

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

April 26, 2017

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, in the School Administration Building.

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

Present were: Messrs. Keune, McNamar, Blanchette, Purcaro and Young; Mesdames Hayes, Foster, Picard-Wambolt, Kiff-Judson and Socha; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology; Mr. Robert Butler, Director of Facilities; and Student Representative Grace Hinckley.

Also attending were Mr. Neil Rinaldi, Principal, Ellington High School; Mr. Tim McCluskey, Athletic Director, Ellington High School; Mr. Aaron Foster, Board of Selectmen; Mr. Mark Mahler, Ellington Education Association; First Selectman, Lori Spielman (8:45 p.m.); and Sergeant Brian Santa, Ellington Resident Trooper's Office (8:45 p.m.).

CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM

Shannon Kent, 41 White Road, Ellington, shared concerns about her EHS student's Latin class, the amount of staff turnover in district, the lack of communication to parents, and the low morale at the high school. Dr. Nicol responded that the Latin teacher would be back next year, and that the rate of turnover in the district is not abnormal when compared to turnover rates over the past decade. He explained the various personal reasons why staff make these decisions. Mark Mahler, EHS English teacher and the teacher's union president, responded to the morale issue. He explained that teachers can have personal relationships with one another and when a teacher leaves without much closure it can be very emotional. He stated that he has had positive and productive meetings with Dr. Nicol regarding staff issues.

Tabetha Avtges, 5 Ryan Drive, Ellington, shared concerns about a Latin class and an English ECE class communication to parents; she also inquired about exit interviews. Dr. Nicol responded by stating a new teacher with experience was hired from Farmington High School and that Mr. Scavatto was cleared to teach ECE with students still able to receive the college credit for the course. He also stated that two emails were sent to parents of students in that ECE class. Regarding next school year's Latin class, he explained that the current teacher will be returning next year.

Tess Grous, 12 Buff Cap Road, Ellington, inquired about communication between Board of Education members and parents and about the lead teacher at the middle school. Mr. Keune responded that the Communications Committee was formed three years ago to help improve Board communication with the community.

Nancy Gillis, 12 Shepard Way, Ellington, expressed a concern about her daughter's EHS teachers being stressed. She would like the Board to be aware of the current climate at the high school. She praised the EHS teachers.

Sydney Avtges, a junior at EHS, praised her teachers and asked about teacher evaluations. Dr. Nicol explained that per state mandates, some evaluations are required to be announced and some unannounced.

Stella Pontius, president of the National Art Honor Society, stated that an EHS art show would be held and wanted to extend invitations to all Board members.

Dr. Nicol stated that he would like to engage parents in productive conversation about their concerns and aspirations and move the school district forward in a positive manner. He noted that social media contains misinformation and suggested that parents call or email him directly, and he will respond.

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 seventeen were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the March 22, 2017 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the March 22, 2017 Special Meeting.
3. Approval of the Minutes of the April 3, 2017 Special Meeting.
4. Approval of the Minutes of the April 11, 2017 Special Meeting.
5. Approval of the employment of Kevin Bernardino as a Spanish teacher at Ellington High School, effective August 28, 2017.
6. Approval of the employment of Maria Enrique as a math teacher at Ellington Middle School, effective August 28, 2017.
7. Approval of the employment of Alexandra Garcia as a kindergarten teacher at Crystal Lake School, effective August 28, 2017.

8. Approval of the employment of Emilia Mason as a science teacher at Ellington High School, effective August 28, 2017.
9. Approval of the employment of Victoria Schilling as a science teacher at Ellington Middle School, effective August 28, 2017.
10. Acceptance of the resignation of Emma Piaseczynski as a part-time paraprofessional at Windermere School, effective March 17, 2017.
11. Acceptance of the resignation of Nicole Torretti as a part-time kindergarten aide at Windermere School, effective March 22, 2017.
12. Acceptance of the resignation of Laurie Miller as a part-time secretary at Windermere School, effective March 24, 2017.
13. Acceptance of the resignation of Susan Branca-Kuehn as an In-School Suspension Supervisor at Ellington High School, effective April 10, 2017.
14. Acceptance of the resignation of Savannah Deskis as a paraprofessional at Windermere School, effective April 18, 2017.
15. Acceptance of the resignation of Deanna Drohan as a part-time paraprofessional at Windermere School, effective April 21, 2017.
16. Acceptance of the resignation of Heather Burns-Lucas as a school nurse at Ellington Middle School, effective May 2, 2017.
17. Acceptance of the resignation of Emily Bellone as a grade 5 teacher at Crystal Lake School, effective June 30, 2017.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Presentation of Ellington Friend of Education Award

Mr. Keune stated the nomination and selection of the Ellington Friend of Education Award recipient was actually a group of individuals this year; he paid tribute to their accomplishments on behalf of the Ellington Rescue Post 512 – Explorer Program.

Mr. Keune and Mrs. Kiff-Judson presented award plaques to the following recipients of the Ellington Friends of Education Award: Arthur Aubin, Sr., Kenneth Gayton, Stephen Kratzke, Sr., Robert Poggie, Richard & Joan Senger, and John Watts.

Mr. Keune thanked each recipient and praised their extensive service to the community.

Regular Board Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Dr. Young reported that the Finance Committee met on April 24, 2017. Regarding the 2017-2018 Budget, Mr. Greenleaf overviewed the current budget process and situation with regard to the overall town budget. Of the two budgets publicly presented, the alternative budget not based on the Governor's budget was used as the basis of discussions. The Board of Finance is proposing a 1.2 mil increase in this year's town budget. This requires the Board of Education to find cuts of \$200K from its proposed budget.

It was discussed that using the alternative budget presumes none of the Governor's tax shifting and cost-shifting proposals will be implemented. Should the Governor's budget proposal be implemented in part or fully, the Town's contingency fund would be the likely source for covering state costs that are passed to the town after our budget process has been completed.

Dr. Nicol presented his revised budget cuts, totaling \$200,151. This included revised higher transportation costs with First Student providing new buses with no savings, no change in our current health care costs (0% increase), the non-replacement of a technology education teacher, an increase to 1.0 FTE from .6 FTE for a Spanish teacher, elimination of a new assistant principal position (salary and benefits) from the proposed budget and a few smaller system-wide cuts and transfers from risk accounts and the dynamics of retirements.

A motion was made to recommend for approval by the Board of Education a budget cut of \$200,000 to bring the 2017-18 budget request to \$36,871,969. This motion is an Action Item.

Policy Committee

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that the Policy Committee met on April 3, 2017. The committee continued Review of Policy 3280 – Gifts, Grants, and Bequests (Crowdfunding). Dr. Nicol presented a proposed revision of the policy to include crowdfunding. Ms. Kiff-Judson located another related policy, Policy 1324 – Fundraising, within the heading of Community Relations. It was agreed that the

crowdfunding language should be included in that policy as well. Dr. Nicol will make the necessary changes to both policies and the committee will review the revised policies at the next Policy Committee meeting.

The committee continued review of Policy 5141.213 – Naloxone Use in School Setting. Dr. Nicol informed the committee that Dr. Kristy LaPorte has been researching this topic and this policy, including seeking input from additional stakeholders. She plans to recommend a policy to the committee at the August Policy Committee meeting.

The committee reviewed Policy 6142.101 – Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (School Wellness Policy). This mandated policy was revised due to federal legislative changes that now require the inclusion of “goals” within the policy. Mrs. Foster also requested the committee review Policy 5141.25 – Students with Special Health Care Needs – Food Allergy Management & Guidelines.

Communications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson reported that the Communications Committee met on April 4, 2017. Dr. Nicol discussed his article for Ellington Events. Mr. Greenleaf reviewed the latest budget documents prepared by the Town, and the group discussed transportation consortium. The committee reviewed the budget timeline for this year and discussed potential options for encouraging public involvement. Mr. Keune gave an update on the Ellington Friends of Education Award.

Operations Committee

Mr. Purcaro reported that the Operations Committee met on April 26, 2017. The primary topic was the baseball/softball scoreboard at Ellington High School. Mr. McCluskey, Athletic Director, and Mr. Greenleaf provided options and funding solutions for a new scoreboard. The committee will make a recommendation. Due to the hard work of the Booster Club and community, the purchase of a scoreboard is at no cost to the Board.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Report(s)

Superintendent's Goals – Update

Dr. Nicol discussed his transparent school initiatives. He reported on magnet school applications. In 2016-2017, there were approximately 193 parents (4.82%) that requested magnet school applications. For 2017-2018, parent requests are down to 179 (4.59%). Regarding the Hartford Choice program, in 2016-2017, eleven students

selected Ellington as their first choice. In 2017-2018, twenty-seven students selected Ellington as their first choice.

Dr. Nicol, continuing with the transparent school initiatives, stated a video will be made in order to communicate with parents in regard to the budget. Additionally, Dr. Nicol reported on the success of the 30-30-30 tours and eventual parent involvement in tours for the next school year. Tours will start by being open to PTO presidents and members of the Superintendent's Parent Advisory. Dr. Nicol also touched on his monthly Superintendent office hours for staff at each school.

Next year, Dr. Nicol plans to offer Superintendent's Parent Office Hours before the monthly Board meeting. There will also be Superintendent EHS Student Office Hours. All of these initiatives are intended to improve relations with students, staff and community to move the schools forward.

Board of Education Brainstorming Session (Mastery Based Learning)

Dr. Nicol stated that parents will receive an email in regard to attending and observing a session on Master Based Learning to be held on May 3, 2017. This arose from interest from the Superintendent's Parent Advisory. At the May 9 Superintendent's Parent Advisory meeting, feedback and findings will be discussed, and parents are invited to attend and participate.

30/30/30 Tour – Windermere School

Dr. Nicol stated that the next tour is scheduled for May 10, 2017 at Windermere School.

Ellington High School FBLA Field Trip to Anaheim, California

Dr. Nicol stated that four students achieved final standing for the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) and were invited to go to the FBLA National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California. The parents of the students will cover the expenses and take their children; there is no action needed by the Board to approve this event.

Directors' Reports

Expulsion/Transition Program Update

Dr. LaPorte explained the Transition program for students 19-21 years old who are graduating but staying with the high school for vocational work programs and daily living skills. The location will be off-site from EHS but still within the community.

Mr. Greenleaf discussed the Transition Program budget:

Estimated start-up costs	\$15,000
Estimated ongoing costs	\$30,000

Estimated revenue	<u>(\$20,000)</u>
Total budget	\$25,000

He also discussed alternative options if EHS transition/expulsion students were outplaced. The estimated cost for the district for outplacement for (9) transition students would be \$405,000 and for (5) expulsion students would be \$78,750.

Mr. Greenleaf discussed the positive features and the challenges of the location (16 Church Street, Ellington). There is an Action Item for the Board to move forward with up to a 5-year lease agreement with final terms to be negotiated by the administration.

Transportation Contract

Mr. Greenleaf reported that the transportation contract with First Student is up as of June 30, 2017. Ellington is currently working in collaboration with Manchester, Vernon and Somers. He provided a fact sheet (in Board packets). Regarding rates, from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018, there is a 15.33% increase in Type 1 buses (regular size) and 10.50% increase in Type 2 buses (mini bus). Under the new contract, First Student will pay the first \$1.50/gallon of diesel. This allows the budget to be reduced in the fuel account to offset the increase in rates.

State Accountability Results

Dr. McGurk made a presentation on the Next Generation Accountability System 2015-2016 Report. She stated that accountability systems serve important purposes, such as tracking progress, helping districts make improvements, showing where support is needed most, recognizing successes, promoting transparency, and satisfying federal and state requirements. She also stated that several new indicators were added to underscore the importance of a well-rounded education.

Dr. McGurk discussed the twelve indicators, the Accountability Index scores and the Performance Index Scores. She shared the Ellington Public Schools District Report, 2015-2016, how schools are categorized, and examples of schools in each category. She noted that Windermere Elementary was a School of Distinction in 2015-2016. She stated that future steps include monitoring student learning achievement data.

Board Liaison Reports

CREC

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported on CREC schools in regard to Hartford Choice enrollment numbers and magnet school enrollment numbers and the search for a new CREC superintendent.

CABE

Mr. Purcaro reported that that there will be no increase in member dues in light of the budget situation at the state. He briefly discussed other budget indicators.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Hinckley reported on the upcoming OKP production of The Sound of Music, spring concerts for band and chorus, Class Day, Senior Night, Prom and Relay for Life. She stated that AP testing was about to begin, and seniors are making college decisions.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion was made to add as Action Item #4, the personnel employment of Courtney Walker as a long-term substitute Latin teacher.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #5, the personnel employment of Ryan Ferrer as a long-term substitute physical education/health teacher.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #6, the personnel employment of Michelle Bennett as a long-term substitute grade 2 teacher.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #7, the approval of baseball and softball scoreboards at Ellington High School as recommended by the Operations Committee.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. K. Socha

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #8, the approval of the administration to enter into a lease agreement for the purpose of operating an expulsion/transition program.

1st. A. McNamar 2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #9, the approval of a Regional Inter-District Collaborative Transportation Contract.

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

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #10, the removal of Action Item #3, the approval of the Ellington High School FBLA Field Trip to Anaheim, California from June 28, 2017 – July 3, 2017, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

1st. A. McNamar 2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #11, that the Board accept the proposed changes to the Board of Education Budget 2017-2018, reducing the increase by \$200,000 to \$36,871,969, as recommended by the Finance Committee.

1st. M. Young 2nd. J. Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

1. A motion was made that the Board of Education accept, with regret and best wishes, the retirement request of Louise Kelly, literacy specialist at Crystal Lake School, effective June 30, 2017.

1st. A. McNamar 2nd. J. Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that the Board of Education change the June Board of Education Meeting date to Wednesday, June 14, 2017, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

1st. A. McNamar 2nd. M. Young

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made to approve the employment of Courtney Walker as a long-term substitute Latin teacher at Ellington High School, effective May 15, 2017.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made to approve the employment of Ryan Ferrer as a long-term substitute physical education/health teacher at Center School and Crystal Lake School, effective May 18, 2017.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. K. Socha

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5. A motion was made to approve the employment of Michelle Bennett as a long-term substitute grade 2 teacher at Crystal Lake School, effective May 22, 2017.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

6. A motion was made to approve the new baseball and softball scoreboards at Ellington High School as recommended by the Operations Committee.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. Not Required

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

7. A motion was made to authorize the Superintendent to enter into a lease agreement with Our Moms, LLC for the property located at 16 Church Street, Ellington, Connecticut for a term not to exceed five years with the funds to be negotiated by the administration for the purpose of operating an expulsion/transition program.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

8. A motion was made to approve the Regional Inter-District Collaborative Transportation Contract for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2022, accepting First Student as the lowest bid.

1st. A. McNamar

2nd. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

9. A motion was made to accept the proposed changes to the Board of Education Budget 2017-2018 reducing the increase by \$200,000 to \$36,871,969, as recommended by the Finance Committee.

1st. J. Foster

2nd. Not Required

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Correspondence

Dr. Nicol stated that the Board packets included student and alumni achievements.

A motion was made at 9:55 p.m. that the Board enter executive session to discuss matters concerning security strategy or the deployment of security personnel, or devices affecting public security. Further, that the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Scott Nicol, First Selectman, Lori Spielman, and Sergeant Brian Santa of the Ellington Resident Trooper's Office be invited to attend the executive session.

1st. J. Foster

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

The Board came out of executive session at 10:42 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made at 10:42 p.m.

1st. T. Kiff-Judson

2nd. A. Hayes

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Hayes
Secretary

AMH/amd