would be instructive for how to go forward next year.

The field lights installation has begun.

Mr. Maharay requested they work on a meeting schedule and agenda setting. He also requested a year-end financial update.

Mr. Aicardi said he would prefer to meet in early July for the update. He said that he is going to need the Committee's authorization to help balance the books and they are going to need outside funding allocations.

The Committee scheduled meetings for June 21, June 22 (joint meeting with the BOS for appointment, June 27 and July 11.

### **13. Old Business**

No old business

### **14. Approve Minutes**

*Ms. Liscinsky made a motion that they approve the minutes of April 26, 2023, May 30, 2023, May 31, 2023, and June 6, 2023. Mr. Shinnick seconded the motion. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

### **15. Executive Session**

*Mr. Desruisseaux entertained a motion to enter into executive session by roll call vote to: discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; UTA Contract Negotiations Unit A and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel--with no business to follow.*

Mr. Shinnick asked if it was possible to state the subjects for which the executive session is being called without compromising the discussions. He stated he felt the descriptions were ambiguous. Mr. Desruisseaux said that was how he was instructed to write it but he could ask if they could share more information in the future. Mr. Maharay said he believed they should find out.

*Mr. Maharay moved the motion. Ms. Liscinsky seconded the motion. By roll call vote: Ms. Liscinsky: Yes, Mr. Lenart: YES, Mr. Maharay: Yes, Mr. Shinnick: YES; Mr. Desruisseaux, YES. The Committee voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The motion passed.*

The Committee entered executive session at approximately 8:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Stark

Uxbridge School Committee Recording Secretary

**School Committee Members:**

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*Barry Desruisseaux*

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**Mr. Barry Desruisseaux, Chair**

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*C. Edw. Mahary*

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**Mr. Ed Maharay, Clerk**

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*Benjamin Casper*

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**Mr. Ben Casper, Member**

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*Arlene Liscinsky*

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**Ms. Arlene Liscinsky, Vice-Chair**

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*David Shinnick*

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**Mr. David Shinnick, Member**

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*Aaron Lenart*

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**Mr. Aaron Lenart, Member**