

To: Nashoba Regional School District School Committee  
From: Kathy Codianne (L)  
Re: Hale Middle School Principal Position  
Date: October 7, 2015

I am curious about the process by which the Assistant Superintendent became the principal of the Hale Middle School. My curiosity was peaked during the May 27, 2015 meeting when Ms. Oderick reported the following during the Correspondence portion of the School Committee Agenda:

**CORRESPONDENCE**

*Ms. Thier advised she received a correspondence regarding a bus that is always breaking down, Mr. Perkins was made aware.*

*Ms. Odekirk advised she received several emails regarding concerns of the Chorus Director position at the high school, and hoping a qualified candidate is awarded the position, Ms. Odekirk also received several correspondence regarding the building use policy and whether the girl scouts would be shut out, which she responded they will not, Ms. Odekirk also received an inquiry whether Mr. King was still considered the interim Principal at Hale or is now the permanent Principal at Hale. Mr. Wood replied he is the Principal. (from School Committee Meeting minutes, May 27, 2015)*

I am also curious because in my experience, I have not seen a central office administrator assume a full-time principal position. I know from experience that being a full-time principal does not allow much time for other professional activities let alone another full time job.

In reviewing the School Committee Meeting minutes, starting in 2008, I looked for references about the former Principal leaving the district. I found none. However, in the School Committee Meeting minutes for August 20, 2009, I found the following:

**OLD BUSINESS**

*Mr. Wood announced that Mr. King will be the interim Principal at the Hale Middle School for the start of the school year. Mr. Wood stated there is a time table for a replacement, which is January 2010 but will ultimately be driven by the candidate pool.*

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

*Ann Needle questioned if there was any assistance lined up on the school end and financial end to make sure that both these roles are covered while Mr. King fills in as interim Principal at Hale. Mr. Wood replied that the Senior Accountant and Director of Human Resources will be handling more responsibilities on the financial end.*

Superintendent's Reports for 10/1/2009, 10/15/2009, and 11/5/2009 contain a topic, "New Principal Search Process," but these reports were not archived so I could not

see what was reported.

The following is from the School Committee minutes, January 21, 2010. The topic was one of the items in the Superintendent's report

***Interim Principal Position at Hale Discussion***

*Ms. CampoBasso stated she would like to caution against the decision to keep Mr. King in an interim position for two years, stating she feels after two years, it will be difficult to add the Assistant Superintendent position back into the budget and concerned it will be difficult to validate the need after not having it for two years.*

*Mr. Govindan stated he agrees with Ms. CampoBasso.*

*Ms. Federspiel stating that it is dangerous and feels that it devalues the Assistant Superintendent position. Ms. Busch also stated she believes we also have to acknowledge that Mr. King's staff has to "step it up" when they did not volunteer for that position or extra work load.*

*Ms. CampoBasso stated she is very concerned of the impact it would have on our middle school, stating, when this situation happened previously, things did go downhill at that time and would hate to see Hale follow that path when they are such a high achieving school. Ms. CampoBasso said she would like to give this more time before a final decision is made.*

*Ms. Colletti stated she does not know how Mr. King does it, she has heard that he is at many school functions and there is no doubt the student and parents love him, Ms. Colletti stated she is concerned about burn out.*

*Mr. King replied he does not believe anything is lost on the operations side as he has full time Managers/Directors in all departments and still meets with them weekly for updates. Mr. King stated that he believes he has a keen sense of finance and would like to think he would notice anything out of sort promptly. Mr. King also stated we have a great school community and staff at Hale which make it an easier school to manage and that he has enjoyed the position, stating he does work more hours but is at a place in his life he can afford to do that. Mr. King stated it is a model that works and saves the district \$100,000.*

*Ms. CampoBasso just wanted to voice one last time, that we cannot look at the person but rather the position, she has to separate the two, asking if the Hale principal line item still remained in the budget and if not can we leave it in there?*

*Mr. Wood stated while he has complete confidence in Mr. King, he would like to advise that more student monitoring is done out of his office this year, he stated he meets with the principals at their schools every week for updates.*

*Mr. Fly stated he does understand the concerns but does not share them, he does not think this is out of the ordinary of what other districts do in hard financial times.*

In reviewing the School Committee Meeting for the FY11 Budget Workshop (February 25, 2010), I found the following in the notes of the discussion:

*... Ms. CampoBasso stated she would like to repeat her concerns (I was unable to find any reference to this either in these meeting notes or I previous meeting notes) about taking the Hale principal position line out of the budget for fear not being able to justify getting it back.*

*Ms. Federspiel stated that she is also not comfortable with removing the Hale principal position and questioned the interview process and timeline. She added that she is not comfortable with the way this process was handled and feels it will be hard to justify one of the two positions in the future. Mr. Wood responded to the question on process and stated that it worked exactly has it was intended to work. That was not the outcome anyone was expecting but it was the search committee that made the inquiry to have him explore the possibility of Mr. King continuing for another year. The committee discussed the time line for searching and hiring for the Principal position.*

*Mr. Wood advised that with every budget we set priorities, we would set the priority that the funding for a principal at Hale would in fact be top, even if it meant reorganizing some other department in either central office or elsewhere, ideally in 2012 we will be dealing with some additional revenue. Mr. Wood stated that he does not have any concern regarding the ability to fund a principal position.*

*Mr. Govindan stated that we need to make the public aware the decisions we have made, such as not filling the Principal position at Hale, to keep this budget down but that does not mean in the future we will continue to have Mr. King doing two jobs.*

*Ms. CampoBasso stated she wanted to go back to when Ms. Conte was hired, that director position was vacant for two years and she felt the committee had hard time justifying that. Mr. Wood replied that particular circumstances was in light of training for Ms. Conte, whom he I saw as the mostly likely candidate to succeed. The arrangement allowed Ms. Conte to get her license, which took a year longer than expected. This circumstance is different too in that just the nature of the training that Mr. King is getting, this is huge bonus for when Mr. King returns to his Assistant Superintendent position, he will be much more knowledgeable to assist with the education side of his role and not just the financial.*

I found the next reference to the Hale Middle School Principal in the School Committee Meeting minutes from March 4, 2010, under Old Business, FY 11 Budget:

*...Mr. Burke asked the committee if any members had any concerns regarding the Hale Principal position, no concerns were raised. Mr. Burke asked if we can be assured this is the last year that Mr. King will serve in two roles. Mr. Wood replied yes...*

*...Ms. CampoBasso stated she wants to come back to something we discussed weeks ago, she would like to see Mr. King compensated for his dual roles this year,*

*FY10 and would like to know how this is going to be done, he has not been compensated for his roles this year and if you need to use the money to do that, she would fine with that. Mr. Wood replied that he will certainly address this year's compensation in next year's contract negotiation.*

*...Mr. Govindan stated he would like to make it clear to the public that this is the last year that Mr. King will be principal at the Hale school and next year this will be added back into the budget*

I found the next mention of the Hale Principal position in the School Committee minutes from February 17, 2011, under New Business:

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Director of Finance – New Position Job Description***

*Mr. Wood advised he is proposing to keep Mr. King in a dual role position. Mr. Wood provided the proposed job description of Director of Finance and revised NRSD Organization chart. Mr. Wood advised he is proposing to realign Mr. King to the new position of Director of Finance. Mr. Wood stated he believes this realignment is possible because of the strong administrators and directors currently within the district organizational structure. Ms. Federspiel raised a concern regarding the Director of Finance providing financial advice to Principal whereas Mr. King will be one in the same. Mr. Govindan would like to remind the public this is a stop gap measure,, we cannot continue to have one person (George King) holding two positions indefinitely and we will need to budget for both Ms. Federspiel stated the concern of once this position is cut from the budget it will be hard to get it put back in. Ms. Busch asked what is considered temporary. Mr. Wood stated he is not putting a time frame on this realignment that if and when changes occur this will be reviewed. Mr. Rupich stated she is not as concerned with the public opposition to adding back a financial position given the financial history of the NRSD.*

## **MOTION**

*Mel Govindan made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to add the position of Director of Finance as outlined in the provided job description seconded by George Babich **IN FAVOR:** Lynn Colletti, Maureen Busch, Kathy Owen, George Babich, Mel Govindan and Reta Rupich **OPPOSED:** Nancy Federspiel **VOTED AND PASSED. (6-1-0)***

This is the last reference I found in the school committee minutes regarding this topic.

I also want to note that in reviewing the NRSD budget line item for Administrative Salaries at the Hale Middle School for FY9, FY10, and FY11 the following amounts were listed respectively: \$98,760; \$97,652; \$10,000.

My interpretation of the School Committee's minutes is that they did not want the dual

position to be permanent. I also would like to know why the school committee wasn't apprised of the section III of the Amendment to the Assistant's Superintendent's current contract:

III. Section 4 is amended to add the following at the end of the section. "The Assistant Superintendent will serve concurrently as the principal of Hale Middle School. While serving in this capacity of Hale Principal, additional annual compensation of \$10,000, as authorized by the Nashoba Regional School Committee beginning in FY 2011, will be added to the total regular compensation provided for in section 3 of this contract"

In reviewing the contracts of the other NRSB Principals, no one has a five-year contract. I am curious as to why the Assistant Superintendent warrants one.

(With regard to the Assistant Superintendent's contract, I am curious why it was given to the Assistant Superintendent on December 8, 2014 with a salary increase of .025% [\$142,328 to 145,930], prior to approval of the FY16 budget. Additionally, under Compensation it states "...salary paid to the Assistant Superintendent may never decrease." None of the other administrator's contracts that I reviewed contain such a provision.)

I would like to know the proper format for discussing the issue of the Hale Middle School Principal with the School Committee. I feel strongly that the Hale Middle School should have a dedicated Principal (just as all the other schools in the district do) and that members of the school community should take part in the process to select that person.