

**EVALUATION/AIP
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday, June 17, 2013
5:00 PM**

**FRPS Administration Building
417 Rock Street
Fall River, MA 02720**

AGENDA

Discussion Items:

- School Committee's Self-Evaluation

MINUTES

At 5:04 PM, Chairman Pavao called to order the Evaluation/AIP Sub-Committee Meeting. A roll call showed that Mr. Costa and Mr. Pavao were present. Mr. Hart was absent.

Mr. Pavao stated that before he started the meeting he wanted to thank the members of the Oversight Committee for being there and asked that everyone introduce themselves for the listening audience.

Present in the room were:

- Mark Costa – School Committee
- Meg Mayo-Brown – Superintendent
- Tom Kelly – Liaison from DESE
- Reverend Donald Mier – First Baptist Church
- Bob Karam – Oversight Committee
- Carol Nagle – Family Services Association and Oversight Committee
- Rick Pavao – Chairman of the Subcommittee for Evaluations for the F.R. School Committee

Mr. Pavao asked Dr. Kelly to share the information they discussed on Friday regarding suggestions for the School Committee as a Whole to evaluate themselves in a more proper and directive manner.

Dr. Kelly explained that his role all along has been one of trying to facilitate the School Committee in getting done what they have had to do under the Recovery Plan, now under the Accelerated Improvement Plan. What he thought is important to keep in mind on the issue of self-evaluation is that the Recovery Plan is now in the past. The School Committee is now operating under the Accelerated Improvement Plan which changes things. The most significant change is there was a requirement in the Recovery Plan that there be a self-evaluation by the School Committee every single meeting. When the School Committee originally discussed self-evaluation, it became evident that the process of an in-depth evaluation at every single meeting doesn't really lend itself to a formative process over time. Therefore, in the Accelerated Improvement Plan, under objective three, it reiterates the need for a valid self-evaluation system. When it is fully developed, this in-depth evaluation would be done on a semi-annual

basis by the School Committee in a cycle that is similar to the evaluation of the Superintendent. The evaluation of the Superintendent is a full year process, not an event. It begins with the development of goals, a mid-year formative review at which time there is a discussion and exchange, input to the Superintendent, dialogue with the School Committee on how things are going and then a summative evaluation at the end of the year. The concept would be for a similar type of evaluation cycle. The evaluation itself needs to be somewhat substantiated. The AIP also references, although it could not compel in any way, involvement by the Oversight Committee. DESE recognizes that that has been of significant value to the School Committee in terms of them receiving data, to generating and receiving data to reflect on, to guide them going forward. The AIP also references as a very positive thing if that type of input could continue on some basis by the Oversight Committee. The evaluation instrument that the Oversight Committee has been using is an abbreviated instrument that focuses primarily on things that are going on during a meeting. What is the School Committee doing right and how efficient are they operating during this meeting? That is important information but moving forward, getting to a place where the School Committee can do a self-evaluation that generates these goals and objectives, the use of that process alone really wouldn't be enough information. It is not comprehensive enough across the scope of the work that they do. So in looking at where the Committee is and where it needs to be, Dr. Kelly's observations are that there are now three general evaluation tools out there:

- The meeting evaluation that is done.
- The original self-evaluation that was developed by the School Committee for the purpose of complying to the policy. That lends itself to a more in-depth look at all of the responsibilities of the School Committee, not just at the meetings, and provides comparative data.
- Operational protocols which were approved and accepted as part of the Accelerated Improvement Plan and the protocols. There are 14 statements in this set of protocols which really serve to step back and take a broader look at the work of the School Committee in terms of everything that they do.

Dr. Kelly's observation is the School Committee has made the commitment to operate in accordance with these protocols. This opens the door to using this as a basis for the evaluation. You have a fully developed self-evaluation instrument. It is comprehensive and lengthier than either of the other two criteria that the School Committee might be evaluated on and it has a scale which helps process the data once the input is received. If the Committee decided to rely on an instrument like this as a starting point, they would still have to generate some instrumentation to allow that to happen. When he spoke to Mr. Pavao, he said this is kind of the starting point right now and they are not starting at zero.

Dr. Kelly continued that they are starting with a number of things floating around and with a new expectation from DESE which gives them some latitude in terms of coming up with the end product that works in a way that will allow them to generate the data they need, look carefully at the actions/activities of the School Committee, generate the data and then generate objectives for improvement.

Mr. Karam asked if "generating the data we need" was the compilation of how they evaluated themselves.

Dr. Kelly explained when the School Committee used this original self-evaluation they would look at what the connection was between the current conditions, what the School Committee judged to be next to these things, and how important it was. If current conditions were not very good and it wasn't considered to be very important, it is probably not something you would want to spend a lot of time working on. Certain things in that process rest on the surface where the School Committee

acknowledges it is very important and they are not doing that well on it and so they will generate a goal that will help them get better on it. That is the idea of the data and how it is used.

Mr. Pavao: "The data will drive the evaluation process. As we collect more information from members of the School Committee we can look at our strengths and our weaknesses and then we'll know what we have to work on to get them to that level that we are satisfied with."

Mr. Karam: In the private sector, he is on two different boards where they evaluate themselves and others then a chairman of the board goes in the room with each of the directors and goes through their evaluations from their peers which can be more critical because it's not in public session and people are more honest. "The process with the School Committee is that there are good School Committee people who are reluctant to publicly take other School Committee members to the woodshed and so it's one of the reasons why the Oversight Committee lost interest in doing the evaluation because those who perform well are happy to see it put on the table and those who were doing with it what they are going to do with it could give a damn whether it's on the table. We're looking for where can we be helpful and not waste our time."

Dr. Kelly: He can't speak for the School Committee but knows from the perspective of DESE the fact that the Oversight Committee has been doing the work that they have been doing and providing some feedback shows that as a positive force for change. He added that at the end of the day they can have the best instrument in the world and if people don't use it or if they don't try to take advantage of the necessity of having to go through the process, then it is it is a waste of time that might better be spent some place else.

Mr. Costa said one of the things that the self-evaluation came about from was the Recovery Plan. At the time in which the Committee had agreed that it would be a fruitful process to evaluate themselves and to come up with issues that they see as relevant and address them, that process started when they were still looking for the answers to what the issues were. He believes they all know what the issues are now. "I think the State is aware. We have had Judge Fernandes in here who spent a considerable amount of time with us and issued a report. We have had the State down here number of times. Dr. Connolly, who has reviewed minutes, watched video. I don't think the issue is necessarily not uncovered. The question becomes the willingness on the part of individuals who make up this Committee wanting to do the work that's necessary to be part of a full Committee. Some of us are going to do that and others no matter what is suggested, no matter what the end results of this evaluation is, they are still going to decide to do what they want because at the end of the day, there is no ability and no means to sanction a member. So we can all call people out publicly and attempt to hold each other accountable in public but that is going to lead to a lot of public arguments that will detract us from the work at hand and that's what the majority of us are trying to accomplish and at the end there is still no mechanism to hold one or two or less than the majority of Committee members accountable. So that's been my frustration. I've spoken to the Superintendent about it. I've talked to former Mayors about it. I talk to people in the community about it looking for some directive on how do you handle situations in which less than the majority feel as though that regardless of the rules - we all know what they are - we all know what the policies are - we all know that we were sworn to implement those policies in the best interest of the District. What do you do when someone decides they are just not going to do it? So that's my frustration. I don't mind the evaluation process. I don't mind discussing the issues and having a goal as to how we can change things. I've had conversations with the Commissioner at the time and he was concerned about the direction in which the Committee was going. I tried to assure him that the majority of the Committee members were looking to remain on track, stay focused on the Recovery

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Plan, and work in tandem with the Superintendent to make things a better climate here for education for our kids and he agreed; however, I think there is an expectation that everybody's got to be on that and that's tough to do when you have people who, quite frankly, aren't willing to do it and there are no consequences by the rest of us to sort of hold them accountable."

Reverend Mier asked if there is other data that those other two tools surfaced beyond which this tool that was invented surfaces.

Dr. Kelly responded yes and that a more comprehensive piece did surface data because it surfaced things about other kinds of responsibilities the School Committee has that are not directly evident in the course of a meeting. He added that the answer to Mr. Costa's question, in his opinion; if the Committee is not willing to take steps to police itself then any kind of self-evaluation is going to be frustrating. He feels the evaluation process can generate a means by which that discussion can take place. You can make believe everything is fine or on occasion confront what's working and what's not working.

Mr. Costa said there lies the dilemma from where he sits. He asks himself is it worth the majority of the Committee's time and effort to publicly police less than the majority? They work in the majority so do they focus time and energy on addressing policies that haven't been followed by less than the majority? "I say less than the majority because I don't want to single out any one individual or two individuals."

Mr. Karam: "To be honest with you that's what this is all about. At the end of the day we are talking about one person. As an outsider sitting in the audience without picking on him, the rest of the board can say Mr. Chairman, Roberts Rules of Order; he is out of order. That's the self policing you are talking about. I'm saying the bully needs to hear from his peers when he is out of order."

Mr. Pavao said he has spoken with the Chairman of the Committee about this process and strongly recommended that for those members who may have second thoughts about the evaluation process and how it works and what it is supposed to do, that the leadership of the Committee bring them in and talk with them. He suggested the Chair show them the policies in which they voted on to implement and now our refusing to abide by. He added that if they were going to work as a Committee as a Whole, the leadership of the Committee had to take a stronger stand and bring in those members and sit down.

Mr. Costa said he personally met with the Chairman – as Chairman and vice-Chairman - and spoke about issues related to the effectiveness of the Committee. "I have given my suggestions and here we are today. There are times in that meeting, quite frankly, where I may be out of order or I may be off-track and I'm okay with my colleagues holding me accountable for that. However, when you make a suggestion to either move the question or advise the Chairperson that an individual may be out of order or off-track and he just lets him finish, that just defeats the purpose because next time he comes out, there is not as much of a willingness on part of members to suggest that."

Mr. Pavao agreed with Mr. Costa and noted that the Chair has taken a stronger position as of late on controlling the nature of the School Committee meetings. "What I am talking about is if we know we have a member of the Committee who is not going to cooperate with the evaluation process, then I believe the first step is for the leadership to bring that member in and discuss that issue with him or her and try to get to the bottom line as to why this person(s) is not willing to proceed with a self-evaluation that would be productive."

Mr. Costa felt it went back to there being no ramifications.

Mr. Pavao said they are in a unique position because they are an elected body and not an appointed body. He asked the members at the table if they have seen a situation similar to the one described and what steps were taken to rectify the matter?

Mr. Karam said he believes that subcommittees do the work and then you go to the board. The subcommittee makes a report and unless they didn't follow process, the report is expected to move forward. He also thought that if the other members were as frustrated publicly about what's happening as the other person is about trying to change the course of what's happening, the Mayor would have a dilemma and would have to solve the uprising. "In other words, if only one person is doing the uprising and he lets him have his hour/hour and a half, my theory would be, the rest of you don't have to act that way, you just need to be able to say we are not following Robert's Rules of Order. We are not following the Code of Ethics. I find sometimes you guys are as guilty by allowing it to happen because you set these goals, one person is breaking them and everyone is saying, well, I am not going to fight him. The fact of the matter is the person needs to hear it publicly from the other Committee members. And the trouble about this is that we spent a half an hour here on one person."

Mr. Pavao asked that the Superintendent get copies so that the Oversight Committee can take a look at how they evaluate themselves.

Superintendent said the Oversight Committee has seen the results but it has been a while.

Mr. Pavao said he put time and effort into his self-evaluation and once submitted, it collected dust. "It has got to come back to the Committee as a Whole. As I said earlier, if the Mayor assigns one or two members to look at the evaluations, put the scores together, look at the things we're doing well or think we are doing well and keep moving that along. Then look at the things that are really holding this Committee back from being a real effective Committee and improve on those. It may be one, maybe two, maybe three or half-dozen issues, but let's focus in on it. I don't believe in a gunshot approach. I like to rifle in, look at the situation and do my best to correct it and unless we do that, I don't know how far we are going to get if we have members of the Committee who do not want to participate. We have done everything in our power and we can not sanction them because they are an elected official. Then we work around that and we try to come up with the majority of the evaluations that earmark those successes and those failures but we can't just fall back on, well we can't do it because we have a member or two members who are just digging their heels in and they refused to cooperate and abide by the rules that all of us voted on."

Mr. Costa: He doesn't believe the problem is the actual evaluation piece. They all understand that the self-evaluation can be used as a tool for them to grow. He does not think the issue is whether or not they can evaluate themselves. The question becomes once they get the answers what do they do with that information? He believes the path they are on now is that if one or two ignore policy the majority is going to keep the focus on the work that needs to be done by the District and he is going to continue to do that. He believes they are going to end up with the answers that DESE already knows. "We all know what the issue is. The question is how do we work together to get individuals motivated enough to be able to acknowledge that them not following the policies that we have set is a hindrance to the progress we are trying to make. How do we do that? I rack my brain. I have talked to a number of people."

Mr. Karam suggested rearranging the agenda and putting the critical issues upfront and the travel items, etc. at the end. A part of it might be reconstructing the agenda to get to the meeting. He added that the other Committee member's knowledge doesn't come out because they never get time to really let the public know that they are on top of things. It is at times a detriment to the hard working members of the Committee that don't have an agenda except high-quality education. "You need to spend more time being a good board then spending an hour being lectured on foolishness. How can we help you with that? Whether it is the evaluation tool and then how to use it; put more teeth in when someone is in the meeting and not following the Code of Ethics and maybe you have a point of order and it has to then stop. So the Mayor is forced to do it because, in fact, this is what happens. Maybe that is how you do the evaluation?"

Mr. Pavao thought it was a good suggestion and did not disagree with anything that had been discussed so far but felt he didn't know how to get to the finish line with the hurdles. He noted that he has seen a marked improvement from the day he sat down at his first meeting but doesn't know how to massage the process to make it better.

Dr. Kelly said from his standpoint he doesn't think they should spend all their time evaluating. However, in their policy and AIP, they have committed to evaluate over the course of time. It is how they agree to dealing with the end results of that process on a meeting to meeting basis whether it is the Chairman stepping up on certain things or members reminding other members about following protocols. "At the end of the day you are reporting to the DEA. The DEA's observation is okay they are evaluating. Some things are getting done and some things are not getting done and these are going to be chronic issues. You are not going to change somebody by evaluating them but just to have a process in place to highlight what is supposed to be going on and focusing on the direction that you would like to take. It's not just about the conduct of the members. It's about how the board can accomplish certain things and what you need to do that is the majority of the board. So my suggestion, and I had this conversation with the people at the Department of Ed., is that realistically some things probably won't change unless the voters of Fall River make a decision to change that. Anybody can make the observation, they certainly have at DESE, that operationally this Committee has gotten better and better over time. It is just like the evaluation of a Superintendent because if the Superintendent isn't doing a good job I'm not renewing the contract. But the concept is there is a process there where things are identified to be done and tracked to see if they are done and people get better at that over time. The hope of it is that for the things that the Committee takes on to do and identifies as these goals that you will make progress and complete those things. If the footnote is not everybody was pulling the wagon, well that's the reality."

Reverend Mier asked if their job is to evaluate, raise the issues, and then develop action plans to address those issues.

Dr. Kelly responded that that is what needs to come out of the School Committee's self-evaluation.

Reverend Mier: "That is not happening, the action plan. It is sort of there? Is that our task to develop tactics?"

Mr. Pavao said he is not going to say it is specifically but he thinks it is part of the subcommittee to do that.

Reverend Mier: "Okay, at least we know where it belongs."

Ms. Nagle explained that it was the intent of the Committee originally to take the information that the Superintendent had shared very early on and to condense it and to focus on certain things. The first one was core values. They thought that was very important for the governance but then they were stuck there because she thinks their intent was to make it better, to evaluate it, to work on it, to bring that back and they never moved on. Her thought as to what has to happen is that they have to have a time limit in terms of providing a report or information. Once the information is provided, the Committee can do with it what they would like but then they would move on to the following section(s). She thinks they need to go back and take a look at how they approach the process.

Dr. Kelly: He thinks that the Oversight Committee is a very important piece of reinforcement. "If the Committee members themselves are seeing things and they are being reinforced by a group of other people, that's all you can do."

Mr. Costa stated that that was his intent in supporting this collaboration. He feels if you have a different group of people who represent various facets of the community who are noticing the same issues, it says something.

Reverend Mier asked if they have enough data to make an action plan for improvement or if they needed to collect more.

Mr. Pavao said he was going to suggest at the next regular meeting of the School Committee that they have a discussion on self-evaluation and that they make a recommendation to the Committee as a Whole that they have a more in-depth self-evaluation completed again by the members of the Committee.

Reverend Mier: "An updated version?"

Mr. Pavao: Yes, to see who turns it in and how it is turned in and then share that with the Oversight Committee. A meeting can be called once that data has been compiled to sit down and see where they are. If they feel that there are members of the Committee that are still refusing the evaluation process, then the subcommittee would recommend to the leadership that that person be brought in and talked to. He added that they are all adults and need to do the jobs that they have been elected to do. Part of that, as far as the School Committee is concerned, is evaluating itself.

Reverend Mier: "So that's our action plan; let's evaluate again and see what we learn?"

Mr. Pavao: He agreed.

Superintendent: She asked if it would be the comprehensive evaluation.

Mr. Pavao said yes.

MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mr. Pavao: That the Committee undergo an in-depth self-evaluation. That information or results will then be shared with the Oversight Committee and at the conclusion of that, we will reconvene and set of action agenda items to work on the issues that need to be addressed.

2 in favor

1 absent (Mr. Hart)

Motion Passed

Mr. Karam asked if they are members of the evaluation committee and if they vote. He said they don't have to answer that today but he thought the Mayor had added them to a Committee, not to be permanent members of the Evaluation Committee, but to be full members. He said they can get that determined and let them know.

Mr. Pavao asked Mr. Costa to look into Mr. Karam's question.

Dr. Kelly asked if the Oversight Committee has seen the protocols.

They responded yes.

Dr. Kelly: These are stated more in terms of core values than the items in the other evaluation. The School Committee has passed these and agreed to abide by them. "I think we might be also thinking about how to piece it. In the end, my own feeling was that this instrument here probably is a little bit cumbersome and when you look at the data and evaluate the data, it is not the easiest thing in the world to pull meaningful data out of it, although, I think it can be done."

Mr. Costa: He thinks if members follow those protocols and commit to those as they have adopted them, they will be in a far better place. "So maybe at the end of this there is a way to focus some of the goals we looked to set out on those operational protocols. That is measurable."

Mr. Pavao said they need to communicate the protocols in a more articulate manner and the importance of the protocols; how they interface with the evaluation process and how that will improve the Committee as a Whole while working in conjunction with the Oversight Committee to help the Committee move along in the right direction. "I think we are on the right road and accomplished a couple of things here this evening. One is the motion made where we are going to have the more comprehensive evaluation submitted to the School Committee to be filled out and submitted back. Copies will go to the Oversight Committee. Once that data is compiled, we will call a meeting of the subcommittee to discuss the data, how it's done, and prepare some action plans to deal with those areas in which the Oversight Committee and the subcommittee as a whole agree to."

Mr. Costa asked so they are clear, who will compile the data.

Superintendent: Last time it was Dr. Kelly.

Dr. Kelly: I have a spreadsheet that compiles the data. It is just a question of putting the raw data in.

Mr. Pavao asked Dr. Kelly if he minded doing that.

Dr. Kelly agreed and said he is not going to analyze it but just going to get the data.

Mr. Pavao explained that Dr. Kelly will compress it so they can understand what their strengths and weaknesses are so they will have a better feel of where they are going and what they have to do.

No further questions or discussion.

MOTION: Mr. Costa – Mr. Pavao: To adjourn.
2 in favor 1 absent (Mr. Hart) Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca L. Caron
Interim Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Interim Administrative Assistant for School Committee Services.