

**Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee
Community Resource for Education (CoRE)
January 10, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.
Media Center
Blackstone-Millville Regional High School
175 Lincoln Street
Blackstone, MA 01504**

At 7:00 p.m. the CoRE meeting was called to order.

At 7:05 p.m. a tour was taken to identify capital needs areas for the high school with principal, Richard Porter.

Mr. Porter stated that the building is 38 years old and in need of repair. He stated that the current heating units are worn. These units could eventually freeze and break and rooms could be shut down. It could cost as much as \$500 per valve times 40 classrooms to make these repairs. Mr. Porter stated that the A & C wings need repairs since the hallways stay at 50 degrees most of the time. He also stated that the two main boilers have many tubes inside. If any of these tubes break it will cost approximately \$1,000 per tube to repair.

Mr. Porter stated that many of the windows in the building are not efficient and may need replacing. Circuit breakers may need replacing and the electrical wiring needs revamping.

Mr. Porter stated that at a recent fire drill the all purpose room did not hear the alarm. It was determined that the unit near the classroom was not working properly. This problem has been addressed and repairs will need to be made.

Mr. Porter discussed the asbestos issue on the 1st floor of the building. The air quality has been checked and monitored and has not tested positive for asbestos.

Mr. Porter also stated that a handicapped bathroom will be added to the building at a cost of \$75,000. This bathroom will be used by the Life Skills Classroom which will be moving to the high school from the middle school next year.

Dr. Levine mentioned that providing these students with a classroom and program at the high school will save the school approximately 3.5 million dollars since these students will not be bused and will not attend school at out of district placements.

Mr. Porter also mentioned a water leak at the high school where 24 wheels need to be repaired. He also stated that the building is not NEASC compliant. In order to become compliant, all the door handles would need to be replaced with lever handles at a cost of \$300 each.

Mr. Porter stated that the loading dock is crumbling and will need to be replaced. They will go out to bid for this project which will cost approximately \$30,000.

Mr. Porter stated that in order for any student in a wheel chair to reach the cafeteria and auditorium they must go outside of the building and use the courtyard. Anyone in a wheelchair does not have access to the all purpose room in the basement. He has been researching the placement of a three stop elevator which would give anyone in a wheelchair access to the cafeteria and the all purpose room at approximately \$300,000. This would go out to bid.

Mr. Porter feels that the girls' locker room is in need of updating; the gym roof has been patched repeatedly and will eventually need to be replaced.

Mrs. Harvey asked Mr. Porter to prioritize his list of updates needed at the high school and to place it on the School Committee meeting website for concerned citizens in the community to see.

The meeting was moved from the classroom area back into the Media Center.

Dr. Levine stated that the life of a school is approximately 40-50 years. At some point many items in a building need repair. This becomes very costly. At some point a school district will need to decide if they should make major renovations to a building or tear it down and build another.

Dr. Levine mentioned that there is room on the current lot to put up a new building. The state reimbursement formula has changed. You are no longer getting anywhere near the reimbursement amount that you were getting 10 years ago. Blackstone would probably see a 50-60% reimbursement at this time. If you decide to completely renovate a building this could be very costly. You also need to take into account your handicap compliance issues.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the district would completely research all of their options thoroughly before reaching any decisions.

Dr. Levine discussed his proposed budget items for FY08-09. He is proposing a new reading program for the elementary levels. He believes that the current program does not engage our students very well. He stated that the current reading scores are flat. Our students should be performing much better on standardized tests. The Millville Elementary School has not met the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) for 3 years. The cost for the new reading series for the JFK/AFM and MES Schools would be about \$175,000. They are currently researching the different reading programs available to the district. Sue Cullen, Curriculum Facilitator, will research this area and join in with teachers to make a recommendation.

The second proposal Dr. Levine will make for FY08-09 is an all day kindergarten program. This program would not be optional, meaning that parents would not have the option of half or full day Kindergarten. It is a fact that children in an all day kindergarten program out perform those in a half day program. He stated that if you factor in the cost and deduct the middle of the day busing that they will not need as well as the grant money allocated to the district from the State (which will need to be applied for every year) the cost will be \$51,000 for the year. You will see approximately \$1,200 in reimbursement for each student. The district will receive about \$100,000 more than it normally would if this

program is implemented. Dr. Levine stated that the classroom space has already been identified. A full day Kindergarten Committee will be starting up in January with Sue Cullen, Curriculum Facilitator, heading the committee.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the application for the grant has been completed. The School Committee will follow the process and proceed with each step and make a decision once all of the factors have been researched. She stated that this is a proposal and not a done deal.

Dr. Levine stated that he will always make recommendations on what he thinks is right for the kids.

Dr. Levine discussed the new special education program that will be moving to the high school next year. As mentioned previously there will be 10 students who will be staying in the district instead of getting outside placements. Dr. Levine stated that their new bathroom is not in place yet and the renovations will be made to the classrooms to accommodate these students. There will be a special curriculum designed for these students. Dr. Levine stated that students are brought back into the district every year. This year a program was created at the high school which brought back three out of district students. There is also a similar program at the Millville Elementary School. Sometimes it is feasible to create a program for students in the district.

Dr. Levine wants to add library hours to our school libraries and be sure that they are open longer. Due to budget cuts they are sometimes closed. He would like to be sure that whenever the school is open the library is open as well.

Dr. Levine would also like to see an elementary level technology program integrated in our elementary schools for FY08-09. The District would bring in a technology integration specialist to train kids and teachers on the correct way to teach students in the area of technology. In year two he would like this brought to the middle school and in year three to the high school.

Dr. Levine is thrilled with the BMR School District video where kids are talking about the school district and how much they like the school system and why.

Dr. Levine stated that the District is currently looking for a new 6th grade math book. The school is currently using supplementals.

Dr. Montagano discussed the status on the copies used in the buildings. She stated that the cost to add 200,000 additional copies for the remainder of this school year would be approximately \$1,000. It was also mentioned that if you have good text books and learning materials you will not be in need of so many additional copies. This area is being researched at this time. You must also be very careful when it comes to copyright infringement. A notice on this has been placed near all copy machines at all schools.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the middle school project has a surplus of funds of about \$300,000. Attorney Harold Gould has petitioned the state to allow us to use this money at the high school. Legislation has approved this request. Currently there are thoughts that

it will be used for the high school freezer, driveway repair and technology. These are top priority areas for the high school.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the high school athletic fields are in need of repair. She would also like to see the best utilization of the middle school fields. Mr. Mercier (former school committee member) and Frederick Hartnett (consultant) are seeing firms that would like to propose designs for these fields.

Dr. Montagano discussed an issue that was brought up at the last CoRE meeting with regards to the bathroom at the high school located closest to the band room. At that meeting parent Caroline Coleman stated that it was in disarray and that soap and paper towels were needed there. Dr. Montagano stated that originally the paper towels were removed and hand dryers used because on 2 separate occasions the towels were used to clog the toilets and a plumber had to be called in. She did state that they will replace the paper towels and soap in this bathroom.

Mrs. Lesperance reminded everyone that the next CoRE meeting will be held on February 7th @ 7:00 p.m. at the FWH Middle School Media Center. This meeting will be held to meet with the district school councils. On February 27th the CoRE meeting will be held to meet with the district parent groups at the same location.

Mrs. Vasquez stated that we need to get everyone else on board with this and would like to find a way to spread the word to other people.

Mrs. Harvey stated that there could be a round table on the local cable access channel between the School Committee and the general public where the public would ask questions to be answered by the school committee and to promote discussion. Mrs. Harvey would like to see them get their own show on the cable access channel and discuss important school issues.

Another citizen mentioned holding these CoRE meetings at different times of the day. Why not try an a.m. meeting with coffee and donuts and try to make it only one hour long.

Mr. Conlon mentioned that Lyndsey Poirier, our current student representative could do a 10 minute recap of the meeting on video tape and put it on Cable Channel 8. He stated that the CoRE meeting dates should also be placed on this channel.

At 9:00 p.m. the CoRE meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Joanne R. Forbes, District Secretary