

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

February 26, 2014

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2014, in the School Administration Building.

Present were: Messrs. Blanchette, Friedman, Keune, McNamar, Purcaro (7:40 p.m.), and Young; Mesdames Hayes, Kiff-Judson, and Picard-Wambolt; Mr. Stephen Cullinan, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Mrs. Margaret Devlin, Director of Business Services; Student Representative Alissa DelPiano. Also attending was Dr. Carl Mandell, Vernon Regional Adult Basic Education Program. Mr. Roberson was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mr. Keune, Chairperson.

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. As there were no objections, Consent Agenda items 1 through 5 were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the January 22, 2014 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Approval of the Ellington High School field trip to the New England Music Festival from March 20-22, 2014, subject to the conditions as outlined in board policy #5138.
3. Acceptance of the Personnel Resignation of Edward Hernandez, cafeteria/playground aide at Center School, effective January 25, 2014.
4. Acceptance of the Personnel Resignation of Danielle Lemieux, cafeteria/playground aide at Windermere School, effective February 3, 2014.
5. Approval of the Employment of Katherine Berry as a long-term substitute remedial reading teacher at Windermere Intermediate School, effective February 3, 2014.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Presentation from Vernon Regional Adult Basic Education Program

Dr. Carl Mandell, Director of the Vernon Regional Adult Basic Education Program was present to provide an overview of this 14 town program. Member towns are: Ashford, Bolton, Colchester, Coventry, East Windsor, Ellington, Glastonbury, Griswold, Mansfield, South Windsor, Tolland, Vernon, Wethersfield and Willington. State legislation requires programs in Americanization, limited English proficiency, and elementary and secondary school completion. Dr. Mandell provided a description of the following required programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE, Pre-GED), General Education Diploma (GED), Credit Diploma Program (CDP), English as a Second Language (ESL), National External Diploma Program (NEDP), and Citizenship. Additional programs and services offered are: Career Counselors, CT GED Test Center, Technology, College Transition, Workplace Education, Enrichment (Continuing Education), Expulsion Support and Family Literacy. Dr. Mandell also reviewed the level of participation of Ellington residents in the Vernon Regional Adult Basic Education Program. Dr. Mandell responded to a variety of questions. Mr. Keune thanked Dr. Mandell for his presentation.

Regular Board Committee ReportsCurriculum Committee

Mr. Blanchette stated that the Curriculum Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Friday, January 31, 2014. Library media specialists Lisa Garofalo, Jenifer Smolnick, Mary Varley, and Becky Wentworth presented an overview of their role in supporting student learning in our schools and the tools being used to support literacy.

Dr. Erin McGurk gave an update on the Smarter Balanced Field Test in which Ellington students will participate this spring, and also reported on a new resource being used in the district, *Bridges in Mathematics*, which is aligned with Common Core State Standards. The next Curriculum Committee meeting is March 14, 2014.

Finance Committee

Dr. Young reported that the Finance Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Thursday, February 6, 2014. Dr. Young reported on a review of 2013-2014 food service financials to date. An across-the-board increase of \$.25 is requested for the fall 2014. Lunch Price Equity in Schools will require an increase in the price to equate free and reduced rates with paying customer rates.

The Finance Committee reviewed the budget forecast for the remainder of this fiscal year. The committee reviewed the year-end forecasted balances by category and anticipates approximately \$25,000 being returned to the town at the end of the year.

Ms. Devlin provided an update on plans to implement the Uniform Chart of Accounts. A State consensus on the accounting manual to which schools would map their software does not exist. There will be costs associated with doing the mapping. The process seems rushed, costs are unclear, and a pilot program might be a better approach at this point.

Finally, there was a discussion of process for non-represented contracts. Two volunteers from the Board of Education will be requested to meet with the nurses. For all other non-represented staff, the Finance Committee will offer ten minute slots to present requests for Board consideration. Mrs. Hayes and Mr. Blanchette volunteered to meet with the nurses. The next meeting of the Finance Committee is March 6, 2014.

Special Board Committee Reports

Communications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson stated that the Communications Committee met on Tuesday, February 11, 2014. The committee discussed the message that it wants to communicate to the public regarding the building project along with possible methods of disseminating this message. The media pitch and unified budget message were items addressed in the meeting, followed by a discussion/review of the Communications framework for the Ellington Board, including a budget communication timeline with tasks and dates, a CABE Area 3 Legislative Breakfast, and a Friend of Education Award.

The committee discussed a negative article in the Journal Inquirer that suggested that Ellington's reading program is lacking. The Communications Committee requested that Mr. Cullinan provide a report at the next Board of Education meeting on our reading program. Dr. McGurk suggested creating a factual handout on the subject. The next committee meeting will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4, 2014.

As all members of the Board were not in attendance it was recommended that the reading report be postponed to the next meet of the Board of Education.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report(s)

Monthly Instructional Report - January

Mr. Cullinan stated that the January report was included in the board packet. It contained the results of the kindergarten and grade 5 mathematics performance tasks and also reading assessments in grades 1-6. Crystal Lake School reported on its initial CARES meeting (Cooperation, Advocacy, Respect, Empathy, and Self-Control) as part of its Responsive Classroom program. Crystal Lake also provided an update on the work of its data teams as well as the work of its faculty book study. Center School

reported on a variety of activities related to the celebration of Martin Luther King Day as well as the creation of valentines cards for recipients of Meals on Wheels.

Windermere School provided another update on the school-wide PBIS program as well as work related to small group interventions. Ellington Middle School reported on the new algebra program as well as the Kendall Hunt Mathematics program. Ellington Middle School also reported on Smarter-Balanced practice tests, the roll-out of Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education. Ellington High School provided an update on a review of special services offerings, the transition of special education students from grade 8 to 9, and the work of the NEASC Two-Year Report Committee. The report also contains an update on the Parent Conversations program as well as the on-going work with the Teacher's College.

Recognitions include the growth and success of the Mock Trial Team, the premiere performance of the Steel Drum Band, an academic award for the boys soccer team, the CMEA Music Festival participants, as well as Mr. Rinaldi's participation in a focus group at the College Board AP Forum related to the school's success leading to the 2014 AP Honor Roll.

Update on Building Projects

At the last Board of Education meeting it was reported that the low bid was in excess of the approved budget. On January 28, 2014 the Permanent Building Committee recommended an additional appropriation of \$867,000. On February 10, 2014 the Board of Selectmen recommended an additional appropriation of \$900,000, a town meeting date and a referendum date. On February 11, 2014 the Board of Finance also recommended an additional appropriation of \$900,000 as well as the town meeting and referendum dates. On February 18, 2014 the Town Meeting forwarded the additional appropriation to a referendum which was held on February 25, 2014. The referendum passed by a vote of 360 to 258. On February 25, 2014 a pre-contract meeting was attended by Peter Welti, Peter Williams, Atty. Ryan, Nick DiCorleto, David Stein, Will Walter and Steve Cullinan. A meeting with the contractors will be scheduled for next week. The Permanent Building Committee will meet on March 12, 2014. Mr. Cullinan commended town officials for their efforts in resolving this issue in such a timely manner.

Update on Proposed Capital Improvement Budget

On January 27, 2014 the Board of Selectmen's Capital Improvement Committee presented its recommendations to the Board of Selectmen which approved its plan as presented. On February 11, 2014 the Board of Selectmen presented its Capital Improvement Plan to the Board of Finance. On April 10, 2014 and possibly on April 11, 2014 the Board of Finance will finalize its recommendations for inclusion in the budget.

Two Board of Education items, the Ellington Middle School Courtyard Drainage Project and the Windermere Generator are listed as capital items. The Technology Refresh at Windermere and Ellington Middle School is listed as a lease/purchase and will appear in the Debt Service portion of the town budget. This item will probably need approval at a town meeting.

Update on Proposed Operations Budget

Mr. Cullinan reported that the proposed Board of Education budget for 2014-2015 was submitted to the town as required. Copies were provided to members of the Board. Upcoming dates that will impact the proposed Board of Education budget are:

March 25	7:30 p.m.	Board of Education presentation to the Board of Finance
April 8	8:00 p.m.	Budget Public Hearing at EHS
April 10	7:30 p.m.	Board of Finance Budget Deliberations
April 11	7:30 p.m.	Board of Finance Budget Deliberations (If Necessary)
May 13	8:00 p.m.	Annual Town Budget Meeting
May 20	8:00 p.m.	Board of Finance sets mill rate – Possible Referendum Date

Directors' Reports

Report on Flexibility to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation

Dr. McGurk reported that the Board had received documentation from the State Department of Education on this topic in the board packet. Optional revisions to the Educator Evaluation Plan were recommended by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) and approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education on February 6, 2014. The changes allow districts to make revisions in their teacher evaluation plans for the remainder of the current school year and for the 2014-15 school year. On February 19, the Ellington Professional Growth and Teacher Evaluation Committee met to discuss the recent changes to the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation (2012.)

The Adopted Flexibilities to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation are in three areas:

1. Number of Student Growth Goals
2. Decoupling of State Test Data in 2014-2015
3. Number of Observations

The first area of flexibility relates to the number of goals/objectives educators are required to set. While the existing guidelines allow for at least one (1) but no more than four (4) goals/objectives for student growth, the amendment clarifies and emphasizes that the minimum number of goals/objectives required for each educator can be one (1.) Ellington's plan already allows teachers to select one goal with at least two IAGDs. No changes to our plan were recommended by the committee.

The second area of flexibility pertains to the use of state standardized test data in compiling educators' summative ratings. Based on the recommendation of our committee, the Ellington Board of Education approved an amendment to our plan on October 23, 2013, indicating that Ellington will not require that a teacher's summative rating incorporate state test data. No further action needs to be taken at this time.

The third and final area of flexibility addresses the specific requirements for the number of observations based on teachers' experience and performance ratings. PEAC recommended providing districts with the flexibility to reduce the number of required formal observations for teachers. The flexibility options allow teachers who have received summary ratings of proficient or exemplary would be able to participate in a rotating cycle, with 1 formal observation every three years and 3 informal observations in the alternate years, starting in 2014-15. In the current year, teachers may choose to have additional formal observations and evaluators maintain the right to schedule additional formal classroom observations for any teacher with concerns about professional performance and practice. The Board of Education has approval of these flexibility options listed as an action item.

Board Liaison Reports

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reminded the Board that the CAFE Day on the Hill will be held on March 5, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. at The Bushnell's Autorino Great Hall on Capitol Avenue in Hartford. The Connecticut Council for Education Reform: Best Practice Forum is scheduled for March 6, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Omni Hotel in New Haven, CT. Attendees will join international thought leaders and statewide experts in a dialogue about implementing key strategies to raise student achievement in Connecticut. A webinar titled, *The Affordable Care Act and Collective Bargaining in Connecticut's Schools* will take place on Wednesday, March 12, 2014 from 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. An Education Public Policy Workshop titled, "What's Happening in Washington, D.C.?" is scheduled for March 25, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the Wilde Auditorium at the University of Hartford. This informative presentation will recap federal legislative and executive branch activities that affect PreK-12 education.

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that she attended a CREC Council meeting on February 19, 2014, followed by a CREC Board of Directors meeting, and a CREC Policy meeting.

Glen Peterson, the Education Division Director for the CT State Department of Education was in attendance to provide an update on Sheff negotiations. A one-year agreement was reached and is effective upon execution through June 30, 2015 and runs concurrent with the Phase II extension which is expiring on June 30, 2014. This extension is being referred to as "The 2014-15 Sheff Phase III Stipulation." The new goal is to achieve 44% Hartford resident minority enrollment in a reduced isolation setting. This is a 3% increase over the previous goal. There is now a revised definition of reduced isolation. It expands the definition of diversity to include diverse racial

populations as contributing to reduced isolation. In order for a school to be considered not racially isolated, there had to be a minimum of 25% white students and no more than 75% minority students. This goal has become increasingly difficult to achieve and it does not reflect the make-up of Hartford suburbs. At this point, 70% of the applications from Hartford suburbs are from minority students. This led to unfilled seats within the programs to keep the correct racial balance. A major difference with the Phase III stipulation is that racial diversity will be no more than 75% black and or Hispanic students reflecting the original plaintiffs, and a minimum of 25% white, Asian, Pacific Island and Native American students. The state feels this balance will be easier to achieve and more realistically represents the communities. This should also allow for increased Hartford resident minority enrollment in the Sheff Region's 44 magnet schools and 25 Open Choice districts. Additionally, the state is looking to increase capacity at several magnet schools as well as adding 500 more Open Choice seats. Finally, this stipulation allows for the conversion of a Hartford neighborhood school to a Lighthouse school designated through a collaborative process.

Peter Smith provided an update on the current legislative session. He stated this short session will have a financial focus. There will be no real policy shifts. Identified initiatives will be implemented. The governor plans to stay the course regardless of opposition or complications.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative DePiano reported that this year's Mr. EHS will be held on March 7, 2014.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made to approve an across-the-board increase in lunch prices of \$.25 beginning in the fall of 2014 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

1st. Dr. Young

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made to approve revisions to the 2013-2014 Educator Evaluation and Support Plan as presented and as mutually agreed upon with the district Professional Development and Evaluation Committee and to authorize submission of Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System 2013-2014 Flexibility Request Submission Form to the Connecticut State Department of Education.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. H. Friedman

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the personnel retirement request of Sharron May, special education aide at Ellington High School, effective June 30, 2014.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. T. Kiff-Judson

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made to accept, with regret and best wishes, the personnel retirement request of Marita Francis, third grade teacher at Center School, effective June 30, 2014.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. T. Kiff-Judson

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Keune asked if any member of the Board would be attending the CABA "A Day on the Hill." Mr. Purcaro indicated that he would attend and was asked to report to the Board at the next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

A motion was made at 8:36 p.m. to enter into executive session for the purpose of Strategies Related to Negotiations and a personnel matter and to invite the Superintendent of Schools, Stephen Cullinan, into the executive session.

1st. A. Hayes 2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:52 p.m.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #4 Approval of Modification of Existing Bargaining Unit.

1st. H. Friedman 2nd. M. Young

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made that the Board of Education approve the Memorandum of Agreement modifying the existing Ellington Educational Support Staff bargaining unit as presented.

1st. H. Friedman

2nd. T. Kiff-Judson

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:58 p.m.

1st. M. Young

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

AMH/ad

Ann Marie Hayes
Secretary