

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 10, 2021

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Julia Dennis
Steven Jenkins
Jaymee Miller - Absent
Timothy Oakes
Mark Pruzin
Adam Salina
Kari Sassu, Ph.D.
Tracy Sisti
Stephen Weber
Student Representatives: Ryan McGowan
Lindsey Leary

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; Finance Director Ashley Dorsey; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; and Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Dennis called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Board of Education (“the Board”) meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A moment of silence was held to honor Janis Francalangia, wife of Athletic Director and K-12 Physical Education Health Coordinator David Francalangia, who recently passed away.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

A. Report of Student Representatives

Mr. McGowen reported this week is Berlin High School Spirit Week with today being Collegewear Day and Friday Hallway Day; the Berlin High School spring choral concert is Tuesday, May 18, 2021; the Senior Prom is Saturday, May 22, 2021, and will be held outside at Cascade Fine Catering in Hamden, Connecticut; and the Junior Prom is Monday, June 21, 2021, at Quassey Amusement & Waterpark in Middlebury, Connecticut.

Miss Leary reported Awards Night is Wednesday, May 26, 2021; the Upbeat town-wide picnic is Thursday, May 27, 2021; and the Upbeat May Peer leadership weekend was held this past weekend at Camp Woodstock.

B. Committee Reports

Mr. Oakes reported the Finance and Operations Committee met prior to tonight’s meeting to discuss end-of-year projects, which appear later in the agenda for approval.

Dr. Sassu reported the Curriculum Committee met prior to tonight’s meeting and discussed proposed changes to the Berlin High School exams for diversifying the format and increasing flexibility with respect to midterms and final exams as well as other assessments and a new Connecticut State Department of Education mandated social studies course.

C. CREC Report

There was no report this evening.

D. Correspondence to the Board

There was no correspondence to the Board this evening.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Nothing to report.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of April 26, 2021

Moved by Mr. Pruzin, seconded by Mr. Weber, to approve the minutes from April 26, 2021.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis

B. Monthly Budget Report – Period ending April 30, 2021

Moved by Mr. Pruzin, seconded by Mr. Salina, to approve the monthly budget report for the period ending April 30, 2021.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Facilities Related Updates

Director of Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported he has not received the report from the Public Building Commission detailing how they wish to proceed with the HVAC systems in the five schools.

B. Summer Programs

Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian and Assistant Superintendent Erin McGurk updated the Board on the summer programs. Ms. Holian reported, to date, there are approximately 161 students recommended for summer programs. There will be two sessions: a five week program that runs from June 28 to July 30 for students with most intense needs; and a four week program that runs from July 6 to July 29 for preschool through Grade 12 students. In addition, the State Department of Education and the Bureau of Special Education has made available to districts a one-time \$20,000 grant to be used through the end of September. These funds will go towards providing students, who have been identified with intellectual disabilities, autism or social chromatic difficulties, with the opportunity to experience a typical camp program after the summer programs end for two weeks at the Berlin YMCA.

In addition to the regular extended school year (ESY) programs for students with special needs, the district will run a Summer Academy for rising first, second, and third grade students who have been identified by their teachers as in need of additional support. Additionally, the mathematics department has developed summer programming to provide an instructional boost to selected students entering Grades 7-10 who have struggled during the last academic year and in need additional support.

In addition, the district is working to provide additional opportunities for English Language Learners. Students will participate in an English speaking setting, with students their age, to continue to developing English skills. The district will also run a music program, which will include ukuleles and vocal music.

C. Textbook Adoptions

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk recommended the following textbooks for adoption to the members of the Board of Education:

Big Ideas Math: A Common Core Curriculum Algebra 1 Teaching Edition, by Ron Larson and Laurie Boswell and published by Big Ideas Learning, LLC. This textbook will be used in Grades 9-10.

Big Ideas Math: A Common Core Curriculum Algebra 2 Teaching Edition, by Ron Larson and Laurie Boswell and published by Big Ideas Learning, LLC. This textbook will be used in Grades 9-12.

The textbooks have been reviewed and recommended for adoption by the Textbook Selection Committee. The Curriculum Committee reviewed the recommendations at its meeting on April 26, 2021. The recommended textbooks are available for viewing by contacting Dr. McGurk, and the textbook recommendation forms are posted in Schoology.

Moved by Dr. Sassu, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, to adopt the textbooks, *Big Ideas Math: A Common Core Curriculum Algebra 1 Teaching Edition*, and *Big Ideas Math: A Common Core Curriculum Algebra 2 Teaching Edition*, by Ron Larson and Laurie Boswell and published by Big Ideas Learning, LLC.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis

D. BHS Building Project Closeout

Ms. Dennis stated today she spoke with Mayor Mark Kaczynski, and there is another meeting tomorrow regarding the insulation and jacketing of the ductwork. The estimate is anticipated to be someplace in the \$700,000 range.

Superintendent Benigni stated he spoke with Town Manager Arosha Jayawickrema last week, and he has been assured the insulation and jacketing of the ductwork will be done.

Mr. Cugno stated it is his understanding the contract, for the insulation and jacketing of the ductwork, will appear on the Town Council's May 18, 2021 agenda.

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to close the Berlin High School Renovation Project as complete and authorize the filing of the final electronic submission with the state.

Mr. Salina stated discussions regarding the closeout of the Berlin High School project began a few years ago, and there was a push to close the project in 2019 with the understanding there were questions regarding the ductwork. The purpose for closing the Berlin High School Renovation Project is to be eligible to receive the reimbursement funds from the State. Mr. Salina stated a subcommittee was formed and a third party was hired to review the ductwork at the high school. The mindset was that once a contract was submitted or a purchase order was cut for the work, the Board of Education would move to close out the project. Based on the good-faith efforts that have been accomplished between the Town Manager, the Mayor and the Public Building Commission to date, Mr. Salina stated he is comfortable closing the project at this time.

In response to Mr. Pruzin's question if there is a projected date to complete the ductwork, Superintendent Benigni stated first there has to be approval and then a timeline will be set.

In response to Mr. Jenkins' question, should there be a contingent motion on an appeal or the contract being issued, Ms. Dennis stated, the Town Council, on the record, voted to move the insulation and jacketing of the ductwork forward and based on conversations with the Mayor and Town Manager, she is confident the work will be completed. Mr. Salina stated he would be in favor of a contingent motion if it was a third party, not affiliated with the Town of Berlin; however, since the agreement is with the Board of Education for the Town of Berlin and the Town itself, he is confident as is.

Mr. Cugno stated the actual financial closeout of the project cannot start until the Board of Education accepts the renovation project as complete.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis

E. Deposit into the Non-Lapsing Fund

The administration and the Finance and Operations Committee recommended that \$400,000 in uncommitted funds be deposited into the Board's Non-Lapsing Fund to be used for the following projects:

1. Lighting Upgrade in the McGee Library/Media Center – \$150,000
2. Paving of Willard Playground Area and Sidewalks – \$150,000
3. Classroom Storage at Hubbard – \$50,000
4. Removal of Retaining Walls and Paving of the McGee Entrance – \$25,000
5. Balance of Additional Rooftop Unit at McGee School – \$25,000

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, that the Town Council deposit \$400,000 from account 001-35-3560-0-51000-00000 Board of Education Program 60 into account 500-35-3561-0-54000-01733 Unexpended Education Funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Superintendent Benigni stated, although there are many items on the capital improvement list, at this time, these items are the priority.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Salina stated it was wonderful to see Superintendent Benigni back this evening, and there were many thoughts, prayers and well wishes from this room as well as outside the community during his recovery.

Superintendent Benigni stated he was in a motorcycle accident with a deer. He thanked the community for everything and for keeping him in their prayers and could not be prouder to work in the Berlin district.

At 6:40 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Pruzin, to adjourn.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sisti, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education