

## BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT MINUTES

REMOTE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

DATE: October 7, 2021  
TIME: 2:55 PM

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway, Chair  
Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Secretary  
Ms. Kate Bowen  
Mr. Mike Crowley  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich joined at 4:33 pm and left the meeting at 6:11 pm  
Mr. Jamal Saeh  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent listened to the first hour of the SC conversation

Chair Amy Checkoway called meeting to order at 4:11 pm

1. **Introductions** - Each SC member said something about their backgrounds and reasons for running for Belmont School Committee.

2. **Norms and Protocols** - Chair Checkoway suggested the group write a Norms and Operating Protocols document for the Belmont School Committee to help SC members and future members as well as the community understand the boundaries that the SC may operate within. Current language for such a document is available through the MASC and other districts.

SC members were in favor of writing such a document while being aware that they have other, time consuming responsibilities. Kate explained this document will help expedite responses and how we move forward, likely saving time down the road. The decision was made that the Policy Subcommittee will take on this work in their meetings.

3. **Focus Areas and Priorities** - Chair Checkoway asked members for a list of focus areas and priorities for the coming year. The list that was generated in no particular order was: 1. Keeping school as normal as possible, 2. Oversight and handling of the budget, 3. Negotiations, 4. Communications and community engagement, 5. Strategic planning and visioning. 6. Equity

Upon further discussion of each point, the group came to consensus that building capacity (e.g., hiring consultants to provide additional capacity this year) for the finance/budget and communication needs of the district is a priority. Amy will get in touch with the new communications consultant to ask about the possibility of scope expansion (i.e. assessing the overall communications protocols including the website and communications with the out to the school community).

Amy will also contact MASC to try to schedule a staff person to facilitate a working session with Belmont SC in order to: a. inform Superintendent evaluation goals and priorities for the coming year, b. identify if our policy manual is in line with equity standards.

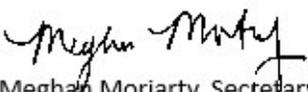
The SC agreed that further discussion about negotiation strategy and organization would take place in a future executive session to be scheduled by Amy.

The SC discussed potentially making student SEL assessment a priority this year, including whether ARP money can be used for implementation and/or hiring expertise to advise on this work. Amy will follow up on this topic with the SD and SC at a future meeting

Jamal and Kate provided highlights from the MASC Webinar: *Critical Race Theory*, which focused on community communication, First Amendment rights, and Open Meeting Law (OML) requests. Kate proposed that the SC look at policy 1006P: Public Participation at SC Meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm by Amy Checkoway

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Meghan Moriarty, Secretary