

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Ellington, Connecticut

### Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

The Communications Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met for a virtual meeting on Monday, December 14, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

#### Attendees:

*Board of Education Members:* Ms. Jenn Mullin, Ms. Marcia Kupferschmid, Ms. Miriam Underwood and Ms. Liz Nord.

*Administrative Team Members:* Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools

*Also in attendance:* Ms. Jennifer Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Human Resources Coordinator.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Ms. Mullin at 6:32 p.m.

#### Agenda Items:

1. *Discussion on Ellington Public Schools Legislative Agenda (Teachers of Color Residency Program)*

Dr. Nicol began the discussion by explaining the difficulty in meeting with all of the various groups and coordinating timing for all of the meetings. The meetings were held to identify all of the legislation that may be beneficial for Ellington regarding having more teachers of color, and other legislation that will make Ellington more marketable. This is why Ellington is working with various groups and organizations in order to present legislation initiatives that will address the need for diversity in our schools. Dr. Nicol emphasized that it is important to Ellington because at this time Ellington has 26% of students of color and only 3% of teachers of color. This is a great way to recruit untapped resources of individuals who, in middle of their careers, may be looking for change in their career path. This has been done in the past in the art program and was a great success. This Teacher Residency Program through CREC is a great way to reach out to the black and latino community. This is an area that has been untapped. To hire teachers with other experiences that can bring knowledge to our students from different job experiences. The more diverse the education we can provide to our students in Ellington the better prepared our students will be

for future job opportunities. If the Communications Committee and the Board of Education approves this proposal, then this will be lobbied and sent out to our state legislators, superintendents and other groups. We also plan on presenting this to our Ellington Equality Group, Town ADHOC Diversity Committee, and other groups and committees.

Dr. Nicol indicated that we currently have a teacher at Windermere School that is part of this initiative program and having a great experience. If this teacher is successful with the completion of the program and we have a position open in the fall, we can then hire this teacher.

Dr. Nicol further explained that he has been working with a lobbyist from CREC and CAPPs in order to get the wording correct regarding this initiative and all of the groups are happy with the current proposal.

Ms. Mullin asked the question as to whether Dr. Nicol has reached out to legislators and other organizations to inform them that this is coming and previous work he has done. Dr. Nicol said he has strategized with two Co-Chairs of the Education Committee to try to make this a bi-partisan signed bill. If this is co-sponsored it has a better chance of getting approved. This is why we are trying to work with these various groups in order to prevent this from getting derailed and changed.

Ms. Underwood asked if Ellington is endorsing or proposing this legislation? Dr. Nicol said that we are not actually proposing a bill that has been written because it is more complicated since the program is already in place so we are endorsing the program that is currently in place and making sure it expands to include other initiatives. Dr. Nicol explained that we are the only Board of Education that he is aware of that does official voting on legislative agendas. That is not to say the other districts are not in agreement of this legislation. There are various other groups and committees that are in the process of presenting their own legislation regarding this program.

How long has Ellington had a legislative package? Dr. Nicol explained that this was created approximately 3-4 years' ago when he became the Superintendent in Ellington. It was an initiative that he started.

Ms. Nord asked the question as to whether we are endorsing the BLAC Consortium platform. Dr. Nicol explained that we are supporting the various diversity and equity work in the region and the state. This shows that Ellington is a leader in this area in supporting the work that is being done for the black community. This only raises the credibility of Ellington in recruiting teachers of color.

Dr. Nicol further explained the difficulty with the wording of this legislation with regards to this legislation and trying to not singling out one group and that is why various groups are listed and not just the black community.

Ms. Underwood asked the question with regards to not listing individual name and signing off on this legislation that is highly political. Dr. Nicol said that if she prefers instead of individual names that it could just say the Board approved. Dr. Nicol understood her concern with putting individual names on such a political topic.

Ms. Nord asked if this letter will be updated/changed prior to a vote? Dr. Nicol indicated that he was not planning on changing the wording of the letter at this time but if it did change it would only have minor changes. Ms. Underwood had some grammatical changes to the letter and Dr. Nicol will address those changes.

Ms. Mullin asked if this would be discussed with the full Board of Education meeting to be held on Wednesday, December 15, 2020? Dr. Nicol said it was on the agenda for the Board meeting.

2. *Continued Discussion on Communications Plan Template/Upcoming Matter*

Ms. Mullin indicated that since she was ill prior to Thanksgiving she was unable to film with the nurses and custodians. Ms. Mullin will reach out to Brian Greenleaf to coordinate a time and date that filming could take place. Ms. Mullin asked if this could be done and sent to families prior to the break, so they have an understanding of what is being done at the schools with regard to cleanliness, nursing protocols and the contact tracing. Dr. Nicol said there will be school wide meetings and a short video that Brian Greenleaf will send to parents regarding recommendations and thoughts prior to break. He indicated that the video that Ms. Mullin would like to record may not be feasible prior to the break and may need to be done when the staff returns. Ms. Mullin understood and would like to use Windermere School for the video.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

1st. M. Kuperschmid

2nd. M. Underwood

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Jenn Mullin  
Communications Committee, Chair

