

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 8, 2013

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Gary Brochu
Kristin Campanelli
Jeffrey Cugno
Julie Erickson
Irene Matulis
Timothy Oakes
Kathleen O'Donnell-Moss
John Richards
George Synnott

Absent
Arrived at 7:50 p.m.

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools David B. Erwin; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Brian Benigni; Director of Business Operations Roman Czuchta; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; Principal of Berlin High School Francis Kennedy; Assistant Principals of Berlin High School Janet Parlato and Amanda Gagnon; Principal of McGee Middle School Dr. Scott Ratchford; Assistant Principal of McGee Middle School Barbara Ventura; Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza; and Assistant Principal of Hubbard School and Math Coordinator Kara Watson.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brochu called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board of Education (“the Board”) meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by students Macie Krawciw, Max Enes and Tommy Morisse-Corsetti. A Moment of Silence was observed.

II. STUDENT PRESENTATION – Richard D. Hubbard School

The district has placed recent focus on professional development and subsequent implementation of the workshop model concerning language arts instruction. As such, students are learning writing content, skills, and strategies through daily implementation of Writer’s Workshop. Throughout the course of the year, kindergarten learners at Hubbard School have been engaged in activities and tasks focused on development and reinforcement of the foundational skills and strategies of written communication through the Writer’s Workshop model. This evening, Mrs. Ali Lacroix and her kindergarten learners provided a snapshot of the Writer’s Workshop experience in a kindergarten classroom and shared samples of their most recent work involving pattern books. Kindergarten presenters were Max Enes, Lanie Ferguson, Macie Krawciw, Juniya Lighty, Tommy Morisse-Corsetti and Sarah Swanson.

III. INFORMATION AND REPORTS – PART I

A. Berlin Bravos

Berlin Bravos is a program where the district recognizes students, staff, parents, and volunteers who have had a significant achievement, gone well above and beyond, or have overcome a significant challenge or obstacle. The Board of Education acknowledged the following individuals:

1. Berlin High School

Principal Francis Kennedy, along with Assistant Principals Janet Parlato and Amanda Gagnon, presented the following individuals from Berlin High School:

Jean Borrup, English Language Learners teacher, and Yesseyla Montanez, a grade 12 student.

2. Catherine M. McGee School

Principal Ratchford, along with Assistant Principal Barbara Ventura, presented the following individuals from McGee School:

Tyler Cohen, Jennifer Mouser and Greg Platosz, three March Madness essay contest winners, who were selected by the faculty for their compelling letters, copies which were provided to Board members.

From 7:27 p.m. to 7:39 p.m., a short recess was held for refreshments, to informally meet the award recipients, their family and friends and to acknowledge Superintendent Erwin's birthday.

IV. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Czuchta reported the time period for the Willard referendum challenge has passed. Mr. Czuchta, as a follow up to questions raised at the last Board meeting, provided an update on the CHOICE grant, indicating it is considered a one-year grant and needs to be expended in the fiscal year it is authorized.

Ms. Parsons reported the first clerical negotiation meeting was held last week, with three more meetings scheduled and will discuss the negotiations with the Board later in the agenda. Ms. Parsons reported today was the final of the five presentations on the Health Savings Account/High Deductible Health Insurance plan.

Ms. Holian reported that Kelly Maio and Michelle Zeuschner are in the process of putting together the summer school program. Ms. Holian reported the Pupil Personnel Services staff is beginning to work with the administrators in regard to case load and groupings for next year. Ms. Holian reported Kelly Maio and Michelle Zeuschner provided a wonderful professional development workshop for the Special Education teachers last Monday.

Mr. Benigni reported the district has contracted with Columbia University and over 27 teachers have donated their time for a four-day workshop in July.

Ms. Erickson reported the Student Achievement Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, April 22, 2013, prior to the Board meeting, to review the summer reading program.

Mr. Oakes congratulated the Griswold School on their \$5,000 award from the Follett Challenge. Mr. Oakes reported on his participation in McGee's version of *The Wizard of Oz* on Thursday, April 4, 2013, Friday, April 5, 2013 and Saturday, April 6, 2013.

Ms. O'Donnell-Moss reported she attended the first clerical negotiation meeting held last week.

Mr. Synnott reported he was extremely impressed with the three essays from the McGee students, noting they were very well written and heart wrenching.

Mr. Richards reported on his attendance at Capitol Region Education Council's (CREC) strategic planning meeting on Wednesday, March 27, 2013. Mr. Richards reported he attended the Public Building Commission and Advisory Committee meetings on Wednesday, March 27, 2013, and held his comments until facilities related updates are to be presented. Mr. Richards reported he attended the project meeting at the high school on Tuesday, April 2, 2013. Mr. Richards reported he will attend CREC's Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 10, 2013.

Mr. Erwin reported on the security audit that has begun. Mr. Erwin reported the Parent Advisory Council met last week and went well with Town Manager Denise McNair explaining the budget, explaining what should happen at tomorrow evening's Town budget meeting, encouraging parents to attend and the non-lapsing account for deposit of unexpended education funds of one percent. Mr. Erwin reported Griswold had a recent instructional rounds visit, with three visitors from the Middletown district. Tomorrow, Hubbard will have an instructional rounds visit, with three more visitors from the Middletown district. Mr. Erwin reported the annual recognition breakfast for the custodial/maintenance staff was held last Monday. Mr. Erwin reported the Superintendent's Network met in Hartford for a very interesting rounds visit with a group from Harvard. Mr. Erwin reported the district is holding the annual series of tenure meetings for teachers that are achieving tenure. Mr. Erwin reported Michelle Zeuschner covered a meeting last week with individuals from New Britain, Southington and Plainville, looking into the feasibility of a family resource center. She will attend another meeting on April 30, 2013. Mr. Erwin reported Lauren Feltz has accepted a position in another district and will be leaving Berlin at the conclusion of this school year. Mr. Erwin thanked Board members for remembering his birthday.

Mr. Brochu reported he contacted the Superintendent who hired Lauren Feltz last week to congratulate him and told him she is a wonderful administrator and will make a nice addition to their district. Mr. Brochu reported he spent a day in Middletown last week with the Connecticut Center for School Change, working with the Parents Supporting Educational Excellence (Parent SEE) group. Mr. Brochu reported on his attendance at CABE's Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, March 27, 2013. Mr. Brochu reported he, along with Mr. Erwin, will give a presentation at the National School Boards Association (NSBA) annual conference this weekend, and he is also partnering with Robert Rader, Executive Director at CABE, for a second presentation. Mr. Brochu reported the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education/Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CABE/CAPSS) convention committee has selected one of the Board's presentations for next fall. Mr. Brochu reported the annual Town budget public hearing is tomorrow evening.

V. RECOMMENDED ACTION – PART I

A. Facilities Related Updates – Code Renovations – Berlin High School

Director of Business Operations Roman J. Czuchta reported the modification from the State Fire Marshal's office was received on Thursday, April 4, 2013, and bids went out on Saturday, April 6, 2013, and are due back on May 15 and 16, 2013. Mr. Czuchta reported, from what he understands, the contract FIP Construction has with the Town allows them a month, after the bid opening, to come up with their final guaranteed maximum pricing (GMP). In response to Mr. Brochu's question if work will

start this summer, Mr. Czuchta reported that is something he cannot answer. If FIP Construction takes its full time in coming up with the GMP, there is still a need by the Public Building Commission to approve the GMP and have the contract signed. Mr. Czuchta reported he spoke with Arthur Simonian this afternoon, voicing his concerns about the timing, and what is critical is getting people on site to do the abatement work this summer. Everything was pushed back by two weeks with what was faced with the State. Mr. Czuchta reported another item he has been dealing with over the last month is storage. Mr. Czuchta reported he had a discussion with the Town concerning freezer space availability for the cafeteria, and Town Manager Denise McNair has said she is going to work on attempting to find that money within the Town side. Mr. Czuchta reported he spoke with Principal Kennedy this evening, and there is some push back on using the auditorium for storage. Mr. Czuchta reported there is a walkthrough on May 16 and 18, 2013 with interested contractors.

VI. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Nothing to report.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of March 25, 2013
- B. Payment of Bills – Period ending March 31, 2013
- C. Request to Extend Leave of Absence – Emma Hart Willard School

Meg Souza, teacher of grade one at Emma Hart Willard School, requested an extension of her current leave of absence to extend through the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

- D. Overnight Field Trip Request – Catherine M. McGee School

McGee School Principal Scott Ratchford requested permission for the FIRST Robotics team to travel to St. Louis, MO, on April 24-28, 2013, to compete in the FIRST Robotics Championship Competition. The trip itinerary was provided to Board members. The event allows students to network with other students and engineers to become familiar with careers relating to math, science, and technology. The FIRST venue promotes teamwork by teams working together with other teams.

Mr. Richards requested that the Overnight Field Trip Request – Catherine M. McGee School be removed from the consent agenda.

Moved by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to approve the consent agenda as modified.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 6:0:2; with President Brochu and Board Member Oakes abstaining

Mr. Richards indicated he requested the overnight field trip request for Catherine M. McGee be removed from the consent agenda as there have been communications with the Board President and the

Superintendent regarding field trip requests in general. Mr. Richards indicated if the Board is to vote on this item, he would abstain from participation because he is uncomfortable with the process.

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Synnott, to approve the overnight field trip request for Catherine M. McGee for the FIRST Robotics team.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0:1; with Board Member Richards abstaining

VIII. INFORMATION AND REPORTS – PART II

B. Status of the Board of Education's Adopted Budget for 2013-2014

Board President Gary Brochu reported the Operating Budget has been reduced by \$200,000; Site and Building was cut back to \$40,200; and the Capital Budget was cut back to \$150,000. Mr. Brochu reported the \$40,200 for Site and Building does not include an additional \$50,000 the Town is keeping on its side for potential facility, safety or security updates based on the security audit. Mr. Brochu reported the Site and Building Budget does not include funds for the renovations to the kindergarten classrooms in each of the elementary schools because it is anticipated these renovations will be funded from the Board transferring to the non-lapsing account.

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTION – PART II

B. Non-renewal of Contracts for Non-tenured Teachers

Superintendent of Schools David B. Erwin recommended the non-renewal of contracts for three non-tenured teachers who were given a one-year contract for the 2012-2013 school year. Kara McCourt was hired for one year to fill a grade four vacancy at Griswold School due to a childrearing leave, Meghan Lorch was hired for one year to fill a grade one vacancy at Griswold School due to a childrearing leave and Danielle DeMaio was hired for one year to fill a grade one vacancy at Griswold School due to a leave of absence.

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Richards, that the contracts of employment for the following non-tenured teachers not be renewed for the 2013-2014 school year, upon their expiration at the end of the current school year: Kara McCourt, teacher of grade four at Griswold School; Meghan Lorch, teacher of grade one at Griswold School; and Danielle DeMaio, teacher of grade one at Griswold School.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 7:0:1; with President Brochu abstaining

C. Review and Possible Action Regarding the New Teacher Evaluation Plan

Brian Benigni, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, presented the new Teacher Evaluation Plan for the Berlin Public Schools. A draft copy of the plan was reviewed by the Board of Education for approval and submission to the Connecticut State Department of Education for their review on April 15. The new Teacher Evaluation Plan meets all requirements outlined by the Connecticut State Department of Education and utilizes the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation

and Development (SEED) model as the base framework with modifications to the Observation of Teacher Performance and Practice, Student Feedback and Parent Feedback sections of the plan. Upon approval of the Teacher Evaluation Plan by the Connecticut State Department of Education, district administration will determine the most appropriate data management system for integration with the district's new plan. A copy of the new Teacher Evaluation Plan and Mr. Benigni's presentation was provided to Board members. Mr. Benigni also provided Board members with a draft copy of the Administrator Evaluation and Development Plan (SEED) model.

Moved by Mr. Synnott, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to approve the new Teacher Evaluation Plan as presented and submit it to the Connecticut State Department of Education for their review.

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

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Richards, to approve the (SEED) model for administrator evaluations as presented and submit it to the Connecticut State Department of Education for their review.

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

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:24 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, to go into Executive Session for discussion of strategy related to collective bargaining-clerical negotiations.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0

In attendance for Executive Session were Board members Brochu, Cugno, Erickson, Matulis, Oakes, O'Donnell-Moss, Richards and Synnott. In addition Superintendent Erwin and Ms. Parsons were present.

At 9:43 p.m. the Board returned to Open Session.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. O'Donnell-Moss, seconded by Mr. Oakes, to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 7:0

Respectfully submitted,

Berlin Board of Education Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 8, 2013

Irene Matulis, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education