

UXBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
JANUARY 20, 2015
UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

School Committee Members in Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Michelle Taparausky, Chair	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Jane Keegan, Vice Chair	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Sean Dugan, Secretary	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Eileen Gorman, Member	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Melanie King, Member	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Charlene Miller, Member	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Debbie Stark, Member	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>

1. Call to Order-

Michelle Taparausky, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. Public Comment

Peter Demers asked if there could be a discussion of the impact of the teacher's contract to the FY15 budget. Ms. Taparausky stated that it would be discussed later on in the meeting.

3. Superintendent's Contract- Renewal Negotiation

Melanie King respectfully requested more time to review the documents that were given to the Committee, as she felt the decision was being rushed, and she takes her position very seriously.

Deb Stark echoed Ms. King's comments and added that she was ready to vote, but that she felt it was unfair for a vote to come forward when not all members were ready. She also stated that she believed an additional month's worth of time would not make a difference.

Ms. Taparausky stated that she appreciated the request, but she felt that a vote had to be taken at the meeting because it is a lengthy process to find a new superintendent.

Eileen Gorman moved that the Committee enter into contract negotiations with Superintendent Kevin Carney. Sean Dugan seconded the motion. The Committee voted in favor of said motion 6-1-0. MOTION PASSED.

4. Uxbridge Teacher's Association- Unit A Contract Approval 7/1/2014-6/30/2017

Ms. Taparasky reported that the Committee has the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), but the full contract is not ready to be signed yet. She provided a summary of the MOA as it related to salary increases and the effect on the budget. She also discussed modifications to some of the language used in the contract.

Don Sawyer, School Business Manager, added that the contract would have no impact on the FY15 budget because the administration knew that the contract was coming, so the budget was prepared to accommodate that. He stated that there would be no retroactive pay, and that the increases would take effect in early February.

5. UHS Out of State Trip- Jay's Peak Vermont

Sarah Gaudet stated that they were seeking a trip over February break to Jay's Peak Vermont to ski. She stated that it would be a one night trip, leaving February 17th and coming back the following day. Ms. Gaudet noted that numbers will fluctuate based on solid numbers of people attending, but that the cost would be around \$225 per person, and that was inclusive of all costs.

Eileen Gorman asked how many chaperones there would be. Ms. Gaudet stated that it would change based on participation, but that it would be around 1 per 10 students.

Jane Keegan moved that the Committee waive their requirement of being notified more than 30 days prior to a trip and allow UHS students to stay overnight for the trip to Jay's Peak Vermont from February 17th to the 18th. Sean Dugan seconded the motion. The Committee voted in favor of said motion 7-0-0. MOTION PASSED.

6. Global Competency Task Force

Jay Cahill provided a presentation on the progress being made in the newly formed Global Competency Task Force, which has the mission of finding ways for students to be better prepared to face a global economy once graduating from the district. He discussed interactions with other districts in the state that have similar programs. Mr. Cahill proposed the adoption of a global competency program, which would encompass being accepted and needing to earn credit by doing approved activities that would improve global competency, with the end goal of receiving a certificate at graduation, which would be attractive to colleges and could be added to a resume.

Charlene Miller asked if the Cambridge Institute was connected to this program. Mr. Cahill responded that they were not.

Jane Keegan discussed how the program would fit into the district's vision for the future and how it would enhance student's cultural intelligence.

Ms. Miller stated that she is fully supportive of the work of the Task Force, but she wanted to make sure it didn't take away from what the students are currently offered at the high school. She expressed concerns with the current lack of offerings in history and foreign language.

Ms. Keegan noted that with further growth, there would be reallocation of resources to accommodate the changes.

Mr. Cahill stated that he could make another report at the April meeting.

The Committee thanked Mr. Cahill for his presentation and participation.

7. UHS/MMA Grading Procedure update.

McCloskey Middle School Principal Rich Drolet and Uxbridge High School Principal Tara Bennett provided a presentation on the grading reforms that were made at the two schools.

Dr. Drolet discussed his school's re-do/re-take policy and provided grade by grade data on it. Ms. Bennett discussed the same for the high school level.

Ms. Stark asked how consistency would be handled from teacher to teacher. Dr. Drolet responded that it requires constant monitoring. She also asked what the impact of the 10% homework policy was. Dr. Drolet stated that he didn't have feedback on that yet. Ms. Bennett responded that she's hearing that those who don't do their homework are still not doing their homework, but that it was an ongoing conversation, and that she was confident staff were following through on their end.

Ms. Miller stated that she was especially concerned with the number of students who were reportedly not completing their assignments within the higher-leveled courses, yet were still allowed to retake tests in order to bolster their cumulative average. Her concern is that this policy sends the wrong message to students and stands behind her original concerns as stated in August.

Ms. Taparausky asked for clarification on assignments that were done at home and how some were considered homework and others were higher. Amy Marshall responded that it depended on the level of effort that was necessary for the given assignment.

Ms. Taparausky, along with other Committee members, felt that the 80% standard for retaking a test was too high.

Dr. Drolet added that the reforms were put in place to encourage students so that they gain mastery of the material.

8. Vote to accept School Choice Students in SY15-16

Superintendent Kevin Carney discussed the need to vote on allowing students to school choice in to the district. He recommended that some sort of a cap be put on for next year's grade 7, as they were currently at capacity.

Ms. King asked about the financial impact of the students coming in. Mr. Carney stated that sending districts are capped at giving \$5,000 per student and that any additional costs that were above and beyond were the responsibility of the sending district.

Ms. Keegan asked if the district was currently in a situation where school choice students were costing more than the \$5,000. Mr. Carney stated that they were, but the appropriate districts are billed.

Ms. Taparausky asked if school choice could be shut off at any point if necessary. Mr. Sawyer said yes, the Committee has the authority to do so.

Charlene Miller moved that the Committee accept school choice in students based on building and grade enrollment and the district's ability to accommodate them for the 2015-2016 school year. Sean Dugan seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0 in favor of said motion. MOTION PASSED.

9. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Carney discussed his administration's needs in terms of Committee action in the coming weeks. He also provided an update on his goals. Mr. Carney also provided an update on enrollment and discussed school choice revenue.

Ms. Stark asked for clarification on the contract with the Cambridge Institute. Mr. Carney stated that they needed to provide a 90 day notice before terminating their contract.

Ms. King asked why an International Revolving Account needed Town Meeting Approval. Mr. Sawyer responded that the vote by the Committee was the preliminary step, but Town Meeting approval was the final step.

Ms. Miller asked if the Committee could influence specific program of studies. Mr. Carney stated that he needed to do more research on the matter.

10. Old/New Business

Ms. King noted that two policies related to the approval of warrants needed to be discussed. She also stated that Tri-County transportation should be a Town of Uxbridge cost, not a school expense. She also requested the spreadsheets for athletics.

Sean Dugan provided an update on the activity at Whitin Elementary School. He stated that there were issues at the building with regards to the cleaning service. He also stated

that 5th graders were going to publish their first student newspaper called Warrior News. Ms. King requested that the Committee receive a copy of the first edition.

11. School Committee Minutes – January 6, 2015

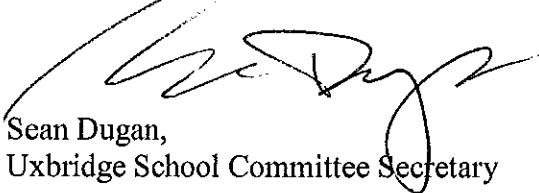
Eileen Gorman moved that the Committee accept the minutes of the January 6, 2015 School Committee meeting. Sean Dugan seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0 in favor of said motion. MOTION PASSED.

12. Executive Session - Open Contracts and Minutes for January 6, 2015

Sean Dugan moved that the Committee adjourn. The Committee, by roll call vote, adjourned the open session meeting and entered into executive session at 9:45pm.

Michelle Taparausky-YES, Sean Dugan-YES, Charlene Miller-YES, Deb Stark-YES, Melanie King-YES, Eileen Gorman-YES, Jane Keegan-YES.

Respectfully submitted,

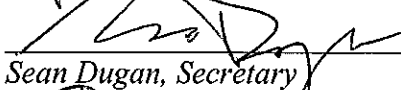


Sean Dugan,
Uxbridge School Committee Secretary

School Committee Members:



Michelle Taparausky, Chair



Sean Dugan, Secretary




Melanie King, Member



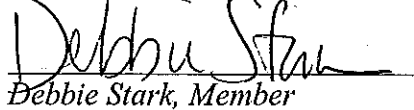
Charlene Miller, Member



Jane Keegan, Vice Chair



Eileen Gorman, Member



Debbie Stark, Member

Report on the Global Competency Task Force

I am pleased to give this report on behalf of a group of local educators, local business people, and legislators appointed by the Superintendent to study the feasibility of engaging in a partnership with a Chinese high school to exchange students for educational and cultural purposes to foster, what in education fields is being called, 'global competency'. This 'big picture' report describes the work done thus far by this Task Force. Repeating the District Vision Statement may help put our charge in proper perspective:

The Uxbridge Public Schools will provide a learning environment that is intellectually and creatively stimulating for students to enhance critical thinking skills, collaborative problem solving skills and leadership skills that will prepare students to meet the challenges of their adult lives.

This statement was crafted by school leaders, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders and accepted by the SC in 2013. Currently, hoping to take advantage of a unique opportunity presented by China last spring and wanting to move Uxbridge towards achieving the next level in its educational evolution broadly explains why such a task force exists.

The phrase "No man is an island" still rings true! However, the 'creatively stimulating' part of our 'vision' is not a simple 'exchange' of students and travel opportunities. Although that has proven value, this goal runs deeper! As the world continues to shrink due to technology advances, our students must build a foundation for, and then strengthen, what is being termed 'cultural intelligence'. This is achieved in an internal/external process encompassing the classroom and outside world. This is **in addition** to mastering other skills needed to succeed in an increasingly inter-connected, complex world. Keep in mind that China is not the only foreign country with which our students will need to 'connect'. For example, statistics show about 60% of our US population will be Spanish-speaking by 2055, and yet Uxbridge does not start teaching that language until 9th grade. This is unacceptable if we are to progress more completely as a district.

Another term in education is 'cultural intelligence'- what does it actually mean and how is it achieved? By offering learning opportunities for our students to acquire a better understanding of how our domestic civics and way of life 'connects' with other cultures in the classroom here and around the globe, 'cultural intelligence' produces 'global competency'. Words like 'connection', 'collaboration' and 'understanding' are keys unlocking doors to international business opportunities in this century. So if this 'metamorphosis' does not happen locally, at some point we must ask if our students are not hobbled significantly as they move on to college or, sooner or later, into the workforce. Therefore, the Task Force is being pro-active in examining the benefits of exposure to the teaching and learning of 'cultural intelligence'. As a community, we must remain open-minded to the idea so our graduates are not consigned to lesser positions in a world-wide, super- competitive job market.

As Mr. Cahill reported, Marlborough took two years to develop their program on Global Competency. Today, no one is asking you to dive in at the deep end of the swimming pool, but it is imperative we 'get wet'! As more information is gathered and direction given vis-a-vis support from community, education and business leaders, these educational opportunities will be developed in conjunction with the Cambridge Institute in Waltham. Simply put, foreign students will study here for 2 to 3 weeks, and 6 months or longer. While our own high school students will have the opportunity to do the same, their stays overseas are envisioned on a more short term basis, at least initially.

The Task Force recognizes this initiative can only move as fast as there is enthusiastic 'buy-in' from parents, students, teachers, business leaders and SC. Most importantly, a willingness of all to participate in the detail work yet to be undertaken is critical. Meanwhile, this body should examine our responsibility to our students from two perspectives: always first, to educate them to increasingly rigorous standards; second, to provide an array of broader experiences that makes them more 'distinctive' to institutions of higher education and 'marketable' to the global work-world.

Let us consider the ramifications of three huge challenges facing the world today:

- #1. The **digital revolution** has blurred economic borders;
- #2. **Mass migration** is 'diversifying' many nations, not just the US, to the point where national 'identities' are blurred as well. Ironically, if all migrants were counted as one country, their population would be exceeded only by China, India and the US;
- #3. **Climate instability** is one major cause for #2, and no surface on land or sea escapes its multiple, adverse effects.

... so back to our 'vision' of arming children with skills to answer such challenges in their adult lives. We must start thinking in terms of **actually developing a new kind of graduate** who is prepared. Business leaders recognize that as the calendar turns deeper into the 21st century, China and other countries in the 'developing' world will play ever larger roles on the American economic stage. Those in professional 'education' and interested parties, such as parents, must recognize a need to be pro-active. Acquiring that 'cultural intelligence' achieves the 'global competency' the next generation of US students will need to meet the demands of a global economy on an equal, if not superior, footing. While China is the most aggressive in wanting educational partnerships today, we must appreciate this initiative is not exclusive to the Far East; other countries want the same chances.

If the China Initiative moves forward, it will allow a framework for expanding student/community relationships with other nations that pays future dividends. Whether acknowledged or not, 'cultural intelligence' is becoming an integral commodity in today's global marketplace, equally as important and valuable as strong knowledge of the 3Rs. Concerns are frequently voiced about how Uxbridge fares compared to other districts. This marks an opportunity to be first in the Blackstone Valley to establish far-ranging international partnerships.

At no expense to taxpayers, our Superintendent went to China last spring to open dialogue on this subject. On a reciprocal visit in November, the principal of the school with which Uxbridge is considering partnering was part of a Chinese delegation 'shadowing' our high school and Milford's. Well-covered in the press at the time, Mr. Shang made 'presentations' to community leaders, Task Force, and UHS teachers and students. We already have some Chinese students enrolled, and our students' initial response has been overwhelmingly positive. This is an indication of the potential for successful implementation of a global education outreach program which we will need to make a two-way street, perhaps in the next school year.

To put the 'China Initiative' in perspective, I understand Shijizhuang, our potential partner-city, has more citizens living within its borders than the entire population of the Commonwealth- a mind-blowing statistic! The Task Force is certainly not advocating opening UHS doors to Chinese multitudes, however Mr. Shang, Principal of School #24, rated #3 among his city's scores of high schools, made a generous offer during his visit. He conveyed the following information:

1. A brand new high school complex includes 126 classrooms designed to be multi-purpose to accommodate the teaching styles/methods of educators world-wide;
2. A 'hotel' on campus provides foreign visitors with food and modern lodging;
3. The program is first and foremost 'educational' and allows students and teachers to engage in the home school's curriculum while still experiencing the differences of Chinese education;
4. Part of the 'school day' includes engaging in joint classes, sports and 'arts' activities with Chinese students;
5. The exchange program includes opportunities for intimate learning about the Chinese cultural by visiting in private homes;
6. The program allows teachers to compare and contrast pedagogy or methodology in China (or any other country) that results in improvements to their own teaching style at home;
7. With approval and a 'budget' from the Chinese government, our host has offered to subsidize the cost of living and sight-seeing expense which makes the experience more affordable to those interested parties... and this includes family members, not just teachers and students.

Interesting to note that as a mark of his high 'status' within the Chinese government, Mr. Shang recently organized and hosted a conference on education reform for more than 1000 colleagues.

A book, *Education for Global Competency: Preparing Our Youth To Engage The World*, is recommended reading for those interested in acquiring an appreciation of why the Task Force considers the following are some of the benefits of such an educational exchange program, applicable anywhere not just China:

1. In an overarching view of an increasingly globalized economy, it makes sense to 'know your neighbor' culturally so the wheels of business run smoothly;

2. It gives local students a broader world-vision so they are adequately prepared to 'compete' in the world marketplace someday;
3. In the broadest financial view, a break-even scenario is envisioned with any extra tuition funds generated helping to develop new interdisciplinary courses to be created by our own teaching staff. In a real sense this aims at a fiscally responsible way to improve district programming which is a win/win for students **and** taxpayers;
4. New money derived from the program and/or fundraising can be 'banked' until it is determined how best to re-allocate revenue in a strapped school department budget. For example, (if the program is successful) strengthening the foreign language program in UHS is envisioned along with re-introducing Spanish in the middle grades, and starting Mandarin on a 'club' level from middle grades up, all without necessity to increase spending. This is all part and parcel of expanding 'cultural intelligence' efforts which supports the 'vision' as adopted by the SC in 2013 to produce district-wide improvements;
5. In the very long-term Uxbridge (hopefully) will be involved in a wide-ranging "Global Competency" program that offers a 'certificate' which can be earned by participating students who host a foreign student, enroll in a foreign language course for four years, complete independent study about other cultures beyond required courses, travel abroad, or pursue other international study efforts. (Recently, a science and math teacher joined the Task Force with an assignment to explore the specifics of such a program in middle and high school grades.)

Mr. Cahill's report on the meeting with Marlborough staff described their experiences since embarking on this journey. Their reality may be some time in coming to Uxbridge, but if nothing else, the take-away message for SC and community is: we should not fear the journey. We are far from arriving at any particular destination but investigation and careful consideration has begun. As a community we must acknowledge the unprecedented confluence of factors with which we and future generations must deal. Keeping in mind just the three far-reaching problems mentioned previously, the Task Force will make future reports that likely encourage the SC and town to embrace the "China Initiative" and "Global Competency". Stay tuned on this subject...

In conclusion, one comment about 'education' in general: John Dewey's life spanned 1859 to 1952 which, interestingly enough, he 'reimagined' the way that learning process should take place included the cataclysmic changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution **and** the 'Modern Age' of the 20th c. As a philosopher who applied his concepts to education, he 'reimagined' the way that learning process should take place for teachers to actually deliver a subject's content **successfully** to enquiring young minds. Like Dewey fifty years later, we must acknowledge being in the midst of another 'revolution' or, at least, 'evolution' in education today.

If our 'vision' for successful improvements in the Uxbridge School District is to be commensurate with 21st c. realities, it will require eventual action by the SC. However for now, this merely serves as an 'information sharing' report. More conversations will occur before the Task Force can answer questions or offer official recommendations.

Thanks for your attention during this lengthy report. Hopefully, its comprehensiveness provides the SC and the listening public with an accurate 'big picture' account of the Task Force aims and efforts to date.

Again, stay tuned for more progress reports...

Jane F. Keegan