

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2015

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Mr. French, Dr. Sewall, Dr. Gomez

BOARD ABSENT: Vice-chair Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Quamme

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia; Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Conner; Directors Ms. Beghetto and Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: None present

OTHERS PRESENT: general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Lambert called the April 8, 2015, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:09 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Gomez led the Board and the public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mr. Kalajian, that the Board of Education approve the March 11, 2015, business meeting minutes (Ref. 1); and the March 5, 2015, special meeting minutes (Ref. 1A).

Motion is unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Reports

Staff Recognition (CIRMA Risk Management Award)

Food Services Director Mr. Eric Volle and Director of Facilities Mr. Wayne Donaldson and their staff members were recognized by the Superintendent and Board of Education for Windham Public Schools' selection as a 2015 CIRMA Risk Management Achievement Award recipient. The award was received because of the risk management initiatives implemented to lower workers' compensation loss costs by the Food Services Program including the efforts of Mr. Donaldson's staff to provide a clean and safe environment for the Food Services Department.

Natchaug School Presentation

Ms. Cyr recognized and thanked the many parents, students and staff in attendance at tonight's Board meeting for their support to celebrate Natchaug School. Grade four and five students William Gonzalez, Paul Lachapelle and Maya Ramos, elected members of the Student Climate Committee, spoke about their work to create a positive school climate focusing on creating a working mission statement and conducting a

student climate survey. Grade four students Aleyska Sandoval Morales, Judy Gomez Vera and Yalivette Sanchez read their persuasive essays about the benefits of Smarts Boards in every classroom. Grade five students Joshedy Sanchez and Diona Roberts highlighted the great experience students had when they traveled to Maine earlier in the year. Grade four student Olivia Hackett spoke about her positive experience as a member of a group of Natchaug students who practiced with performers at UConn and performed an opera with them on stage at the Jorgensen Theater at the University of Connecticut. Ms. Cyr said that there has been a recent influx of new arrivals' students and the ELL teachers developed a specialized program for these students. A short video was shown. The following third grade students ended Natchaug School's presentation by playing their recorders: Natasha Valentin, Mia Caballero, Gabriel Diaz, Ismael Ingles, Sandi Gonzalez, Alenix Ocasio Beltran, Judy Gomez Vera, Aleyska Sandoval Morales, Alex Mateo, Mimi Lira, Brandon Sanchez, Angela Alva, Omar Murillo Lopez, and Briana Ingles. Mrs. Cyr, parents, students and staff were thanked for attending tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Micaela Colaj De León and Victoriano De León Perez, Willimantic, (translated by Josue Lopez, New Arrivals Teacher at Windham Middle School) thanked the teachers for their work with their children. They said that their son came to the United States last year and was not doing well; however, this year with the help of Mr. Lopez, his grades and his English have improved greatly and he has been nominated by his eighth grade math teacher to enter Honors Algebra. Their daughter is now attending the program.

Ava Hacker, Willimantic, a second grade teacher in the North Windham School Compañeros program, said she was speaking as a proponent of bilingual education and on behalf of Teach for America. She said that she is excited to be in Willimantic and explained that she returned to the classroom after a long hiatus and has received intense and ongoing training throughout the two years that she has been a core member and will continue to receive significant training. She said that the majority of TFA teachers are single and have time and energy to devote to working after hours.

James Flores, Willimantic, said that he believes in the Windham Public Schools. He said that even though the budget referendum is taking place on May 12th, he hasn't heard anything about it. He said that most people won't be reached by advertising on the radio or in the newspaper; and if people receive flyers, they'll be thrown out as junk mail. Mr. Flores said that the town and the school district need to work together as a team; and the same efforts by public officials should be put into passing the school budget as they put into their campaign efforts for election. He said that if they were able to get the people who voted for them out on May 12th, the budget would pass.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that it is all about how wonderful TFA is and it sounded as if teachers with families don't spend extra time in the same way that TFA teachers do. She also said that misinformation previously presented by the Talent Officer on cost savings was never corrected because entry level teachers are paid at the same low salary; therefore, it is not a cost savings to hire TFA. Mrs. Gallucci said that it is an insult to university and college education programs to take a group who is trained for five weeks in the summer and treat them like traditionally trained teachers. She said that information provided by TFA is only about advertising its own greatness and it is not a scientific study. She said that professional development shouldn't be held for teachers on a school day and she asked why so many substitutes are budgeted for. She said that it is an insult to have a lawyer answer a parent's freedom of information request and asked how much this costs the district. She said that Parish Hill is not accessible to all students because parents have to provide transportation.

Camie Niland-Poirier was signed in to speak but passed.

Josue Lopez, Willimantic, said that having the family who spoke earlier come to advocate for their children is what motivates him. He said that educators, whether TFA or not, are teaching for the love of it and truly believe that every student has the potential to change the world. He said there is no guarantee with

any program that someone will stay in the teaching profession. He said that he will always battle inequity whether he is a teacher or working in some other job, and he will always be working on behalf of Windham students and families. He said that he may not be a classroom teacher forever but he will be a compañero forever.

Al Korczynski, Willimantic, applauded the Board of Education for putting together a plan and a budget that received a unanimous vote of confidence from the Board of Finance. He said that there is a lot of conversation among parents in the PTOs, School Governance Councils, and Booster Club to get out the vote. He said that the conversation about the minority hiring of teachers to represent the student body has been going on for two decades and is a problem in the country with the percentage of minority teachers decreasing and the percentage of minority students increasing. Mr. Korczynski said that it is important for students to have role models and studies have shown the benefits of having teachers who reflect the student body. He said that it is irresponsible for a Board of Education member to make a statement without taking the time to do research first.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS (continued)

Teach for America Update

Dr. Garcia said that Ms. Beghetto and Mr. Mercier will provide the requested supplemental Teach for America (TFA) information to the Board at tonight's meeting. The present contract with TFA expires in June 2015. Ms. Beghetto and Mr. Mercier reviewed retention data, location and subject matter taught, student performance data, and teacher evaluation data relative to TFA hires were highlighted. It was reported that there are nineteen TFA teachers in the district with the anticipation that all of them will return for the next school year. Ms. Beghetto and Mr. Mercier answered questions and there was discussion.

Morgan Stanley Plan

Mr. Thomas Forma and Mr. Kevin Nichols, consultants from Morgan Stanley – The Forma Group, presented a proposal regarding the investment of unallocated funds into the Aetna Plan to provide diversification of the existing portfolio across several funds to improve the district's investment return. They have worked with the Town and police and fire department pensions. Mr. Forma and Mr. Nichols answered questions. Further discussion will take place at a Finance and Audit Committee meeting. Mrs. Lambert thanked them for attending the Board meeting.

Planning Grant to Increase Representation of Black and Latino Educators

Dr. Garcia announced that a planning grant has been received to increase the representation of Black & Latino Educators in the Windham Public Schools. She thanked Ms. Beghetto and Mr. Harris for writing the grant and said that the funds will be used for recruitment planning.

Barrows Lottery Update

Dr. Garcia reported that the Barrows STEM Academy lottery was held on March 25th and students were selected to fully enroll kindergarten and grade five with open seats in the remaining grades selected. She answered questions.

Middle School Promotion and High School Graduation 2015

Dr. Garcia informed the Board that the Middle School promotion ceremony will be held on June 11th and the High School graduation will take place on June 12th. Board members will receive invitations to both ceremonies.

Parish Hill Contract

Dr. Garcia asked that Board members review the agreement with Parish Hill which will be brought forward to the Board in May as an action item. Twenty-four months' notification is required to end the contract.

Math Pilot

Dr. Conner and Ms. Hafiz provided information regarding math programs that are being piloted at the elementary and high school levels this spring. Pilot programs for Go Math and Math in Focus will take place in kindergarten through grade five. Houghton Mifflin AGA series, Pearson AGA series and Houghton Mifflin Big Ideas series will be piloted at Windham High School in grades nine through twelve. All programs are systemically aligned to the Common Core. The pilots will run for six weeks and each program will be evaluated to assess its value in the context of teaching and learning. Formal adoption will be recommended for the 2015-2016 school year. Ms. Hafiz and Dr. Conner answered questions.

Alternate Educational Programs

Ms. Packer reported that the a Request for Quote (RFQ) will be sent out seeking quotes for the development and implementation of alternative programs to be located at Windham Middle School and Windham High School. This is being done to reduce the number of outplaced students, provide appropriate educational settings within Windham schools, and reduce the tuition and transportation lines in the budget. Ms. Packer reported that programs have been started in the district over the years but have not continued due to lack of staff, training, materials and related services. However, research of other school districts that have contracts with outside agencies to develop programs and provide services have indicated that they have been successful and have provided cost savings to the districts. Ms. Packer answered questions.

Frozen Food Storage at Sweeney

Mr. Volle explained that an upgrade to the existing frozen food storage at Sweeney School is needed. Due to the small design of the kitchen, frozen foods cannot be stocked which has resulted in the higher cost of goods. He said that by converting the existing dry storage room at Sweeney to a freestanding walk-in freezer, the daily operation of the kitchen would improve due to increased kitchen space. Mr. Volle said that the cost would be encumbered by the Food Service Department, not from the general fund. Mr. Donaldson and his staff plan to install a small exhaust fan to complete the project.

Windham-Early College Opportunity (ECO) Program

Dr. Garcia said that forty-two students have applied to participate in the Windham-ECO program for the 2015-2016 school year. A successful welcome event was held at the High School on March 31st attended by parents, and students, along with Dr. Drummer and her team from Quinebaug Valley Community College.

Summer School

Dr. Garcia thanked Dr. Gasper for his work to coordinate the summer school program allowing Windham the ability to offer a wide range of offerings. Dr. Gasper explained that this is the first time that summer school will be unified under one common budget. Approximately 650 students will be served by 117 staff members. Dr. Gasper thanked staff in the Human Resources office for providing postings for these positions. He said that he is looking forward to a successful program which will run for four weeks from July 6th to July 30th. The summer school program will include mandated summer school, as well as classes for advancement and acceleration. Due to the construction of wells and grid work at the other schools, summer school classes will be held at Barrows and Windham High School. Dr. Gasper thanked Ms. Kiss and Mr. Donaldson for arranging the summer schedule to accommodate classes. Dr. Garcia explained that there is no funding from the State this year for summer school.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. French reported that Dr. Garcia and he attended the Board of Finance meeting and Windham residents came out to strongly support the budget. He publicly thanked the Board of Finance for voting unanimously in support of the Education Budget, as well as for the extra funds for new math books. He said that it is critical to pass the budget the first time so that teachers can be hired early for the next school year. Dr. Sewall congratulated Mr. French for his work on the budget.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mr. Kalajian reported that the committee didn't meet due to the holiday. He said that the master plan for the entire district will be the committee's focus. He reported that the well work is on track and work will begin this summer as soon as school is out at North Windham and Windham Center schools.

Executive Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee recently met. Mrs. DeVivo's recommendation to change Willimantic to Windham on the Windham Public Schools' seal was discussed, and the committee is recommending that Willimantic be removed but not replaced with Windham at this time. The committee also recommended that Public Dialogue be changed to Public Comment and include it at both the beginning and end of the meeting; however, with the recommendation that there be a two-minute limit for speakers at the beginning and at the end of the meeting with comments at the end of the meeting only pertaining to items on the agenda. At tonight's meeting, members discussed the length of public comment. Dr. Sewall recommended that the policy be revised and brought to the Board at its May meeting. Mrs. Lambert asked Board members to send their suggestions to her prior to the next Executive Committee meeting scheduled for May 4th.

Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Mrs. Osuba asked that the Ad Hoc Policy Committee become a regular committee of the Board. She said that due to the spring recess, the next scheduled meeting will be held on April 23rd. Mrs. Osuba said that the committee will review any policies brought forward by Dr. Garcia that the Superintendent deems as urgent. Mrs. Osuba said that the Promotion/Acceleration/Retention policy requires further review and is not ready for the first reading as listed on tonight's agenda. She asked that it be deferred until further review by the Policy Committee. She reported that the Field Trip policy has been reviewed and is on tonight's agenda as a first reading with approval planned for the May 13th meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Revised 2015-2016 School Calendar (Ref. 2)

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that the Board of Education approve the revised 2015-2016 school calendar with the inclusion of Windham High School mid-term and final examination days.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Donations

Windham High School Spanish Exchange Program (Ref. 3 and Ref. 3A)

Motion of Mr. Montalvo, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve acceptance, with deep appreciation, of the following donations to the Windham High School Spanish Exchange Program: a donation from Dr. Murphy Sewall and Ms. Virginia Fulton (corrected to Ms.

Virginia Fulton per Dr. Sewall) in the amount of \$1,050, and a donation from the Pageau Trust in the amount of \$3,000.

Mrs. Lambert said that the students had a wonderful time in Spain.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Windham Public Schools' School-Based Health Centers (Ref. 4)

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board of Education approve acceptance, with deep appreciation, of the award from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut in the amount of \$1,500, to Windham Public Schools' School-Based Health Centers.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Reverend D. Fred H. Shapiro Memorial Scholarship (Ref. 5)

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education approve, with deep appreciation, the Reverend Dr. Fred H. Shapiro Memorial Scholarship.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Personnel (Ref. 6)

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve the following appointments and accept the following resignations:

Appointments

- Jason Loree, to the position of Custodian at Natchaug School effective February 12, 2015, hourly rate \$13.50. Replacement.
- Ellenore Garvie, to the position of Paraprofessional at CHBarrows effective April 6, 2015, hourly rate \$13.34. New Position.

Resignations

- Kyle Choisy, Paraprofessional at Windham Middle School effective February 20, 2015.
- Shaina Engel, Paraprofessional at CHBarrows effective March 4, 2015.
- Victor Martinez, Paraprofessional at North Windham School effective March 6, 2015.
- Tera Juszczyk, Social Worker at Windham High School effective March 26, 2015.
- Katelyn Black, Paraprofessional at Natchaug School effective April 3, 2015.
- Angel Matos-Rosario, Paraprofessional at North Windham School effective April 3, 2015.
- Efren Figueroa, Tutor at North Windham School effective April 5, 2015.
- Paula Puma, Teacher at Windham Middle School effective May 15, 2015.
- Carole Daley, Paraprofessional at Windham Middle School effective June 30, 2015.
- Ryan Corthouts, Teacher at Windham Middle School effective June 30, 2015.

Motion is unanimously approved.

First Reading of Policy 6153 (Field Trips) and Policy 5123 (Promotion/Acceleration/Retention) (Ref. 7)

As noted earlier by Mrs. Osuba, the Promotion/Acceleration/Retention Policy 5123 requires further review by the Policy Committee. Dr. Sewall pointed out that the standards for promotion by grade are needed and this will take some time to develop. Dr. Garcia said that this is in progress and work on universal report cards has begun. There was some discussion regarding revisions to the Promotion/Acceleration/Retention policy. The Field Trip policy 6153 will be brought back for action at the May 13, 2015, Board meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Sewall said that he defends the right of Mr. Desaulniers to express his opinion and he represents a segment of the community that exists. He said that once the recruitment plan is developed, the Board will vote on it.

Dr. Garcia said that she respects Mr. Desaulniers' right to his opinion as well as the rights of other Board members to express their opinions but feels that it is important for the Superintendent, staff and community to hear where the Board stands as one voice.

Dr. Gomez said that he respects that Mr. Desaulniers has the right to his opinion as well. He said that the Board will establish policy which the Board will vote on.

Mr. Montalvo said that Board members have to be careful about how they portray their opinions.

Mr. Kalajian said that a component of the mission statement and philosophy about diversity is something different from hiring practices. He said that he believes that this Board expresses the community in terms of diversity very well and it is the Board's job to articulate that.

Mrs. Lambert said that Dr. Garcia, Dr. Sewall and she attended a very interesting workshop today on Board practices presented by Shipman & Goodwin. She recommended that when possible, Board members take advantage of offered workshops.

Mrs. Osuba said that she attended the National Association of Latino Elected Officials three-day conference where many issues were discussed including policy, Robert's Rules of Order, how to be effective on the Board of Education, and funding from the federal government. Common Core and ELL representatives from around the country spoke. She said that the same issues that the Windham Board of Education faces are the same issues that other boards of education are dealing with across the country. She said that future funding from the federal government was discussed and how districts like Windham are struggling to meet the demands of students. Mrs. Osuba said that she brought back materials she would like to share with the Board.

Mrs. Lambert said that Barrows' students, under the direction of Mr. Tomanelli and with support from parents and staff, will be performing Hairspray Junior on Thursday and Friday at 7 PM in Windham Middle School's auditorium. Mr. Donaldson and his staff prepared the stage at the Middle School for the production.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion of Dr. Sewall, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 10:11 PM for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to non-renewal of non-tenured teachers' contracts and personnel matters.

The motion is unanimously approved.

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Mr. French, Dr. Sewall, Dr. Gomez

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia, Director Ms. Beghetto

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Chair Mrs. Lambert reconvened regular session at 11:09 P.M. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mrs. Osuba, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 11:09 P.M.
Motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Juan Montalvo, Secretary