

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

March 25, 2015

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, in the School Administration Building.

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

Present were: Messrs. Blanchette, Friedman, Keune, McNamar, Roberson (7:05), Purcaro (7:10), and Young (7:10); Mesdames Kiff-Judson, 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; Ms. Laura Norbut, Administrative Intern; John Collins, Director of Technology; Jenna Dhandapani, Technology Integration Specialist K-6; and Michael Nash, Technology Integration Specialist 7-12. Mrs. Hayes and Student Representative Jennifer Roy were absent.

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 eleven were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the February 25, 2015 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Approval of Ellington High School Opening Knight Players trip to the New England Drama Festival in Rockport, Maine from April 23-25, 2015 subject to the conditions as outlined in board policy #5138.
3. Approval of the employment of Jennifer Brokaw as a long-term substitute math teacher at Ellington High School effective March 16, 2015.
4. Approval of the employment of Sarah Potpinka as a long-term substitute art teacher at Ellington High School effective March 18, 2015.
5. Approval of the employment of Jane Sylvester as a long-term substitute music teacher at Crystal Lake School/Center School effective March 19, 2015.

6. Acceptance of the resignation of Shannon Czerwinski, special education aide at Center School, effective March 3, 2015.
7. Acceptance of the resignation of Nancy Beres, café/playground aide at Windermere School, effective March 4, 2015.
8. Acceptance of the resignation of Wanda Parent, paraprofessional at Windermere School, effective March 10, 2015.
9. Acceptance of the resignation of Christopher Pariseau, custodian at Center School, effective March 13, 2015.
10. Acceptance of the resignation of Jessica Golas, special education aide at Windermere School, effective March 27, 2015.
11. Acceptance of the resignation of Jennifer Willis, Spanish teacher at Ellington High School, effective June 30, 2015.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Update on District Technology Initiative

Dr. McGurk, Mr. Collins, Ms. Dhandapani and Mr. Nash presented an Overview of Technology Initiatives. Mr. Collins noted major improvements over the past two years, which include the addition of Chromebooks, infrastructure upgrades, Google Apps, and the positive impact of the Technology Integration Specialists. Ms. Dhandapani and Mr. Nash discussed tech-to-teacher communication as bridging the relationship between tech staff and teachers, improving success of technology initiatives, and adding a layer of tech support. They presented a Draft Technology Plan 2015-2018 to the Board, a recap of the Parent Night Technology Presentation, and a Technology Competencies Continuum document. Last, they discussed Digital Portfolios, Professional Development, and K-12 Tech Integration Highlights. Dr. McGurk informed the Board that the Technology Specialists, in addition to formal training of students and staff, have offered hundreds of hours of support during planning time, lunch time, and before and after school times with individual instruction that has been significant in moving people forward. Mr. Keune thanked the presenters for their enthusiasm and dedication to the staff and students.

Initial Discussion of K-6 Transition

Mr. Cullinan gave a brief introduction for the next Board meeting in April regarding the

K-6 transition. Electronic feedback from parent forms and notes from the parent meetings have been provided to Board members. At the April meeting, a summary of the two options for grade four students will be presented; currently, more grade four parents have expressed the opinion to keep their students at Windermere for two years rather than disrupting their learning with more moving between schools/grades.

Mr. Cullinan also noted that transportation will be discussed at the April presentation, along with logistical and staffing issues. He asked that Board members consider any questions or items they would like to be addressed so that by June, the Board is ready to approve a transition plan.

Regular Board Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt stated that the Policy Committee met on March 2, 2015. They completed a review of the 3000 series of policies – Business/Non-Instructional Operations - as presented in CABE's Customized Policy Review. The Policy Committee sent approximately ten policies to various members of the district administrative team for further review to ensure those policies and regulations as written were in keeping with current practice within our district. Members of the administrative team that were asked to review policies include Mrs. Meg Devlin, Director of Business Services; Ms. Barbara Kelliher from our Facilities Department; Ms. Patti Patton, Food Services Supervisor; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; and Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology. Some of the policies were determined to be acceptable as written, others needed some revising, and several were unnecessary for our district. The committee reviewed all recommendations and accepted all policies as presented with the only exception being in Policy 3541.9 – Transportation Accident Review. The bus company name was changed to a more generic term that will not have to be changed if vendors are ever switched.

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt also stated that they completed a review of the 4000 series of policies – Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified - as presented in CABE's Customized Policy Review. The Policy Committee sent approximately twelve policies to various members of the district administrative team for further review to ensure those policies and regulations as written were in keeping with current practice within our district. Members of the administrative team that were asked to review policies include Mrs. Meg Devlin, Director of Business Services; Ms. Patti Patton, Food Services Supervisor; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Mr. David Pearson, Principal of Ellington Middle School; Mr. Neil Rinaldi, Principal of Ellington High School; and Nancy Daley, former Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent/Director of Human Resources. Some of the policies were determined to be acceptable as written, others needed some revising, and several were unnecessary for our district. The committee reviewed all recommendations and accepted all policies as presented.

Special Board Committee ReportsCommunications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson stated that the Communications Committee met on March 3, 2015. They discussed budget-related communications for 2015-2016 Budget and themes for this year's budget, including per pupil spending, major budget drivers, commitment to meeting the needs of students: world language (adding a teacher) and a school psychologist. The budget plan follows the format as prior years. Mr. Cullinan is drafting the fact sheet for use at public hearings and will follow up with principals about putting a link for the budget brochure in the newsletters. Committee members will ask at the next Board meeting for Board members to start drafting letters to the editors regarding the budget for submission in April and early May. There was also a discussion/review of the communications framework for the Ellington Board of Plans/Activities for 2014-2015. Items discussed were Community Forums, Backdrops, the Budget Basics Flyer, and the Friends of Education Award to be presented at the April Board of Education meeting.

Administrative ReportsSuperintendent's Report(s)Monthly Instructional Report – February 2015

Mr. Cullinan stated that the report was included in the board packet. The report contains the results of January reading assessments for grades one through six.

Center School reported on valentines given to recipients of the Meals on Wheels program; a science fair; a Nutmeg luncheon for fourth grade readers; their Hundredth Day celebrations; the after school homework club; and the work of their data teams.

Crystal Lake School reported on school team data work; faculty meetings discussing two books, *Reading Wellness* and *Notice and Note*; teachers progress toward professional goals; NAEP assessment in the areas of reading, math and science; a meeting of the All Hazards Safety and Security Committee and the Safe School Climate Committee; parent conferences; a PTO sponsored movie night; a Town Meeting assembly for the hundredth day of school; valentines for children at Connecticut Children's Medical Center; and various professional learning opportunities.

Windermere School reported on their Whole School Feedback Goal; the work of the 5/6 reading team and a Close Reading Workshop for 3-6 teachers; a meeting of the BIT (Behavioral Intervention Team); NAEP assessment in the areas of reading, math and science; Digital Citizenship lessons for grades 5/6 and a Google Account and Chromebook safety assembly for grade three students, both presented by Ms. Dhandapani; planning for a NASA video conference by Ms. Bashaw; and monthly Town Meetings by grade level.

Ellington Middle School reported on the Zone After School Program; a Teachers College Development Day; SBAC testing in the spring; Professional Development Day activities; instructional technology to promote a BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) environment; and participation in the Annual Jazz Festival.

Ellington High School reported on mid-year exams; U-Knighted week activities; the NCCC Cheerleading Championship; the quarterly Spotlight Breakfast; the Friends of Music Pancake Breakfast; and a Celebration of the Arts at the Ellington Senior Center.

Instructional Technology Specialists reported on professional development sessions; a special parent session titled “Parenting in a Google World;” and SBAC training for teachers who will be proctoring the tests.

Special services reported on math programming for students with special needs in grades six through eight; professional development at EHS in the areas of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Individual Education Plan (IEP); review of the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process; and professional development provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Mr. Cullinan stated that the Instructional Report also included a significant number of staff and student recognitions.

Monthly Building Projects Update

Mr. Cullinan stated that since the last Board meeting, there have been two Crystal Lake School construction meetings on March 5 and 19. The Permanent Building Committee (PBC) met on March 11, where some concern regarding the pace of masonry work was noted; however, the contractor stated all work would be completed on time. The Permanent Building Committee approved the purchase for the network equipment and the telephone system for Crystal Lake School.

Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Staff

Mr. Cullinan reported that spring non-renewal of non-tenured teachers must be completed by May 1, 2015. The budget can impact tenured and non-tenured staff but especially non-tenured teachers. The non-renewal action at this time eliminates in certain instances the requirement for the BOE to hold individual hearings for non-tenured staff if they should lose their position. As part of the process, each non-tenured staff member was sent a letter notifying them that Mr. Cullinan would be recommending their non-renewal at this meeting. Once the Board has taken this action, each impacted staff member will receive a second letter confirming the Board’s action. Later in the spring, when the budget is settled, Mr. Cullinan will request that the Board reinstate all or most of the positions.

In his capacity as Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Cullinan recommended that the Ellington Board of Education non-renew the teaching contracts of the following list of teachers at the end of the 2014-2015 school year in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151. Mr. Cullinan read the list of non-renewed teachers – (See Exhibit B).

Michelle Bashaw	Danielle Leone
Colleen Bava	Carolyn Lowe
Emily Bellone	Erica Lombardi
Jennifer Bordieri	Douglas Luginbuhl
Jennifer Blalock	Leah Maghini
Amy Borio	Jessica Marshall
Shannon Bostiga	Colleen Martin
Marissa Boucher	Caitlin Masopust
Jennie Brady	Jessica McEleney
Michele Cirillo	Keri McGhee
Elizabeth Cole	Allison McKeegan
Lauren Crowley	Cristen Millen
Rebecca Dean	Allison Morris
Justin DeCormier	Michelle Patenaude
Nadia DeRoy	Karen Penda
Cristine DiVenere	Stephanie Pruden
Amanda Ducharme	Sumitra Ratneshawar
Allison Frankel	Kristina Riscassi-Klopfer
Jessica Giroux	Christina Roy
Michael Glasgow	Catherine Ryan
Megan Glunt	Christina Saccoccio
Melissa Haberern	Jason Scavotto
Jessica Hall	Adam Schumacher
Jacyln Ham	Laura Sobolewski
Buffey Harris-Fogarty	Sara Spak
Abigail Hoffman	Jamie Stroly
Deborah Hurlburt	Jacklyn Tobin
Katherine Johnson	Melanie Wagner
Caleb Johnston	Jessica Waine
Tara Kelly	Jessica Warner
Sherryl King	David Welch
Ines Knospe	Melissa Wills
Holly Korona	Emily Wry
Erin LaFleche	Mark Wursthorn
Lisa LaForte	Katherine Zebedeo
Matthew Lane	

Mr. Cullinan stated that he was making this recommendation for the following reasons, any one or all of which he viewed to be a sufficient basis for the recommended action:

1. budgetary considerations consistent with the reduction in force provision of the teachers' contract,
2. elimination of a position to which a teacher was appointed or loss of a position to another teacher;
3. other due and sufficient cause.

Mr. Cullinan informed the Board that each teacher named had been advised prior to this meeting that he intended to make this recommendation and, if the Board takes action, the teacher has the right under Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151 to request the reasons for the Board's action to non-renew his/her contract of employment and that further, depending upon those reasons, may be entitled to a due-process hearing to consider the Board's decision to non-renew the contract of employment.

Mr. Cullinan also recommended that he be authorized and instructed to communicate notice of this action in writing to the affected parties and to respond for the Board to any appropriate requests, which may be forthcoming from the teacher or his/her representatives as provided in the Teacher Tenure Law.

Health Insurance Update

Mr. Cullinan stated that in December, our healthcare representatives from Brown & Brown Insurance informed the Board that CIGNA had given a not-to-exceed 38% premium rate increase. Brown & Brown made their own calculations that came to 32% based on high claims. When the contract was put out to bid, the recommendation for our budget was 25%, so we initially built the budget at 25%. When the results of the actual budget came back, Anthem was at 18.3% - a blended rate – and ConnectiCare was at 16.9% - which does not include dental, life, and disability – and there are bargaining units who have unsettled contracts, so the Board budgeted at 19%. On March 3, Anthem and ConnectiCare made their presentations and leaders of all bargaining units were invited. ConnectiCare revised their bid down to 9.5%. ConnectiCare provided in writing a not-to-exceed a 15% hard cap for the following year. Brown & Brown went through an analysis and stated that in order to make the change, for factors need to be considered:

- Benefit structure
- Access to care
- Plan administration
- Cost factor

Regarding dental, life and disability, Anthem still wants the bid and will hold our current rate on dental for two years; they would hold our life and disability for three years. There is a two-part Action Item at this meeting based on recommendations from Administration and our insurance broker to authorize ConnectiCare for Medical

Insurance and then authorize the Superintendent to authorize the best contract for dental, life and disability once that becomes available.

2015-2016 Proposed Budget Update

Mr. Cullinan stated that on March 24, the 2015-2016 Proposed Board of Education Budget was presented to the Board of Finance (BOF). The next step in the budget process is the public hearing, scheduled for April 14 at 8:00 p.m. at Ellington High School. The BOF will then hold budget deliberations on April 16. The Annual Town Budget meeting is scheduled for May 12 at 8:00 p.m. at Ellington High School with the Referendum tentatively scheduled for May 19.

2015-2016 Pre-Paid Grants

Mr. Cullinan stated that each year at this time, the office of the First Selectman asks the Board of Education (BOE) to provide an estimate of the various grants the BOE expects to receive in the following fiscal year – (see Exhibit A).

Business Report

Mrs. Devlin provided an update on the Board's directive to investigate the possibility of solar power in the Ellington School District. The Operations Committee met on January 8, and Tim Schneider from Earthlight Technologies presented information to the committee for the potential use of solar energy in our school buildings. He explained the power purchase agreement and the ZREC lottery (Zero Renewable Energy Credit). The Operations Committee endorsed entering the lottery, and at the January 21 Board of Education meeting there was a motion to authorize Earthlight to enter several of the schools into the lottery as recommended by the Operations Committee. On our behalf, Earthlight submitted applications for the three elementary schools, the middle school, and the Administration building; all of the projects have been accepted for funding consideration. The high school would be in a future lottery. The next step is to pay a deposit/nominal holding fee of \$650 per location as a good faith effort. Next, Earthlight will complete a structural engineering analysis on each building, and then draw up a final installation contract. The nominal holding fee does not commit the district to proceed with the installation if the analysis does not support the anticipated benefits of installing solar panels.

Board Liaison Reports

CABE

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported on the 75th annual NSBA (National School Board Association) conference that she attended in Nashville. She will compile her notes and send electronically to all Board members for their perusal.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made that the Board of Education recommend to the Annual Town Budget Meeting acceptance of prepaid grants and funds fully reimbursable for the fiscal year commencing on July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2016, and to appropriate the same to the Board of Education in a sum estimated at \$1,788,321 as detailed in Exhibit A, attached.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the Ellington Board of Education non-renew the teachers' contracts of the following list of teachers as previously read into the record by the Superintendent and contained on Exhibit B at the end of the 2014-2015 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

I further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to the above noted teachers and that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests for a hearing, if required by law, or for other data which may be forthcoming from the teacher and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151; and further move that the Superintendent be directed that any response to a request for a hearing, if a hearing is required by law, indicate that such hearing is to be before the Board of Education.

1st. M. Young

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made that, upon recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a first vote to rescind all policies contained in the current Board of Education Policy, Section 3000 – Business/Non-Instructional Operation - and adopt in its place the revised Ellington Public Schools: Business/Non-Instructional Operation: Series 3000 as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

2nd. H. Friedman

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made that, upon recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a first vote to rescind all policies contained in the current Board of Education Policy, Section 4000 – Personnel - and adopt in its place the revised Ellington Public Schools: Personnel: Series 4000 as presented.

1st. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. G. Blanchette

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5. A motion was made that the Board of Education approve the Superintendent to execute an agreement with ConnectiCare to provide medical insurance as stipulated in employee contracts per the terms presented in their bid documents and as recommended by our insurance broker, Brown and Brown commencing July 1, 2015.

I further move to authorize the Superintendent, acting on behalf of the Board, to enter into agreements for dental, life and disability insurance as stipulated in employee contracts and that best meet the needs of the district in terms of benefits, plan administration, access to care and cost.

1st. M. Purcaro 2nd. T. Kiff-Judson

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

6. A motion was made that the Board of Education accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Theresa Looke, school nurse at Windermere Elementary/Intermediate School, effective June 30, 2015.

1st. A. McNamar 2nd. G. Blanchette

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:46 p.m.

1st. M. Purcaro 2nd. M. Young

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

AMH/amd

Ann Marie Hayes
Secretary