

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

April 24 2013

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 in the School Administration Building.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mr. Keune, Chairperson.

Present were: Messrs. Blanchette, Friedman, Keune, McNamar, Roberson, Stoughton, and Young; Mesdames Hayes, Kiff-Judson and Picard-Wambolt; Mr. Stephen Cullinan, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Mr. Bruce Brettschneider, Director of Special Services; and Mrs. Margaret Devlin, Director of Business Services.

Also present was: Mr. Steven Moccio, Principal at Windermere School.

CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM

No one addressed the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Keune asked if anyone wished to remove any item from the consent agenda. He then stated that if there are no objections items number one through eight will be adopted. As there were no objections, items number one through eight were adopted.

1. Approval of Minutes of the March 20, 2013 Regular Meeting
2. Approval of Minutes of the First April 8, 2013 Special Meeting
3. Approval of Minutes of the Second April 8, 2013 Special Meeting
4. Second Vote on Amended Policy #4213.122 – Job Description, Educational Assistant
5. Second Vote on Amended Policy #4213.161 – Job Description, Accounts Payable Bookkeeper
6. Second Vote on Amended Policy #4213.162 – Job Description, Payroll Bookkeeper

7. Approve the Appointment of Gabrielle Betancourt, Rebecca Derby, Matt DeLassus, Jaclyn Ham, Nicole Satagaj and Allison Smith as Mentors/ Cooperating Teachers
8. Approval of Submission of IDEA Consolidated Grant Application for FY 2014 in the Amount of \$416,671 (Special Education 611) and \$11,987 (Preschool Education 619)

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Report of Rachel's Challenge from Windermere School – M. Toback-Reveley and J. Marshall

Several years ago Windermere Intermediate School introduced the Rachel's Challenge Program which is named and modeled after Rachel Scott who was the first student killed in the Columbine High School shooting. Guidance counselors Marilyn Toback-Reveley and Jessica Marshall provided an update on the program. The program began three years ago. This year forty percent of the grade 5 and 6 students at Windermere participate in the Friend's of Rachel Program. Among the active groups at Windermere are: *Acts of Kindness; Cross Age Coaches; Elderly Outreach; Fantastic Fundraisers; Media Mania; Wall of Famers; Senior Center Superstars; and Positive Impact Publishers.*

Presentation of Ellington's Educator Evaluation and Support Plan – Dr. McGurk

In June 2012, the state legislature approved new Guidelines for Educator Evaluation for all districts in Connecticut. Each district is required to create teacher and administrator evaluation and support plans for implementation in the 2013-2014 school year. A representative group of Ellington teachers and administrators, under the direction and guidance of Dr. McGurk, spent significant time drafting, editing and finalizing the Ellington Educator Evaluation and Support Plan. Dr. McGurk reviewed the requirements and the components of the plan for the Board. The plan will be submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education for review for compliance with the revised guidelines. Administrators will participate in training and proficiency exercises in the summer and the district will hold orientation sessions for teachers to learn about the new plan in August.

Regular Board Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that the Policy Committee met on April 1, 2013. Per the direction of the Board, the Policy Committee did write a bylaw for a student representative to the Board of Education. Draft Bylaw #9127 allows the Board to seat a student representative in a non-voting capacity. This new bylaw is listed as an Action Item for a first vote. The administrative regulations for this new bylaw have been drafted and will be reviewed by the Policy Committee at its May meeting. At the direction of the Board, the Policy Committee began to draft a policy related to canine searches. Work on this policy will continue at future committee meetings. The Policy Committee will meet on May 6, 2013.

Curriculum Committee

Mr. Blanchette reported that the Curriculum Committee met Friday, March 22, 2013. This meeting of the Curriculum Committee focused on ways in which Ellington teachers are using a variety of tools to create engaging learning opportunities for students.

Mrs. Robert was joined by two students from Ellington High School who recently participated in the History Day competition. The students shared a video that they made describing FEMA's role in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, changes that have been implemented by the agency, and how the changes influenced practice during Super Storm Sandy. The students described the research process they used, including conducting an interview with a FEMA representative using Skype. Mrs. Robert also shared a project entitled "Tweeting the Twenties", in which students in the new American Studies class researched historical figures from the 1920s, created Twitter accounts and tweeted from the perspective of the figures.

Mrs. Larkin and Ms. Garofalo shared examples of book review blogs students are using at Ellington Middle School. The published blogs have helped students sharpen skills in writing and have resulted in students being contacted by several of the authors of their reviewed books. Ms. Garofalo also shared a website that she created in order to support shared professional learning opportunities for Ellington teachers. The wiki she created allows Ellington teachers to share resources for professional learning, including those used in professional development sessions.

Mr. Nash described the concept of a flipped classroom to the committee. He has been using this approach for more than a year in his classroom and shared sample videos with the committee. He also described how the approach has changed the way in which he uses classroom time with students and how the video resources he and his colleagues have created allow students to personalize learning goals.

The next meeting of the Curriculum Committee will be on Friday, May 17, 2013.

Special Board Committee Reports

Communications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson reported that the Communications Committee met on Tuesday, April 2, 2013. The Committee continued its review of the District Communications Plan. Significant time was spent on communication activities related to the board's budget. The group discussed highlighting the following topics related to the upcoming budget: addition of a school resource officer; addition of new courses at EHS; additional reading staff at the elementary level; extended day/year programming to challenge and engage students in math, sciences, technology, and the arts; per pupil spending; curriculum specialists; and tennis program funding.

In preparation for the April 9, 2013 Board of Finance hearing, the committee discussed several activities. The committee would like Board of Education members to speak on several topics; School Resource Officer; Curriculum; Multi-year Academic Plan; and sports. Mr. Cullinan will prepare a one-page hand-out on the education budget for the public and bring any remaining copies of the budget flyer to the meeting, as well as some of the other recently developed flyers.

The committee agreed to discuss activities for the May 14, 2013 Annual Town Budget Meeting after the Board of Finance meeting. The committee discussed publishing letters to the editor in the Journal Inquirer, Reminder, and Patch by May 1, 2013. Ms. Kiff-Judson will send some suggested topics to board members and ask for volunteers. Ms. Kiff-Judson will make a Facebook posting reminding people to vote. Ms. Kiff-Judson agreed to draft an email about the budget and forward to her distribution list and to the board to forward to their lists.

For the anticipated referendum on May 21, 2013, the committee asked Mr. Cullinan to take the following actions: send a SchoolMessenger notice prior to referendum reminding people to vote. Ask principals to post date/time/place of referendum in schools and in newsletters and to post the date/time/place of referendum on the website. The committee agreed to discuss at the next meeting whether it would be appropriate/necessary to post signs encouraging people to vote prior to the referendum.

Ad Hoc Facilities Committee

Mr. Keune reported that the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee met on March 26, 2013. Since the tragedy at Newtown, each school has made revisions to entrance and exit procedures. The changes at Windermere have created the need for some revision to parking and bus drop off. The question for the committee was whether these changes should be incorporated into the project. Two issues impacting that decision were raised. The first is whether these revisions fall within the scope of the project as presented and approved at referendum. The second is whether the revisions are within the approved budget for the project. The committee approved the inclusion of the

revised parking and bus drop-off plan at Windermere School, provided it is determined by legal counsel that this work is authorized within the bonding language and provided that the scope of work is within the approved budget.

Recent meetings with staff at Crystal Lake School produced several requests that the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee was required to review and decide whether to include in the scope of the project. Seventeen items were reviewed and direction was given by the committee to the architect. These items are listed in the committee minutes.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report

2013 – 2014 Budget Update

The Budget Hearing was held on April 9, 2013. The Board of Finance held budget deliberations on April 11. The annual town meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2013. It is anticipated that a referendum on the budget will be held on May 21, 2013. The Board of Finance reduced the Board of Education's proposed 2013-2014 budget by \$171,000. The budget that will be presented at the town meeting in May will contain a tax increase of 1.78%.

March Instructional Report

Mr. Cullinan reported that the March Instructional Report was included in the Board packet. The report contained the results of the Kindergarten Inventory and the grade one Dolch Sight word assessment. Crystal Lake School reported on the completion of a data team cycle for kindergarten and grade 2 as well as the start of a new data cycle for grade 3 and 4. Crystal Lake also reported on the work of its School Climate Committee and the continued study of the Common Core State Standards.

Center School reported on the *Daffodil Day* fundraiser for cancer research as well as a PTO event and fundraiser. Center School also reported on the beginning of its third data cycle; the Early Childhood class interns; and National Volunteer Week. Windermere School reported having very successful parent conferences; planning for its Annual Senior Pasta Supper; and the new Windermere Behavioral Intervention Team's Social Academy.

Ellington Middle School provided an update on its quarterly review of intervention programming; continued work on transitioning to a standards-based report card; and work on the transition to the Common Core State Standards. Ellington High School reported on evaluating the school schedule; the student course selection process for next year; and plans for the upcoming Relay for Life. As usual the report has many student and staff recognitions.

Update on Building Projects

Mr. Cullinan reported that the Permanent Building Committee met on April 23, 2013. The architects submitted the completed Design Development documents for both the Windermere and Crystal Lake projects. These documents will now be submitted to an outside estimator for review. Work on Construction bid documents will begin. The Plan Completion Test (PCT) meetings with the Bureau of School Facilities are scheduled as follows: Windermere School – June 24, 2013 and Crystal Lake School – July 2, 2013. Meetings for both schools with the Bureau of School Facilities for approval of Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment will be scheduled for just after Labor Day. The Permanent Building Committee has requested input from the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee on two items. One is a proposal by the town to add a second door, at the southwestern corner of the gymnasium, which exits/enters directly from the gymnasium to the pavement, which might permit the gymnasium to be isolated from student areas during voting. This might permit most voters to enter one outside door and exit the other, limiting voter traffic through the main door to those requiring handicap accessibility. A second issue that has been referred to the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee is the preferred choice for revised parking and bus drop off at Windermere School. Mr. Keune requested that Mr. Cullinan ask the Fire Marshall to review these options.

There is another meeting with representatives of the United Methodist Church and town officials scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2013 to continue work related to the church parking lot. There is a boundary issue related to a homeowner adjacent to the school land. The Permanent Building Committee referred the issue to the First Selectman for action.

The Inland Wetlands Agency held a public hearing regarding the Crystal Lake project site on April 15, 2013. That hearing will be continued at its next meeting on May 13, 2013. Approval of the Inland Wetlands Agency at the May meeting is crucial to the timetable for the project. The project will be on the agenda for the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting of May 20, 2013.

Annual Report on Reassignment of Students

Mr. Cullinan stated that administrative regulations require that the Superintendent annually inform the Board of Education if there is a need to reassign elementary students to other schools for the following year. Mr. Cullinan informed the Board that there will be no need to reassign elementary students for the 2013-2014 school year.

Directors' Reports

There were no reports.

Business Report

There was no report.

Board Liaison Reports

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that she attended a CREC Council meeting today. Denise Gallucci, Deputy Executive Director and Superintendent of CREC Schools, has accepted a position elsewhere and was given special recognition for her years of service to CREC. Patrice McCarthy and Peter Smith offered a quick overview of the state budget as it relates to education issues. They indicated that the Appropriations Committee has adopted their version of the state budget. Highlights include no change from what the Governor proposed for the ECS grant. Transportation remains cut, eliminating \$25 million in reimbursement funds and an additional reduction of \$2.9 million in non-public school transportation funds. There is the addition of a \$5 million competitive grant as incentive to regionalize transportation.

The CREC Council officers and several other members of the Council attended the NSBA conference and shared their thoughts regarding the experience. They will be sending out emails through which others may access presentations and workshops from the conference. Hand-outs were distributed that outline the State Department of Education lottery results by town. This indicates that 119 applications from Ellington for new magnet school seats were received. Fifty-eight of these applicants were offered seats, fourteen of which are pre-K. At this point, forty-four of those offered seats have been accepted.

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that *School Crisis Prevention and Preparedness Training* is scheduled for May 20-22, 2013 at the Neag School for Education. UConn's School Psychology Program will be hosting *School Crisis Prevention and Preparedness Training* through the National Association of School Psychologists. The first workshop is appropriate for school district personnel including administrators, policy people and crisis intervention staff. The second workshop is relevant to school mental health personnel.

A workshop *The Law, Trends and Updates on Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support* is scheduled for Thursday, May 16, 2013 at the Inn at Middletown. On June 11, 2013, CABA will hold its *Legislative Wrap-Up* at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Finally, on July 24, 2013, CABA's *3^d Annual Summer Leadership Conference* will take place at the Saybrook Point Inn & Spa in Old Saybrook.

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt stated that she had a letter from Bruce Douglas recommending that the 22 districts required to comply with the Sheff decision receive more funding

through ECS. She stated that she would distribute a copy of the letter to interested members of the Board.

Mrs. Hayes stated that she spent time at the high school in her role as liaison and was provided with an overview of the *Naviance* program and its role in the development of Student Success Plans, grades 6 through 12. She also witnessed students in Mrs. McCallum's Spanish class using Google Voice.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made that the Board hold a first vote to approve Bylaw #9127 – Student Representative to the Board of Education.

1st. T. Kiff-Judson

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that the Board adopt Ellington's Educator Evaluation and Support Plan as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 3a. A motion was made that the Board approve the employment of Linda Torgeson as a long-term substitute math teacher at Ellington Middle School for the period April 1 through May 3, 2013.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. J. Stoughton

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 3b. A motion was made that the Board approve the employment of Marissa Boucher as a long-term substitute math teacher at Ellington Middle School for the period May 6, 2013 through the end of the 2012-13 school year.

1st. J. Stoughton

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 4a. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Paula Dargan, physical education/health teacher at Ellington Middle School, effective June 30, 2013.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

2nd. J. Stoughton

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 4b. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Kathleen Andrews, special education teacher at Windermere School, effective June 30, 2013.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. J. Stoughton

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 4c. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Patricia McAuley, library/media specialist and math intervention teacher at Center School, effective June 30, 2013.

1st. A. Hayes

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 4d. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Valerie Gagnon, kindergarten teacher at Crystal Lake School, effective June 30, 2013.

1st. A. Hayes

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 4e. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Eileen Fuellhart, mathematics teacher at Ellington Middle School, effective June 30, 2013.

1st. J. Stoughton

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

- 5a. A motion was made that the Board approve the employment of Michelle Bashaw as a sixth grade teacher at Windermere Intermediate School, effective August 26, 2013.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5b. A motion was made that the Board approve the employment of Colleen Thornberg as a first grade teacher at Windermere School, effective August 26, 2013.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5c. A motion was made that the Board approve the employment of Shannon Bostiga as a fifth grade teacher at Windermere Intermediate School, effective August 26, 2013.

1st. A. Hayes

2nd. M. Young

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Report on Hartford Choice “Meet & Greet”

Mr. Cullinan reported that on March 21, 2013 the Ellington Public Schools hosted a “Meet & Greet” for our Hartford Choice families. Dr. LaPorte did an excellent job of organizing this very well attended event. Mr. Pearson did a panel discussion with several middle school students and a high school student spoke positively about her experience at Ellington High School. Dan Keune, Michael Young and Dale Roberson represented the Board of Education.

Discussion of Use of Attorney at Student Hearings

Mr. Keune stated that a member of the Board had requested a discussion on why the Board would incur the additional expense of legal fees in a student discipline hearing that has a stipulated agreement. Mr. Keune shared results he had received from the CABE Board Chair List serve. Mr. Roberson stated that he had requested the discussion as a budget related item in an effort to save money. Some members expressed the need to be sure that all appropriate legal procedures were followed in all hearings. Others stated that they had at times asked questions of the attorney. It was the consensus of the Board that no change would be recommended at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Cullinan noted that the only correspondence was a copy of a letter he sent to the First Selectman regarding voting in the schools. Mr. Friedman stated that the Board may wish to consider discussing this item and taking a formal position.

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A motion was made at 9:40 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

1st. A. Hayes

2nd. T. Kiff-Judson

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Hayes
Secretary

AMH/scc