

**Richmond Consolidated School  
School Committee  
1831 State Road, Richmond, MA 01254  
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 6:30pm – RCS Cafeteria

Approved as amended on 1/14/2020

Attendees: Susan Benner, Adeline Ellis, Dewey Wyatt, Michelle Smith, Beth Smith, Eric Smith, Doug , Cristine Lenfest, Jenevra Strock, Neal Pilson. Lauren Broussal

Call to order: 6:30pm.

The School Committee held this Community Dialogue Session to communicate what is going on relative to the Shared Superintendency and future plans.

A handout including Background information, possible scenarios, and next steps was provided (attached).

The School Committee voted to form an Advisory Committee with the objective of assessing the operational and financial aspects of the shared Superintendency needed, and that will meet the needs of the Richmond Students and Town of Richmond. Members will be parents, teachers, community, Finance Committee, Select Board. Motion by DW, seconded by SB, all in favor.

NP says this appears very complex and a professional negotiator might be needed. Maybe a retired Superintendent or someone who is familiar with school administration and leadership.

ES asked what the advantage would be for Richmond joining the BHRSD at the high school level, relative to the 15 or so students. Why are they interested unless there is expectation there will be significant financial addition from Richmond taxpayers. The State funding for a new high school will be a factor.

CL says she is concerned about how busy the Principal is, how complex her day can become, and how often she gets pulled in different directions based on student, family, staff needs. CL is concerned about the availability fo the Superintendent to support the Principal.

DW explained that it is not the expectation a Superintendent is within the building, or always available to manage the hour by hour events within the building during the school day. The Superintendent should work with the Principal to understand if staffing

Adjournment 8:10pm: Motion DW, second SB

## RICHMOND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL – Discussion around the future Superintendency

### Background Information:

- Richmond (RCS) is part of Shaker Mountain School Union #70 (SMSU), since 2007.
- The school union, with Hancock and New Ashford, has had a shared services agreement with Berkshire Hills Regional School District (BHRSD) since 2016.
- SMSU previously served by (4) different part time (retired) Superintendents.
- Richmond portion of the SMSU has been ~70%, based on student numbers, Richmond funding portion approximately of \$115K.
- The SMSU#70 and BHRSD agreement has been extend beyond the initial 2 year period.
- BHRSD has communicated that they do not wish to continue with the current (3) towns arrangement as they need more of Dr. Dillon's time.
- RCS School Committee is interested in continuing a an updated scenario with BHRSD.

### Challenges:

- Overall shrinking student population, increasing costs.
- Greater challenges providing full, balance programs, meeting ALL student needs.
- Increasing state reporting requirements.
- Ever changing public educational leadership within Berkshire County. Limited pool of part time (usually retired) Superintendents.
- Needs of each of SMSU#70 town needs to be met (separation of a town, or dissolutions needs majority vote).
- Understanding the path and specific steps for any scenario.
- Time.

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The Superintendent will be responsible for, directly or through support staff, the following:

- Along with the individual School Committees for the three Union towns, develop the budgets for each fiscal year and help present them to the respective Town officials. Be responsible for the monthly expenditure reports.
- Serve as the Union #70 Business Administrator, overseeing all fiscal matters for the districts, including budgets, warrants, and payrolls.
- Supervise and evaluate the building Principals at Richmond Consolidated School and Hancock Central School.
- Supervise and evaluate the Special Education Director, Homeless/ELL/Home School Coordinator, and the Administrative Assistant for Union #70.
- Negotiate transportation contracts for Union #70.
- Serve as Union #70 Grants Coordinator; includes researching and writing grant applications.
- Represent Union #70 as a member of the Berkshire County Superintendents Round Table and in State Education organizations such as the MASC, DESC.
- Assist the Town School Committees in negotiating contracts with professional union representatives.
- Act as the agent for the Town School Committees in grievance procedures.
- Represent, along with the three Town School Committees, the educational interests in interactions with Town officials, personnel, and the respective communities.
- Negotiate and monitor tuition and transportation agreements with area school districts.
- Serve as Procurement Officer for Hancock and Richmond schools.
- Notify individual School Committees of updates and changes in laws and policies.
- Work with School Principals on issues that may come up, as requested.
- Attend all School Committee meetings, budget hearings, Union Committee meetings.
- Assist the School Committees in presenting the Budget at Town Meetings and attend all other relevant town meetings.
- Pursue and promote collaborative projects with other Berkshire County school districts.
- Support innovation and technological advancements that encourage students and staff to adapt to a rapidly-evolving world, and pursue public and especially private funding sources that help equip the Union with up-to-date technology.
- Prepare annual Superintendent's Report for the respective Town Reports.
- Draft new policies as needed and keep policy manuals up to date for the three districts.
- Help School Committee members find creative solutions to the problem of a declining school-aged population that will enable the Union schools to remain viable in decades to come.

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#### RCS School Committee Focus Points:

Autonomy for RCS K-8, cost effective agreements with full opportunities for Richmond high school students.  
Sustainable arrangement.  
Effective leadership and services for RCS.  
New opportunities sustaining cost effective high performing educational programs.  
Have a known and visible Superintendent.  
Consistency, minimal disruption.

#### Possible Scenarios:

Revert back to the previous part time Superintendent arrangement.  
Challenges: Available viable professionals, cost effectiveness, availability of other functions (ie, business manager)  
Join BHRSD as a shared services K-8, regional at the high school level.  
Challenges: Securing a contract to deliver services for a high performing school, financial implications. Other two towns form an agreement with a district geographically located to north, or hiring part time services. Timing.  
Join another district:  
Challenges: willing partner, logistics, geographical factors.

#### NEXT STEPS:

- SMSU assessing needs and specific details for scenarios.
- Meeting with Director of Massachusetts of School Committees (MASC) and legal counsel being scheduled for facilitation and detailed action planning.
- Richmond School Committee to form an Advisory Committee (reporting to the School Committee) to assess operational and financial aspects, support for any negotiations, contract setting.

#### QUESTIONS, DISCUSSION