

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

September 17, 2014

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, September 17, 2014, in the Library/Media Center at Ellington High School.

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. by Mr. Keune, Chairperson.

Present were: Messrs. Blanchette, Friedman, Keune, McNamar, Purcaro 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; and Student Representative Jennifer Roy. Mr. Roberson arrived at 8:08 p.m.

Also present were: Mr. Neil Rinaldi, Principal, Ellington High School; Mrs. Suzanne Markowski, Director of Guidance, Ellington High School; Mrs. Nancy O'Brien, School Counselor, Ellington High School; and Mrs. Trudie Roberts, Principal, Center 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. As there were no objections, Consent Agenda items one through fourteen were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the August 20, 2014 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the September 3, 2014 Regular Board Meeting.
4. Approval of the 2015 Board of Education Meeting Schedule.
5. Approval of Jeri St. John as a Candidate for TEAM Initial Support Teacher Training.
6. Approval of Submission of the 2014-2015 Title III English Language Acquisition Grant in the Amount of \$6,239.
7. Approval of the Employment of Jennifer Willis as a Spanish teacher at Ellington High School, effective September 2, 2014.

8. Acceptance of the Personnel Retirement request of Stephen C .Cullinan, Superintendent of Schools, effective June 30, 2015.
9. Acceptance of the Personnel Resignation of Karen Ansaldi, full-time special education aide at Windermere School, effective August 28, 2014.
10. Acceptance of the Personnel Resignation of Kelly Fongemie, part-time preschool aide at Center School, effective September 2, 2014.
11. Acceptance of the Personnel Resignation of Maria Souza, part-time special education aide at Windermere School, effective September 5, 2014.
12. Acceptance of the Personnel Resignation of Barbara Bresnahan, part-time special education aide at Center School, effective September 9, 2014.
13. Acceptance of a Donation from the Streetrod Association in the amount of \$1,000 to purchase materials for Ellington High School's technology education classes.
14. Accept of a donation of \$3,000 from Aetna in support of the Ellington High School Diversity Project with Silver Lane School in East Hartford, CT.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Introduction of Exchange Student – Julian Herms

Mr. Rinaldi introduced 16 year old Julian Herms, an exchange student from Germany who is attending EHS and staying with an Ellington host family, the Davis family. Julian is interested in politics and economics, and he has already adapted to high school life at EHS by joining the football team and plans to play basketball. His hobbies include music, travel, and sports. Julian stated that he became an exchange student because he wanted to have an adventure and experience American school spirit; he likes it here because it is very different from German schools, which do not have sports clubs. Academically, he will be taking French III, calculus, honors physics, American history, and Shakespeare. In the future, Julian wants to attend a university.

Annual SAT, AP, ACT Report / Class of 2014 Statistics

Suzanne Markowski, Director of Guidance, stated that included in the board packets was the high school profile flyer, new this year, which goes out to every college that a student applies to. Also, as part of Naviance, all transcripts will now be sent electronically.

Mrs. Markowski provided a profile of the Class of 2014. Out of 186 graduates, eighty-six percent of the class is involved in post secondary education, including four-year colleges, two-year colleges and technical schools. Mrs. Markowski stated that the Class of 2014 submitted 522 college applications to 170 institutions in 32 states and Canada. A list of the institutions to which students applied, were accepted to and are attending was presented. Forty-three members of the Class of 2014 took the ACT; scores in all five areas (English, math, reading, science and composite) were slightly below the state average, though scores were above national results.

Seventy-four percent of the Class of 2014 took the SAT and again scored slightly lower than state averages but above national results in Critical Reading and Writing. In October 2013, sixty-six percent of the junior class participated in the PSAT, up from fifty-nine percent the previous year. Eighty-eight students took one hundred thirty AP exams, with eighty-five percent of the students scoring three or better. Two AP scholars were identified, and six AP Scholars with Honor were identified. Mrs. Markowski stated that in regard to AP exams, EHS students scored significantly above state and national results.

Sixty-six students earned 487 credits through the College Career Pathways program. Three students pursued college level courses at Asnuntuck Community College. Fifteen seniors earned a total of 51 credits through the UCONN Early College Experience program.

Dr. Young inquired about the students who scored a four and five on AP exams as well as data on students with perfect SAT scores. Mrs. Markowski will research how many students are scoring between seven hundred and eight hundred. Mr. Purcaro inquired about the twenty students from 2014 who entered the work force do we track that data to see if they ever go back to college or conversely, drop out of college and go into the workforce? Dr. McGurk stated that the district just signed on with a student clearing house that does data collection, which will eventually address these questions about tracking students.

CMT and CAPT Science Results

Dr. McGurk provided a handout of Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) 2014 Results. The science test was given to students in grade five and eight, and the CAPT was given to students in grade ten. In grades five and eight, comparison scores were at or above state averages and just slightly off the District Reference Group (DRG) averages. Also in these grades, the percentage of students at or above proficiency over the past five years has been in the ninety percentile range. Regarding CAPT testing in grade ten, 96.2% are at or above the proficient level, and for state comparisons, Ellington is at 61%, slightly off the DRG average of 66.1% but above the state average of 46.8%.

Regular Board Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt stated that the Policy Committee met on Monday, September 8, 2014. They finished the 3000 series of policies—Business/Non-Instructional Operations. The committee considered which policies should be included in the manual as well as any changes, additions and deletions that were necessary. It also sent several other policies for further administrative review to assure they were in keeping with current practice. These include Policy 3517.1-Site and Building Access, 3524.1-Hazardous Materials in Schools, 3542.31-Free or Reduced Price Lunches, 3542.43-Charging Policy, and 3543.31-Electronic Communications Use and Retention. After these policies are reviewed by the appropriate administrator, the Policy Committee will consider all recommendations and make any necessary changes to those policies and then this series of policies will be ready to be returned to CABE for the second draft to be presented to the full Board. The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2014.

Finance Committee

Dr. Young reported that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, September 4, 2014. Mrs. Patti Patton, Director of Food Services, reviewed the Food Service Financials end-of-year report for the 2013-2014 school year. The operational budget for the year ended with a small deficit of \$1,665.07. Mrs. Patton was pleased with these results as the previous year ended with a deficit of \$65,632.62. Reductions in staffing, as a result of serving fewer meals, were made at the start of the school. Mrs. Patton stated that the change in staffing resulted in the improved financial status for the past year. An increase in prices, needed to meet federal lunch price equity requirements, was postponed until the start of the 2014-2015 school year. Thus, the impact of that change has yet to show any results. Mrs. Patton discussed the impact of federal and state regulations on meal content, serving size and sales. The program served approximately 3,000 less lunches last year than the previous year.

Mrs. Devlin presented the end-of-year Final Expenditure report with a variance analysis in major accounts. She noted that the Board of Education did transfer \$17,330.51 back to the Town of Ellington at the end of the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Major accounts that produced a surplus for the year were: various salary accounts; health benefits; public utilities; special services transportation; outside tuition; and heating fuel. Major accounts which produced deficits for the fiscal year included: instructional aides; severance/retirement; purchased/contracted services; pupil services; professional/technical services; property services; property insurance; rentals; regular transportation; maintenance/custodial supplies; textbooks; and replacement equipment.

A copy of a proposed Budget Calendar 2015-2016 was reviewed and discussed. The Finance Committee made no changes to the proposed Budget Calendar 2015-2016.

Also, a draft copy of proposed Board of Education Budget Guidelines 2015-2016 was reviewed. The committee directed that delineation of any costs associated with the proposed K-6 Transition and School Security be incorporated into the guidelines.

Special Board Committee Reports

Communications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson reported that the Communications Committee met on Tuesday, September 9, 2014. The committee discussed plans for the coming year for the Communications Committee through the use of the communications framework document. The committee briefly reviewed accomplishments for the 2013-2014 school year. Members discussed a communications plan that has six main goals. The first goal is "Promote Positive Community Relations," and they discussed a number of ways to achieve this goal. Mr. Cullinan distributed the updated documentation on the Board of Education Marketing Plan action item from the Multi-Year Academic Support Plan. Ms. Kiff-Judson agreed to incorporate action items from that document in the Communications Plan. The next Communications Committee meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2014.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report(s)

Monthly Update on School Building Projects

Mr. Cullinan reported that there have been several meetings related to the Crystal Lake project, including the bi-weekly construction meetings held on August 21, 2014 and September 4, 2014. On September 4, there was also a separate FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment) meeting. The Permanent Building Committee (PBC) also met on September 9, 2014. A meeting was held on September 16 to discuss an issue with the playground site and snow removal at Crystal Lake School. The PBC also approved the same items that the Board of Education had approved, the FF&E for Crystal Lake and the playgrounds for both Crystal Lake and Windermere. At this point, Mr. Cullinan stated that overall, the project is on an accurate time line.

Update on Windermere Assistant Principal Search

Mr. Cullinan reported that there were about ninety applicants for the Assistant Principal position, of which sixty to seventy completed full applications. Of this amount, it was narrowed down to seven candidates for interviews with an eight person committee. The committee included a board member, administrators, and teachers. One candidate will have an extended follow-up interview on September 18, 2014 with Principal David

Welch, and if that is successful, that candidate will have another interview at the central office on September 19, 2014.

Annual Opening of School Report

Mr. Cullinan commented on enrollment, which was 2657 in October, 2013 and is now 2671 in September, 2014, an increase of fourteen students. Of interest is that NESDEC (New England School Development Council) projected that enrollment would decrease by fifty-two students. NESDEC also projected kindergarten enrollment to be one hundred forty-three; it is actually one hundred sixty-four. Mr. Cullinan reported on new staff, professional development on August 25, 2014, and the details of the events related to the opening of each school in the district.

Directors' Reports

Educator Evaluation: Data Management System Report

Dr. McGurk reported on the revised guidelines for teacher evaluations. It is required that boards of education get an annual update on the user experience of their data management system. The district uses BloomBoard, an online platform to manage educator evaluation information. She distributed a handout with feedback from teachers and administrators.

Board Liaison Report

CREC/CABE

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that for CABE, there are workshops coming up in October and November; the listing can be found at www.CABE.org. Regarding CREC, Mrs. Picard-Wambolt stated that she attended a meeting where topics included a presentation on Camp Jewel, the Clark School renovation, the Hartford summer youth program, a legislative update, discussion about the qualities desired in the new Commission of Education, and discussion about a new Executive Director for CREC.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Roy reported on the start of school, including the first senior class meeting; senior activities; portfolios; new staff; first advisory meeting; the first dance on September 19, 2014; upcoming football and soccer games under the lights; Spirit Week (October 27-31, 2014); the Homecoming Dance on November 1, 2014; and Open House on September 18, 2014.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion was made to add as Action Item #4, the approval of five candidates for the TEAM Initial Support Teacher Training.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

1. A motion was made that the Board of Education approve the final expenditures and transfer for the 2013-2014 school year as recommended by the Finance Committee.

1st. M. Young

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that the Board approve the 2015-2016 Board of Education budget guidelines as revised and recommended by the Finance Committee.

1st. M. Young

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made that the Board approve the 2015-2016 budget calendar as reviewed by the Finance Committee.

1st. T. Kiff-Judson

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made that the Board approve Amy Borio, Abbey Menard, Caitlin Masopust, Katelyn Moule and Kimberly Troy as candidates for TEAM Initial Support Teacher Training.

1st. A. Hayes

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS

Discussion Hiring Process for Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Keune stated that there is a CABE Superintendent Search Guide, and it was distributed to board members. It is customary to hire assistance from an outside firm for this process. There will be a Request for Proposal (RFP) drawn up by Mrs. Devlin. It was agreed that a date and time will be determined for a special board meeting to put together questions for potential candidates.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Keune stated that there was a letter in the board members' packets from Mr. Cullinan stating his retirement intention and his heartfelt thanks to all Board members, citizens of Ellington, the administrative team, dedicated teachers and support staff, town officials, parents and especially students.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:02 p.m.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. T. Kiff-Judson

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

AMH/ad

Ann Marie Hayes
Secretary