

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

PRESENT: MAYOR MITCHELL, DR. FINNERTY, DR. FLETCHER,
MR. LIVRAMENTO, MR. NOBREGA, MR. OLIVEIRA, MS. POLLOCK

ABSENT: NONE

IN ATTENDANCE: DR. DURKIN, MRS. DUNAWAY

The Special Meeting was called to review the MCAS 2013 Achievement Results

Dr. Durkin presented the recently announced 2013 MCAS results. (Attached)

Due to New Bedford High School not improving as much as it should, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has declared the school underperforming and it has received a Level 4 designation.

Dr. Durkin stated that not only have the scores not significantly improved, but the current graduation rate and dropout rate are unacceptable.

She said the school and district will strive to decrease the percentage of students in warning/failing status by 40% and at the high school, strive to not lose as many students by increasing the number of students who remain enrolled by 20%. Recently, approximately 300 students did not continue on after grade 9.

Regarding the John A. Parker School, currently at Level 4 designation, the DESE may make a determination to declare it Level 5. Dr. Durkin explained that after three years, there have been no appreciable results. She also stated that the school is already being transformed by a new principal, extended day, new curriculum, professional development and 50% of the staff is new to the school.

To determine the future of New Bedford High School, a Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) will be put in place with members from the high school, community, School Committee, parent groups and administrative staff. The function of the LSG will be to make recommendations to the Superintendent and then to the School Committee as to what plan should be used to respond to the Level 4 designation.

The possible recommendations are: Closure, Re-start, Transformation or Turnaround

A redesign team will be put into place and New Bedford Public Schools will compete with other Level 4 schools for grant funding. The plan will be presented to the DESE in May of 2014.

Dr. Durkin went on to comment that time, energy and fiscal resources will be needed and we have to believe we can be successful.

Mayor Mitchell conceded that it was difficult to hear the news about New Bedford High School and Parker School but stated that he was confident that the Superintendent, as administrator and leader, could bring the High School back to the flagship school it has been in the city and state. Mayor Mitchell went on to state that Dr. Durkin has a proven track record in turning things around as she has done it before. He encouraged everyone, including the School Committee, to embrace her ability to recognize needs and to step out of the comfort zone to support students, staff and Superintendent.

To several questions asked by Committee members, Dr. Durkin answered that teaching and learning specialists will be part of the plan for the high school along with encouraging teacher leaders to share knowledge and ideas with colleagues as part of ongoing professional development.

Early warning signs of potential failure will be observed, APEX learning utilized and capital investments such as WiFi and state of the art technology will be sought after.

Dr. Durkin questioned why many students/parents are choosing the Vocational High School given the fact that NBHS may be a better pathway to top colleges and universities and will explore further when speaking with members the community.

Mayor Mitchell allowed a question from the audience. Pamela Oliveira, teacher at New Bedford High School, asked Dr. Durkin if the Level 4 designation would hurt students when applying for college admission. Dr. Durkin said it would not hurt students seeking admission into any college or university. The High School remains very competitive.

In a separate issue, Mayor Mitchell stated to the Committee that a member had to be appointed to work on the Superintendent evaluation process with the Superintendent.

Voted UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mr. Oliveira to appoint Dr. Finnerty to work on the Superintendent evaluation process.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mayor Mitchell – Yes	Dr. Fletcher – Yes
Ms. Pollock – Yes	Mr. Livramento - Yes
Mr. Nobrega – Yes	Dr. Finnerty – Yes
Mr. Oliveira - Yes	

7 – Yeas 0 – Nays 0 – Absent

At 5:46 P.M., on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mr. Oliveira, the Committee voted to adjourn the Special Meeting.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mayor Mitchell – Yes

Ms. Pollock – Yes

Mr. Nobrega – Yes

Mr. Oliveira – Yes

Dr. Fletcher – Yes

Mr. Livramento – Yes

Dr. Finnerty – Yes

7 – Yeas

0 – Nays

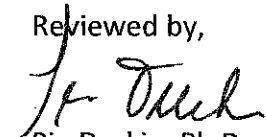
0 – Absent

Respectfully Submitted,



Lisa P. Dunaway
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by,



Pia Durkin, Ph.D.
Superintendent,
Secretary/School Committee

/lpd

