

THE BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE BULLETIN BOARD

A SUMMARY OF THE MAY 29, 2018 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

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

Student Presentations □ Emma Hart Willard School: Students in every grade at Willard School learn computer science at a developmentally-appropriate level. Mr. Elijah Clapp, along with student presenters Isabel Arana, Maya Olewicz, and Vanessa Sirois, presented what computer science looks like for students at each grade level. They showcased what skills students learn and some of the tools used to help them. Upbeat: Students Christian Damiana, Maya Patel, Sunhanee Patel and Aidan Rich, newly-selected coordinators for next year, presented information to the Board regarding the Upbeat Program. Upbeat is 30 years old this year. The presentation provided information on the foundation of Upbeat, peer leader structure, houses, annual projects, projects throughout the year, bi-weekly peer leader meetings, and the peer leadership workshops.

Special Recognition – Art Awards □ The district recently held its annual art show at The New Britain Museum of American Art. Many pieces of student artwork were on display. The following artists were recognized for their award winning artwork: Superintendent’s Choice – “Landscape” by Nancy Ingenito, Grade 10; Griswold Principal’s Choice – “A Weaving of Nature” by Sydelle Holland, Grade 3; Hubbard Principal’s Choice – “The Icy Penguin” by Lila Ricupero, Grade 1; Willard Principal’s Choice – “Patterns, Patterns Everywhere” by Angelina Blain, Grade 1; McGee Principal’s Choice – “Feathers” by Julia Kielbowicz, Grade 6; and Berlin High School Principal’s Choice – “Calm Before Chaso” by Lillian Bierwirth, Grade 10. (Lillian Bierwirth and Julia Kielbowicz were unable to attend the meeting so they will be recognized at the June 11 Board of Education meeting.)

Audience of Citizens □ Mr. John Richards addressed the Board as an elected member of the Board of Finance and the Board of Education liaison from the Board of Finance. Mr. Richards requested that discussion of the budget be moved up earlier in the agenda so he could understand the Board’s intentions and the impact of further cuts so that he could share the information with the Board of Finance at their meeting already in progress.

Personnel – Appointment of Director of Business Operations □ The Board appointed Jeffrey Cugno to the position of director of business operations, effective July 1, 2018.

Appointment of New Board Members □ Due to the resignation of Board members Frederick Morley, Jr. and Jeffrey Cugno, the Board appointed Adam Salina and Tracy Sisti to fill the vacancies until the next election.

Discussion Regarding the 2018-2019 Budget □ Board President Matthew Tencza reported that in addition to the \$250,000 reduction to the Board’s budget, he has heard that there will be an additional reduction as high as \$300,000. With an additional reduction, Superintendent Brian Benigni indicated that programs and services will be affected. Certain programs will not operate at the same level or at all; class sizes will not remain favorable; and Advanced Placement courses, middle school sports and freshman sports could be eliminated. Mr. Tencza indicated that student parking fees and pay to participate in sports and extracurricular activities could be implemented. Superintendent Benigni indicated that the magnitude of a zero budget will take years to recover from. The Board of Education will be represented at the public hearing on June 4, 2018, and will present the areas impacted by these reductions.

Summer Instructional Program □ Supervisors of Special Education Michelle Zeuschner and Cindy Martin reviewed the extended school-year programs for students with disabilities. These programs are based on PPT recommendations for specific students and provide students with an opportunity to maintain their learning over the summer vacation.

There will be two sessions: a five-week program that runs from July 2–August 3 for preschool through Grade 5; and a four-week program that runs from July 3–July 26 for preschool through Grade 12. We are waiting to hear if CREC will provide transportation for Choice students; if not, the Choice students will not attend summer school. This year, two Berlin magnet school students will attend the summer school program as the Hartford magnet schools do not provide a summer school program.

Naming of the B Gym at Berlin High School □ Director of Athletics Jeff Mauri proposed naming the B Gym after the late Jim Day. Jim devoted his entire career to the Berlin community as a wrestling coach, athletic director and special education teacher. In addition, he was instrumental in establishing Berlin High School’s Unified Sports program. Over 900 people petitioned in support of this proposal. The Board approved naming the B Gymnasium at Berlin High School in honor of the late Jim Day. The naming of the gymnasium will be placed on the actual gym floor and the unveiling will occur at the first home wrestling match.

Fiscal Management □ With the appointments of Eileen Eustis as principal of Berlin High School and Jeffrey Cugno as director of business operations, changes to fiscal management are necessary. The Board took action to designate Jeffrey Cugno as the treasurer of the Berlin High School Enterprise Fund, the Berlin Public Schools Activity Fund, and the Cafeteria Fund, effective July 1, 2018. Also, that Eileen Eustis will replace Jeffrey Cronk as assistant treasurer of the Berlin High School Enterprise Fund, effective July 1, 2018.

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The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, June 11, 2018, beginning at 7:00 P.M., in the Auditorium at Berlin High School, 139 Patterson Way, Berlin. 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, and on the district’s website at www.berlinschools.org.