

Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut

September 26, 2018

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, September 26, 2018, in the Library/Media Center of Ellington High School.

Present were: Mr. Blanchette, Purcaro and Young; Ms. Kiff-Judson, Picard-Wambolt, Foster, Dzen, Socha, Nord and Kupferschmid; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance & Operations; and Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology. Ms. Amanda Marcus, Student Representative, was absent.

Also attending were Mrs. Melissa Haberern, Special Education Supervisor; Ms. Sara Spak, Special Education Supervisor; Mrs. Liz Cole, Curriculum Supervisor of Science, Technology and Math; Ms. Michele Murray, Curriculum Supervisor of Language Arts and Social Studies; Mr. David Pearson, Principal, Ellington Middle School; Mr. Michael Nash, Assistant Principal EHS/EMS; Mr. Mark Spalding, Superintendent Intern and Director of Pupil Services, Consolidated School District of New Britain; and Mr. Mark Mahler, Union President, Ellington Education Association.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Mrs. Kiff-Judson, Chairperson. A round of introductions were made.

Special Recognition

Dr. LaPorte introduced two Ellington educators, Diana Richards and Kathleen Rafael. Dr. LaPorte thanked them for their contributions and support of a district family during the last school year.

CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM

Mrs. Kiff-Judson reviewed the guidelines for the Citizens and Staff Forum.

Ashley Lanz, 105 Burbank Road, Ellington, recognized two curriculum leaders in the district that she has been honored to work with, Liz Cole and Michele Murray. Ms. Lanz stated that both curriculum leaders have a passion and dedication to education and that Ellington is fortunate to have them in the district because they are doing a phenomenal job.

Mark Mahler, EHS teacher and Teacher's Union President, in reference to the large number of EPS teachers in the audience, clarified to the Board that they were not in

attendance to protest against the Board of Education but instead to show a united resolve in seeking a fair settlement for EPS teachers. Mr. Mahler said he hopes to continue the good working relationship the union has forged over the years with the BOE and administration. However, he noted, many educators find it hard not to take issues personally when livelihoods are on the line. Mr. Mahler wanted the Board members to see the lives affected during negotiations and hopes that the Board members will consider meeting again to continue negotiations. Mr. Mahler thanked all the teachers in attendance.

Mrs. Kiff-Judson thanked the speakers for sharing their comments. She thanked the teachers for their important roles in the district and stated that the Board wants to work hard to come up with a package that works for them while still maintaining the delicate balance of working out a budget that will pass for the taxpayers.

Dr. Nicol stated that the Board recognizes the challenges of negotiations for teachers while they balance financial obligations and their livelihoods. Dr. Nicol commented that what is impressive about Ellington is that most staff and citizens are able to engage in challenging matters with civility. Dr. Nicol expressed his respect for all the educators in the district who are part of the collective Ellington family and thanked them for attending.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Kiff-Judson asked if anyone wished to remove any item from the Consent Agenda. Consent Agenda items one through seven were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the August 22, 2018 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Approval of the employment of Sarah Maltese, BCBA, effective September 17, 2018.
3. Acceptance of the resignation of Lisa Marholin, Special Education Aide at the High School, effective August 2, 2018.
4. Acceptance of the resignation of Catherine Tamsin, Administrative Assistant to Special Services, effective August 24, 2018.
5. Approval of the employment of Glomelyn Webber, Administrative Assistant to Special Services, effective August 27, 2018.
6. Acceptance of the resignation of Tracy Thibert, Special Education Aide at the High School, effective September 21, 2018.

7. Acceptance of funds for Connecticut's Network of Care for School Systems Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Project, grant application was presented with approval by Dr. LaPorte at the June 20, 2018 Board of Education meeting.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Special Reports

Board of Education Retreat, September 17th Debrief

Mrs. Kiff-Judson reported that the retreat was a brainstorming session that revolved around a self-evaluation process. A handout was included in Board packets. Listed were four items, with sub-topics, that need work and refocusing: The District Improvement Plan, Board Orientation, Team Professional Development, and Communications/Community Leadership. Mrs. Kiff-Judson asked for Board feedback on these items. She recommended assigning each item to an existing Board subcommittee.

Non-Certified Staffing Trends

Dr. LaPorte held a presentation on the resignation rates of paraprofessionals. She explained the many categories of paras (full and part-time, café/recess aides etc.). She noted a significant increase in para hirings over the past three years due to increased student need. Dr. LaPorte shared statistics from 2012-2018 and discussed reasons for para resignations, including but not limited to the hiring of recent college graduates who leave for teaching positions, retirements, temporary assignments that end after several months, part time paras that resign and then return. She introduced Mrs. Diane Frasca, the para union president, who works effectively as a liaison with paras and the administration.

Regular Board Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Ms. Picard-Wambolt reported that the Policy Committee met on September 25, 2018. The committee entered into executive session for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to school safety and security and policy implications.

The committee then continued discussion of Board of Education Members Use of Social Media and reviewed a CAFE proposed policy. First read on that policy will be an Action Item at the October BOE meeting.

Administrative Reports

Superintendent's Reports

First Day of School Recap

Dr. Nicol stated that all the reports he received regarding the first day of school, such as with teachers, transportation, principals, etc. were positive. He and other Board members enjoyed visiting the schools, and Dr. Nicol noted that this is part of the transparent school initiative whereas Board members and others interact with the EPS community. Ms. Socha and Ms. Dzen shared their first day reflections; Ms. Dzen suggested that tours not be held on the first day due to the hectic challenges teachers and administrators face on that day. Ms. Dzen suggested for next year that Board members greet children and families outside of the schools. Dr. Nicol stated the adjustment will be made for next year. Mrs. Kiff-Judson noted the excellent, positive response to the EPS video of the first day of school.

School Enrollment Update

Dr. Nicol stated that for the August, September and November Board meetings, he will provide three reviews of school enrollment due to the fact that there is an ebb and flow at the start of a school year. Dr. Nicol shared a handout on class sizes as of this date across the district; he presented a separate report on K-6 that was color-coded to explain the classes approaching and classes already at high enrollment. Dr. Nicol stated that all students' needs are different and that one class may show a higher enrollment but in actuality be manageable, whereas a lower enrollment class may have more challenging needs to meet. Dr. Nicol stated that on-going conversations regarding class sizes and the need for increased classroom space at the elementary schools should continue.

Superintendent's Goals 2018-2019

Dr. Nicol presented his Superintendent Goals, remarking that this year, he did not start working on his goals until after the district improvement plan had been presented to the BOE once and meetings with administrators had taken place. He garnered feedback and wanted to make sure his goals aligned as much as possible with the district improvement plan. Dr. Nicol went over a few highlights and revisions of the goals. The goals are an Action Item at this meeting.

Facilities Study Community Forum

Dr. Nicol reported that the Facilities Workshop will be held October 4 at 7:00 p.m. at Ellington High School. He has been encouraging all citizens to attend; members from

the Boards of Finance and Selectmen will be there. Dr. Nicol stated that there would be activities for children, if parents need to bring them, and that the meeting would also be streamed live and recorded through Local Live and put on the facilities study website.

Open Choice Open House

Dr. Nicol stated that the Open Choice Open House will be October 18 at 6:00 p.m. at CREC, 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford.

Directors' Reports

Annual Accountability Testing Report

Mr. Hendrickson stated that the Accountability Testing Results Spring 2018 Assessments would be followed by a presentation of the District Improvement Plan. The Accountability Testing Results include the Smarter Balanced, the SAT, CAPT and CMT Science testing. The slide show showcased the Ellington Public Schools District Report, 2017-2018.

The Smarter Balanced Results for 2017-18 showcased grades 3-8 English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Mr. Hendrickson went through slides with graphics depicting:

- Ellington compared to DRG average – SBAC all grades combined
- Mathematics – Areas of knowledge and skill measured and percentage of students at levels 3/4
- ELA - Areas of knowledge and skill measured and percentage of students at levels 3/4
- Non High Needs three year averages / High Needs three year averages
- Percentage of students hitting growth targets
- EHS SAT school day results, grade 11 / SAT scores and sub-scores
- Three year look back percentage at Goal vs. DRG - Math & ELA
- Non High Needs Student Performance three year look back – Math & ELA
- Neighboring town comparisons
- Ongoing Work & Next Steps

District Improvement Plan

Mr. Hendrickson stated that the updated draft of the District Improvement Plan was in Board packets. The draft includes feedback from Board members. Progress will be measured in district and school student outcome goals along with school-based data points. The outline of the plan, which includes actions and strategies, is as follows:

- **Equity:** Mastery Based Learning, Equitable Opportunities

- **Innovation:** Personalized Learning, Innovative Mindset
- **Efficient Operations**

Dr. Nicol reiterated how the District Improvement Plan aligns with the Superintendent's goals. Mr. Hendrickson stated he would like more transparency with the curriculum.

Board Liaison Reports

CABE

Mr. Purcaro updated the board about the CABE/CAPSS Convention and the rescheduled CABE Legal Issues Workshop.

CREC

Mr. Blanchette reported on his first CREC meeting. CREC is opening behavioral clinics for students, parents and educators to provide wrap-around services.

ACTION ITEMS

1. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools: Policy 6171 – Special Education, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. J. Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools: Policy 4111.1/4211.1 – Affirmative Action, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. M. Kupferschmid

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools: Policy 5141.4 – Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools: Policy 5113 – Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. J.Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

5. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools Policy Ellington Public Schools: Policy 5113.2 – Truancy, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

6. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a second and final vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools: Policy 4111/4211 – Recruitment and Selection, as presented.

1st. K. Picard-Wambolt 2nd. L. Nord

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

7. A motion was made that the Board of Education approve the Ellington Middle School Grade 8 trip to Washington, D.C. from June 4, 2019-June 7, 2019, subject to the conditions as outlined in Board Policy #6153.

1st. J. Foster 2nd. J. Dzen

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

8. A motion was made that the Board formally adopt the 2018-2019 District Improvement Plan as present by the administration.

1st. L. Nord 2nd. J. Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

9. A motion was made that the Board approve the Superintendent’s 2018-2019 Goals as presented by Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools.

1st. M. Purcaro 2nd. M. Kupferschmid

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:43 p.m.

1st. M. Purcaro

2nd. J. Foster

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

KPW/amd

Kris Picard-Wambolt
Secretary