

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION  
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT  
SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
February 22, 2012

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Dr. Sewall, Vice-chair Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Osuba, Mr. Adamo, Mr. French, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Ms. Tinker

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Desaulniers

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Assistant Superintendent Ms. Barker-Jones, Directors Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Hossai Jabary, Katelynn Person

OTHERS PRESENT: Special Master Dr. Adamowski; general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the February 22, 2012, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

WORKSHOP SESSION

Dr. Adamowski spoke about implementation of the Strategic Operating Plan over time and explained that work on the budget reflects the strategies of the plan anticipated for the next school year so that these strategies are supported by the budget. He also reviewed the budget timeline.

Strategic Operating Plan

Ms. Ortiz presented information on the Strategic Operating Plan, which is in the beginning stages of development. At this time, the Plan focuses on major strategies allowing for the specifics of these strategies to be developed. Ms. Ortiz elaborated on the initiatives that make up the six major strategies of the Plan which follow: create a portfolio of high performing effective schools; improve teacher and leader quality; remove barriers to low performance; improve instruction for all students; improve the management of public resources; and increase parent and community involvement and support. Ms. Ortiz and Dr. Adamowski answered Board members' questions.

2012-2013 Budget

Ms. Ortiz provided an executive summary of the recommended education budget for 2012-2013. She reviewed the budget development process and highlighted the four budget principles. Two of the Strategic Operating Plan goals supported by the recommended budget and the targets for these goals were reviewed. The major assumptions, as part of the budget process, were also reviewed. Mr. Nelson reviewed the local and state revenue sources, as well as the all funds summary budget by location for this year and the proposed figures for next year. There was discussion, and Ms. Ortiz, Dr. Adamowski and Mr. Nelson answered Board members' questions.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Nico Gonzalez, Willimantic, attended Windham schools and is now attending college. He explained that he wasn't a very good student in middle school and had a difficult transition to the high school. He spoke

about some of the changes that will be taking place at the middle and high schools and asked what would be done for those students who don't score high on the tests. He asked about changes being made to the teachers and the curriculum and how things would be different. Mr. Gonzalez said that when he was in school, students really studied to score high during test time because there were certain things that they needed to know in order to pass the test. It was suggested by Board members that he visit the middle school to talk with the students about his experiences. He said that a couple of teachers had faith in him. One teacher, in particular, said that he would go to college and he took that encouragement with him. He said that he also received support from his family. He said that support and guidance in life has to be incorporated into school for many students because not everyone has families to support them. He also said that students need to learn how to get their work done. When he was in school, he found that there wasn't much monitoring to see if students got their work done and this created a problem for him because he would rush to get his work completed right before class. In high school he decided on his own to change his ways about his life and achievement. He said that he is struggling in college but he wants to achieve and move forward and is looking forward to getting his Associates Degree in May.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, commented that what she said at a previous meeting, which she believes was in December, was not reflected correctly in the minutes. At that time, she asked whether the choice of languages could be presented to parents about Latin and Mandarin just as parents may be asked about the choice of single gender classrooms at the Middle School. She said that she has left her e-mail address but hasn't gotten answers for the last couple of meetings when she has asked questions. She also has e-mailed the Superintendent about an issue that she will bring up later. She commented on the additional students attending each elementary school and said she hopes that additional custodial staff will be provided and the number of bathrooms will be adequate for the increased number of students so they have a comfortable experience. She also asked what is happening behind the scenes with possible teacher vacancies and Teach for America. She said that she feels that she is being shut out of this and private citizens are being asked. She said that she has an FOI request addressed to the Superintendent if her question is not answered.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 8:40 P.M.**

**On the motion: Aye, 8-0; unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary