

THE BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE BULLETIN BOARD

A SUMMARY OF THE JANUARY 14, 2019 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

The Berlin Public Schools □ 238 Kensington Road □ Berlin, CT 06037 □ 860-828-6581

Committee Reports/Correspondence to the Board □ Student Representatives: Miss Smalley reported AP English Literature students participated in the presidential debate on December 20, 2018, and senior speeches (related to those English classes) will occur soon; seniors presented their Capstone projects on December 18, 2018; Attorney General George Jepsen met with the Political Club and Introduction to Law students on January 4, 2019; the winter band concert is being held on January 15, 2019, in the Berlin High School auditorium; mid-term exams begin January 22, 2019; and the spotlight games of the week are boys basketball versus Middletown on January 18, 2019, and girls basketball versus New Britain on January 24, 2019. Student Achievement Committee: Mr. Aroian, committee chair, reported that, prior to tonight's meeting, the Student Achievement Committee met with Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk and discussed the impact of the new state law on graduation requirements. Communications Committee: Ms. Dennis, committee chair, reported that the Communications Committee recently met with Superintendent Benigni and Board President Tencza and discussed ways of sharing information with the community. The Communications Committee collectively put together a slide presentation, which was shared with the Board at the Board's retreat and again this evening. Correspondence to the Board: Superintendent Benigni shared thank-you notes received from Lindsay Marshall, Nicole Arsenaault, and Dave and Jen Bosso. Mr. Oakes reported that the Ad-Hoc Committee for Review of the Policy Book will also consist of Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis, McGee School Principal Salvatore Urso, Hubbard School Principal Alfred Souza, and Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian.

Audience of Citizens □ John Richards addressed the Board as both a citizen of the town and as a member of the Board of Finance. Mr. Richards reported one of the lessons the Board of Finance learned, during the time of the budget, was it made the mistake of not holding hearings. The Board of Finance is looking forward to working with the Board of Education and other town departments to communicate information to the public regarding what is being accomplished. Mr. Richards believes the budget the Board presents should be an embodiment of the positive goals it wishes to accomplish. He looks forward to the budget process and will provide the Board with any questions or information he receives.

Personnel - Retirements □ The Board accepted the retirement of Chris Wolfe, teacher of technology education at Berlin High School, effective at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. The Board thanked him for the 34 years of service he has provided to the youth of Berlin. The Board also accepted the retirement of Karen Schroder, math specialist at Emma Hart Willard School, effective at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. The Board thanked her for the 25 years of service she has provided to the youth of Berlin and wished both retirees good health and happiness in their retirement years.

Berlin High School 2019-2020 Program of Studies □ Assistant Superintendent Erin McGurk and Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis presented to the Board of Education, for its consideration and approval, new course offerings and revisions to the Berlin High School Program of Studies for 2019-2020. Ms. Eustis highlighted each change and responded to questions from Board members. The changes were reviewed and discussed by members of the Student Achievement Committee at their December 10, 2018 meeting. The Board approved the new Berlin High School Program of Studies for 2019-2020 as presented.

Facilities Related Updates □ Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported that at this time of the year there is a lot of focus on facilities. The capital plan is being developed and continues to be worked on by the town; the

district has applied for and is waiting to hear on grant programs; and the Board's own budget is being developed, which includes Site and Building and Capital Equipment. There have been conversations relative to how the facilities should look and where support will come from. Mr. Cugno reported that two weeks ago he met with Town Manager Jack Healy, Finance Director Kevin Delaney, Facilities Director Doug Solek and District Technology Coordinator Craig Szymanski to discuss not only the grants applied for, but what to do with those grants when received and how those grants can be coupled with money the town still has in its fund and is willing to spend on the school facilities. Mr. Cugno reported the Town Council approved installing the bollards in front of Berlin High School. There have been discussions regarding a new phone system for each elementary school and cameras for McGee. Mr. Cugno indicated he has seen a tremendous amount of support from the town for the school facilities.

Policy Review/Revision – Adoption – Policy 5141 - Wellness □ At the December 10, 2018 BOE meeting, adoption of the revised policy was tabled to allow the superintendent to obtain clarification on a couple of items requested by the Board. Clarification was provided and the Board adopted the revised policy as presented. A copy of the revised policy can be found on the BOE website.

2019-2020 Superintendent's Proposed Budget Presentation □ Superintendent Brian Benigni presented his proposed 2019-2020 budget to the Board. The proposed budget has an overall increase of \$2,596,842 or 5.96%. Several budget lines are impacting the overall budget increase, the largest being outplacement tuition at 29.11%; contracted services at 24.69%, which is directly related to the cost of the Effective School Solutions program not being funded in the 2018-2019 operational budget; administrative salaries at 2.42%, which is driven by contractual obligations; certified salaries at 4.5%, based on salary increases and grant reductions, which necessitated teachers being placed back into the 2019-2020 operational budget, and a request for a new 1.0 FTE school counselor at the high school; non-certified salaries at 5.92%, which is based on contractual obligations, hiring staff for open positions and mandated staff additions; employee benefits at 3.55%; utilities at 13.95%; and transportation at 2.69%. There is a decrease of 1.84% in supplies, textbooks and materials; 5.46% in equipment; and 4.36% in other expenditures, which represents a decrease in dues and fees. Mr. Benigni is not proposing the elimination of any positions as it would have a direct impact on current programming throughout the district. The Board will meet again on Wednesday, January 23, 2019, and will have individual presentations on the special education budget, curriculum and instruction budget, and districtwide non-instructional programs/athletics. Site and Building and Capital requests will also be presented and there will be an overall review of the budget presentations.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, January 28, 2019, at the Berlin Board of Education, beginning at 7:00 P.M., in the Board Meeting Room, 238 Kensington Road. The agenda will be available online at www.berlinschools.org.

The Bulletin Board provides a summary of Board of Education meetings. Official minutes from Board meetings are available at the Board of Education Office, the Town Clerk's Office, the Berlin-Peck Memorial Library, or on the district's website at www.berlinschools.org.