

## **Board of Education Ellington, Connecticut**

October 26, 2016

A regular meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, October 26, 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, McNamar, Purcaro and Young; Mesdames Kiff-Judson, Socha, and Picard-Wambolt; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services; Dr. Erin McGurk, Director of Educational Services; Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations; Mr. John Collins, Director of Technology; and Student Representative Grace Hinckley. Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. Foster were absent.

Also attending was Mr. Mark Mahler, Ellington Education Association.

### **CITIZENS AND STAFF FORUM**

Gabbi Mendelsohn, of 34 Newell Hill Road, Ellington, addressed the Board regarding 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.

### **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 four were adopted.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the September 28, 2016 Regular Board Meeting.
2. Acceptance of the resignation of Lynda Houghtaling, paraprofessional at Ellington High School, effective October 11, 2016.
3. Acceptance of the resignation of Amy Vail, paraprofessional at Windermere School, effective October 28, 2016.
4. Acceptance of the resignation of Jennifer Balnis, grade 8 science teacher at Ellington Middle School, effective November 4, 2016.

REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMSSpecial ReportsPresentation of District Improvement Plan 2016-2017

Dr. McGurk gave a Power Point presentation of the District Improvement Plan 2016-2017 and the District Goals 2016-2017. Dr. McGurk discussed the four goals, which are:

1. To increase student achievement in literacy of students in grades 3-8 as measured by the spring 2017 Smarter Balanced Assessment.
2. To increase student achievement in numeracy of students in grades 3-8 as measured by the spring 2017 Smarter Balanced Assessment.
3. To increase student achievement in literacy of students in grade 11 as measured by the school day administration of the SAT.
4. To increase student achievement in numeracy of students in grade 11 as measured by the school day administration of the SAT.

Regarding the Improvement Plan, Dr. McGurk stated that the new format of the Plan is in alignment with the four areas of district focus in the Superintendent's Goals - Mastery Based Learning, Equitable Opportunities, Innovative Practices, Personalized Learning - with an added section - District Operations. Each section includes Actions/Strategies, Timeline, Person(s) responsible, and Results Indicator. Dr. McGurk highlighted and discussed a few specific Actions/Strategies.

Regular Board Committee ReportsPolicy Committee

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt reported that the Policy Committee met on October 3, 2016. The committee continued review of Policy 3520.13 – Student Data Protection and Privacy/Cloud Based Issues. The draft policy presented draws language directly from the statute and is sufficient at this point. All current contracts have been renewed prior to October first, most up for renewal July first, allowing more time to properly vet and implement this policy. Therefore, no action is recommended at this time.

The committee also reviewed Policy 9325 – Meeting Conduct and Parliamentary Procedure. This is an administration recommended revision to an existing policy. The policy was thoroughly reviewed, and the committee was comfortable with it as presented. A motion was made and passed to recommend to the full Board adoption of this policy as presented.

Communications Committee

Mrs. Kiff-Judson reported that the Communications Committee met on October 4, 2016. The committee discussed the advisability of including the Friends of Ellington Public Schools Facebook Page (FEPS) in the Ellington Public Schools social media mash-up content. The group decided that at this point, it is better to keep the FEPS Facebook Page separate. The committee also discussed feeding information from the Tri-Town Hockey Facebook Page and Twitter Account.

Dr. Nicol and Mr. Collins discussed getting video announcements on the website. Dr. Nicol discussed doing various video presentations as well. The committee discussed the budget timeline flyer. The committee felt that an electronic version of the flyer should be created with the new logo and in a different format. The group continued their discussion of themes for the upcoming budget.

Administrative ReportsSuperintendent's Report(s)Superintendent's Goals – Progress Update

Dr. Nicol discussed four examples of progress made toward the Superintendent's goals (A Student's Journey: PK-6 and 7-12; The Transparent School Initiative; Lean and Clean). All handouts were in the Board packets.

The first example falls under the Lean and Clean goal: the results of the Central Office Support Staff feedback. The second example falls under the goal, A Student's Journey: PK-6 and 7-12: developing the vision of the graduate. The third example falls under the Transparent School Initiative goal: personalized learning as the topic of Dr. Nicol's current public blog to be printed in the Ellington Connection and emailed via SchoolMessenger.

Student Enrollment

Dr. Nicol stated that Board packets contained two handouts, one with projected numbers from February 2016 and one with current enrollment numbers from October 2016, along with Open Choice enrollment numbers. He also noted that the September 2016 District Instructional Report has been re-revised to reflect the areas of focus. The report was included in Board packets.

Superintendents' Network Visit

Dr. Nicol stated that on October 26, 2016, the Superintendents' Network visited Ellington High School. An agenda of the visit was included in Board packets. The focus was cognitive engagement in the classroom.

30/30/30 Tours

Dr. Nicol stated that the first 30/30/30 Tour by Board members would be on October 27, 2016 at Center School. Three members from the First Selectmen's office will also be in attendance.

Superintendent's Parent Advisory

Dr. Nicol stated that the first meeting of the Superintendent Parent Advisory Committee would be November 2, 2016. Discussion will focus on developing the vision of the graduate.

Special Board of Education FOI Workshop

Dr. Nicol stated that the FOI Workshop would be at Ellington High School on November 9, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance will also be in attendance.

Directors' ReportsUpdate of Special Education Student Programming

Dr. LaPorte provided a slideshow and started her update with the enrollment numbers for Special Education, which is currently at 331 students. The enrollment continues to grow each year and throughout the year. She noted that many students are moving into district with one-to-one aides stipulated in their IEPs (Individualized Education Programs). Dr. LaPorte provided comparison data for other districts, discussed the increase of new students with significant disabilities, and noted the importance of students staying in their neighborhood schools to receive services.

Dr. LaPorte also noted that the category "Other Health Impaired" is up 9%. This category includes but is not limited to Dyslexia, ADHD, Anxiety Disorders, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Bipolar Disorder. Also increasing the special education numbers is the statistic that Autism is up 9% in Ellington, which is comparable to other neighboring districts. Dr. LaPorte explained that Autism is not necessarily on the rise, but disorders are now being categorized differently with the new DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders).

Dr. LaPorte stated that there are two ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) programs and three MAP (Multiple Ability) programs in district. The SAFE program is at Ellington High

School, and each school has a PAL (Program for Alternative Learning) program to offer the least restrictive environment for all students. Students in all programs attend as many mainstream classes with their aides as much as possible. The SAFE and PAL programs help to increase student attendance, thus improving graduation rates.

The Transition Program was the next topic Dr. LaPorte discussed. In Ellington, student enrollment in the ages 18-21 program has doubled. The new laws in effect in Connecticut support a fifth year program in high schools to help these students, with the support of job coaches, to gain employment positions after completing high school. Dr. LaPorte stated that this change will impact the budget.

As a final topic, Dr. LaPorte discussed the increase of English Language Learners (ELL) in district. Enrolment of ELL went from 37 to 55, soon to be 57 in the coming week. There is a significant increase of these students at Level A - no English. To meet these students' needs, there is currently only one ELL teacher, one part-time tutor, and one paraprofessional.

#### Data Integration Supporting Personalized Learning

Mr. Collins presented a report that highlighted work being done in the district that aligns with district areas of focus, especially in regard to personalization of data. He noted the various technology tools utilized in district to show the flow of data and support personalized learning, which include School Messenger, Finalsite, VersaTrans, Gradebooks, Parents Portal, IEP Direct and Naviance.

Mr. Collins presented a slide show of spread sheets in discussing tracking assessment data for grades K-6, noting the multiple benefits of such data. Teachers can use the information to differentiate instruction, generate reports, create placements, and determine if intervention is needed.

Other content that enters into the database are PSAT, SAT, and Smarter Balance scores. In the Administrator's Plus program, these scores can be tracked to see if students meet growth targets. In the Gradebook program, teachers can see information on individual students, such as reading level, IEP information, and academic expectations.

In alignment with the Lean and Clean district goal, Mr. Collins is launching a cross-training initiative. This would fully utilize all the tools available so that every school is self-sufficient in managing student data and accessing the data from the system.

#### Board Liaison Reports

CABE

Mr. Purcaro reported upcoming events for CABE and the CABE/CAPPS convention, which is scheduled for November 17-19, 2016.

CREC

Mrs. Picard-Wambolt attended a recent CREC meeting, where the topic was an overview of magnet schools, magnet school tuition, and discrepancies in tuition payments made by the state. The meeting also touched on other issues related to the state budget. Mrs. Picard-Wambolt stated that the CREC Legislative Breakfast would be on January 26, 2017.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Hinckley reported on the end of first quarter classes, Spirit Week, the work of the Principal's Student Advisory, the Opening Knight Player's interactive show and fundraiser, the homecoming football game and dance, the upcoming Veteran's Day Assembly, and the success of the marching band at Battle of Bands.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion was made to add as Action Item #3, the personnel employment of James Guida as a long term substitute grade 8 science teacher at Ellington Middle School.

1<sup>st</sup>. M. Purcaro

2<sup>nd</sup>. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

A motion was made to add as Action Item #4, the personnel employment of Tabitha Heavner as a long term substitute library/media specialist at Ellington Middle School.

1<sup>st</sup>. A. McNamar

2<sup>nd</sup>. M. Purcaro

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

1. A motion was made that upon the recommendation of the Policy Committee, the Board hold a first vote to adopt the Ellington Public Schools: Policy 9325 – Meeting Conduct and Parliamentary Procedures, as presented.

1<sup>st</sup>. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made that the Board formally adopt the 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan, as presented by the administration.

1<sup>st</sup>. A. McNamar

2<sup>nd</sup>. M. Young

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

3. A motion was made to approve the appointment of James Guida as a long term substitute grade 8 science teacher at Ellington Middle School, effective November 7, 2016.

1<sup>st</sup>. A. McNamar

2<sup>nd</sup>. K. Socha

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

4. A motion was made to approve the appointment of Tabitha Heavner as a long term substitute library/media specialist at Ellington Middle School, effective November 20, 2016.

1<sup>st</sup>. A. McNamar

2<sup>nd</sup>. K. Socha

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

### Correspondence

Mr. Keune reported that he received a letter from CABA regarding the Ellington School district earning an honorable mention award in the area of social media and being the website winner for the upcoming CABA/CAPPS convention. He thanked Mr. Collins, Mrs. Picard-Wambolt and Mrs. Kiff-Judson for their extensive work on the new website.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:32 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup>. M. Purcaro

2<sup>nd</sup>. A. McNamar

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Kiff-Judson

TKJ/amd