

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

January 20, 2016

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, January 20, 2016 in the School Administration Building.

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

Present were: Messrs. Blanchette, Keune, Young, and McNamar; Mesdames Hayes, Kiff-Judson, Picard-Wambolt, Socha, and Foster; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Mrs. Margaret Devlin, Director of Business Services; Mr. Robert Butler, Director of Facilities; and Student Representative Daniel Joy. Mr. Purcaro was absent.

Also in attendance were Mr. Tim Schneider, Earthlight Technologies, LLC; Ms. Fiona Stewart, Greenbank; Ms. Susan Horvath, Windermere School; and Ms. Laura Norbut, Administrative Intern.

CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM

Gaby Mendelsohn, of 34 Newell Hill Road, Ellington, addressed the Board regarding two issues: Reading levels being eliminated in 9th and 10th grade and the limited options/choices of curriculum based novels in high school. She expressed concern about rigor, focus and analysis of reading material. Mr. Keune thanked her for her feedback and stated that her concerns would be forwarded to and addressed by the appropriate administrative staff.

Josh Oliva, of 32 Brook Crossing, Ellington, addressed the Board regarding his family's support of Full Day Kindergarten. He spoke on behalf of a group of parents who share his views, and he inquired how they could continue their support throughout the budget process. Mr. Keune thanked him for his interest and asked that Mr. Oliva leave his contact information with the Communication Committee Chair.

Janet Settle, of 15 Punkin Drive, Ellington, addressed the Board. She is the owner of two daycare centers, Little House in the Country and Country Club House. She expressed two concerns about Full Day Kindergarten. Professionally, Full Day Kindergarten would have negative financial consequences on her business, other daycares in Ellington, and the families that these businesses serve. Losing part-time Kindergarten students would create an increase in tuition for the other children in daycare, and there would be staff reductions. Personally, she believes that students are too young for a full day of Kindergarten. Mr. Keune thanked her for her feedback.

Mark Spurling, of 17 Gail Drive, Ellington, addressed the Board regarding his support of Full Day Kindergarten. He feels Ellington needs to do what is best for the children, not the budget, and initiate Full Day Kindergarten. Mr. Keune stated that this endeavor has been discussed for years but space for students was an issue. However, due to the completion of the Crystal Lake School Project, Ellington now has the room to accommodate Full Day Kindergarten.

Richard Spurling, of 16 Gail Drive, Ellington, addressed the Board regarding his support of Full Day Kindergarten. Mr. Keune thanked him for his input.

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 eight were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the December 16, 2015 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the January 9, 2016 Annual Budget Workshop.
3. Acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$400 from BJ and Lenny Diamond of Basileus Music, LLC for the EHS music program.
4. Acceptance of the resignation of Melanie Wagner, speech and language pathologist, Crystal Lake School, effective December 21, 2015.
5. Acceptance of the resignation of Amanda Ducharme, literacy specialist, Windermere School, effective January 12, 2016.
6. Approval of the employment of Christine Zaremski as a long-term substitute reading teacher at Windermere School, effective January 11, 2016.
7. Approval of the employment of Nicole Benjamin as a .6 FTE speech and language pathologist at Crystal Lake School, effective January 19, 2016.
8. Approval of the employment of Nancy Melough as a long-term substitute speech and language pathologist at Windermere School, effective February 16, 2016.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMSRegular Board Committee ReportsCommunications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson stated that the Communications Committee met on January 5, 2016. The committee discussed the approach defining a brand. Dr. Nicol suggested keeping the tagline, "Where Children Come First." Dr. McGurk pointed out that the apple logo was part of the last website redesign and that each school has different color schemes and mascots. Dr. Nicol highlighted mindfulness/balance and innovation. Mr. Nash and Mr. Collins pointed out that the website designer can assist with the actual picture for the logo.

Dr. McGurk suggested that the committee spend more time on developing and gathering input from others for the mission/vision. Dr. Nicol suggested moving the timeframe out a couple months for the website final roll out.

The group felt that the following were key concepts to consider for the design:

- Growing learners, growing leaders for today and tomorrow (applies to adults and children)
- Innovation
- Sense of community, small town/big heart
- Mindfulness
- High school core values: innovators, collaborators, communicators, honorable individuals, critical thinkers
- Glastonbury HS: inspires curiosity, cultivates learning and empowers students to shape their lives and our world.

Operations Committee

Dr. Nicol stated that the Operations Committee met on January 6, 2016.

First, the committee discussed prioritizing the Windermere and Crystal Lake Contingency Lists. The committee was reminded that the Permanent Building Committee is the body that approves any spending of the building project funds. The committee was informed that the recommendations of the Board of Education to the PBC are highly considered when approving spending requests. The committee moved the air conditioning of Crystal Lake gym as a higher priority. The committee moved technology items at Windermere to a higher priority. The committee requested more information on the media player and its ability to be used for student performances. A

motion was made to recommend to the Board of Education to recommend to the Permanent Building Committee the reprioritized contingency lists.

Next, the committee continued their discussion on the Solar Panel Project. The group discussed the December 17 meeting in which the school administration engaged the First Selectman, the town's attorney, and other town administration regarding the process of approval and the legalities of the proposed purchasing agreement. The group further discussed the town approval process. A motion was made to recommend to the Board of Education the approval of the solar panel project at Crystal Lake, Center and Ellington Middle Schools contingent upon the town process proceeding as discussed.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report(s)

Superintendent's Entry Plan Update

Dr. Nicol began with his second goal, to “develop a clear understanding of the school district's culture, strengths and needs in order to promote continued school improvement.” He stated that in the Board packets, there were two handouts: the Central Office Support Staff Monthly Meetings and Problem of Practice Protocol. Regarding the Central Office Support Staff Monthly Meetings, Dr. Nicol discussed the Spirit of Central Office work, the three Areas of Focus at each meeting, and the Measurement of Progress. Regarding Problem of Practice Protocol, Dr. Nicol reviewed how this protocol is a structured process for helping an individual or team to think expansively about a particular, concrete dilemma. He related this to the work of the Central Office staff, and he stated that there would be a survey and presentation for all district staff on this issue.

Next, Dr. Nicol discussed his first goal, which focuses on “fostering respectful relationships and productive partnerships with stakeholders within the public schools and within the town of Ellington.” He stated that in the Board packets, there was a handout of the Ellington Board of Education Five Year Capital Improvement Plan, which was presented and approved by the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen. This plan merges with the BOE Budget Proposal and Contingency Lists. Dr. Nicol noted that this goal encompasses many partnerships and positive connections with various boards in Ellington, including the Board of Selectmen, the Permanent Building Committee, Planning and Zoning, and the Board of Finance.

Lastly, Dr. Nicol discussed the third goal of the Superintendent's Entry Plan, which is “out of district networking to enhance the ability of the Superintendent to help the school district.” He stated that Mr. Purcaro is the CAFE III Area Director and on

January 28, 2016, Ellington and Vernon Boards of Education will host the CABA Legislative Breakfast at Ellington High School.

Monthly Building Projects Update

Regarding Crystal Lake School, Dr. Nicol reported on some heating/boiler issues that are being addressed, the completion of the locker rooms for the gymnasium, the snow guards for the roof, and other areas of progression. At this point, approximately 92.2 percent of the Crystal Lake project is paid out.

Regarding Windermere School, Dr. Nicol stated that there is a front entrance door that needs to be brought up to code. It is being addressed.

Monthly Instructional Report – December 2015

Dr. Nicol stated that the December report was included in the Board packet. The report contains the Status of Initiatives for Bridges Math for grades 1, 2 and 5.

Crystal Lake School reported on the work of its Data Teams, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, preparing for a second Learning Walk, the Annual Pancake Breakfast, and Computer Science Week.

Center School reported on a successful Holiday Shoppe and a Holiday Sing-Along, the Winterfest celebration in town and winter concert at school, mid-year student assessments, and the work of their PBIS team.

Windermere School reported on continued instruction on technology and library use with the Hour of Code event, preparation of fifth and sixth graders for middle school, the work of the WPTO for the successful Holiday Boutique, a Seasonal Sharing Drive, and faculty meetings focused on yoga and mindfulness in the classroom.

Ellington Middle School reported on Student Led Conferences, hosting several schools who were visiting to replicate some of the best practices at EMS, faculty meetings focusing on teaching strategies that support students' listening comprehension skills, which is in alignment with the school's goal to improve SBAC scores, the Student Council's Annual Food Drive, and a fundraiser to benefit the organization, Common Hope.

Ellington High School reported on the 2016 Statewide Junior SAT Administration date, which is planned to coordinate with the sophomore administration of Science CAPT and freshman administration of the Science CAPT practice test. EHS also reported on the Opening Knight Players presentation of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, the Winter Choral Concert, a Winter Concert featuring the Concert Band, Jazz Band, Wind Ensemble, and

Steel Drum Band, the Hands Creating Hope Club, Fall Sports Awards Night, and the events of the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America).

The Special Services Department reported that two professional development sessions were offered to all paraprofessionals in the district. The first session was on how to support students with Autism, and the second session provided information on supporting students with the use of Chromebooks. Dr. LaPorte also held a training called "SIT for Autism" created by Southern CT State University. This training was designed for child care providers who babysit for students with Autism and other disabilities. Lastly, Dr. LaPorte and staff presented on our district SRBI and Dyslexia process at the CT Forum.

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

Presentation of Proposed District Calendar 2016-2017

Dr. Nicol stated that approval of the 2016-2017 Proposed District Calendar is an Action Item on the Agenda. The calendar is included in the Board member's packets. The calendar is in alignment with the CREC calendar. Dr. Nicol noted that on this calendar, if Full Day Kindergarten is implemented for next year, the arrival and dismissal times will change for the three elementary schools.

Directors' Reports

Full Day Kindergarten/K-6 Transition Update

Dr. McGurk provided an update on the move forward with Full Day Kindergarten implementation. Kindergarten teachers and literacy support staff attended training on the role of developmentally appropriate play activities, social skills development, and literacy and language skills. She will continue to work on planning and scheduling with Kindergarten teachers, especially with curriculum implications related to Science and Social Studies, since those areas were limited in the half day session.

Regarding the transfer of five fifth grade teachers from Windermere to Crystal Lake and Center School, Dr. McGurk attended a faculty meeting at Windermere, where concerns and questions by staff were addressed. She noted that one Special Education teacher will also need to be moved to Crystal Lake School. Dr. McGurk stated that the transition is a delicate issue and that she and Windermere principal, Dave Welch, are working and offering support to address all concerns.

Board Liaison Reports

CREC/CABE

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported she attended a CREC meeting on January 20, 2016. CREC magnet school tuition may increase by 3% this year. The Speaker of the House, Brendan Sharkey, discussed regionalization and the huge deficit issue in the state. The Speaker did not discuss what specific budget cuts would be needed. Mrs. Picard-Wambolt stated that currently, Ellington pays an average of \$4,407 per student enrolled out of district in a magnet school.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Joy reported on holiday happenings at the high school, mid-term exams, Student Council Activities, a Valentine's Day fundraiser, and winter sports.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to rescind the current Graduation policy and adopt in its place the revised Ellington Public Schools: Policy 6146 – Graduation Requirements, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that the Board formally adopt the District Calendar for the 2016-2017 school year as presented by the administration.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made that the Board of Education accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Eleanor Hughes, language arts consultant at Crystal Lake School, effective June 30, 2016.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made to approve the Crystal Lake, Center and Ellington Middle Schools Solar Panel Project as recommended by the Operations Committee.

1st. G. Blanchette

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5. A motion was made that the Board of Education recommend to the Permanent Building Committee the contingency lists for the Windermere and Crystal Lake School Building Projects as recommended by the Operations Committee.

1st. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

6. A motion was made to adopt a Board of Education proposed operating budget for the 2016-2017 year in the amount of \$36,448,277 as presented on January 9, 2016.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. J. Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Old Business / New Business

Mr. Keune inquired about hosting another Hartford Choice Program Open House for students and their parents. Dr. McGurk will look at possible dates.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:05 p.m.

1st. M. Young

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Hayes
Secretary

AMH/amd