

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
December 17, 2014

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Desaulniers, Mr. Montalvo, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Kalajian, Dr. Gomez, Mr. Quamme

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. French, Dr. Sewall

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia; Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper; Directors Mr. Cunha, Ms. Beghetto and Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: No one

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mrs. Lambert called the December 17, 2014, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the public recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORKSHOP TOPIC

Results of the Curriculum and Instruction Needs Assessment

Dr. Garcia provided an overview of the findings of the curriculum and needs assessment conducted on September 30 and October 1, 2014, by the Leadership and Learning Center. She introduced Dr. Lissa Pijanowski and Dr. Karen Branscombe, who were present, from the Leadership and Learning Center. Dr. Garcia explained that there are three phases of the assessment: collection of data, evaluation of the data, and the action plan to be put in place to address the findings. The needs assessment was based on the nine Foundational Practices for School Improvement grouped into the following three categories: Accountability Practices, Classroom Practices and School Practices. Students, parents and teachers/principals were interviewed as part of the assessment, as well. Dr. Garcia reviewed conclusions and recommendations of the needs assessment and the next steps. There was discussion and Dr. Garcia answered Board members' questions.

ACTION ITEM

**Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education appoint Dr. Michael Conner as Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning and Leadership for the Windham Public Schools.**

**Motion is unanimously approved.**

Dr. Conner was introduced and said that he is very excited to begin in his position.

Mrs. Lambert said that Mr. French, as Chair of the Board of Education's Finance and Audit Committee, is attending the Town's Board of Finance Committee meeting. She also said that Dr. Sewall, who could not be present at tonight's meeting, supports the appointment of Dr. Conner.

#### PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mrs. Gallucci, Willimantic, said that she is a passionate advocate for education. She said that she can't help but feel déjà vu all over again because every few years, there is a study done and a report of the findings is received. She voiced her concern that as a member of the Middle School's School Governance Council, she was not told about the study and was not interviewed as part of the study. She would be interested to know who was interviewed at the Middle School and said there seems to be a lack of communication. She said that there are too many tests given to students. She asked what came from the study that isn't already known. She said that she would have thought that the category where teachers and principals were interviewed, they would have had different perspectives. Ms. Gallucci said that as an educator, she values teacher training and asked if it is being said that teachers aren't trained to be in the classroom. She feels that teachers do get trained to teach as part of their education. She said that she wants her children to be taught by teachers who are trained at universities as educators and not taught by TFA. Ms. Gallucci noted that this isn't mentioned in the assessment. She also questioned if first grade teachers and high school teachers say the same things. She thought they would offer different views. She said that that makes her little bit suspicious of the assessment. She said that she feels she wasn't involved in the assessment. Dr. Garcia replied that needs assessment was announced twice at board meetings and the school selected members to be interviewed.

Mr. Henry Crane, Willimantic, said that he's listened to his neighbors saying curriculum for years at every meeting and that the Board is finally paying attention to do something about it. He welcomed Dr. Conner and said he was happy to see that Dr. Conner is ready to hit the ground running. Mr. Crane said that he is hoping that parents and his neighbors are involved. Every student needs to get to class on time, as well as getting their homework done, and parents need to encourage that behavior. Teachers have another mission and he's hoping that the mission will get done and students will graduate.

Dr. Pijanowski and Dr. Branscombe said that they welcomed the opportunity to work with district, and now they look forward to seeing the results as the action plan is developed and put into place.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Dr. Gomez, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 7:42 P.M.  
Motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Juan Montalvo, Secretary