

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2015

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

BOARD ABSENT: Dr. Gomez

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Garcia; Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Conner; Directors Mr. Johnson, 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 March 11, 2015, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Desaulniers led the Board and the public in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was taken in memory of Jane Diaz, wife of Manny Diaz who served as a member of the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Motion of Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that the Board of Education approve the February 11, 2015, business meeting minutes (Ref. 1); February 25, 2015, workshop meeting (Ref. 1A), and February 20, 2015, special meeting (Ref. 1B).

Motion is unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Reports

Student Recognition (prior to Public Dialogue)

Windham Task Force to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Public Service Announcements

Dr. Garcia and Board members recognized North Windham School grade five students, Chelsea Martinez, Haley Jarvis and Louis Migliore, for writing and recording their own public service announcements against child abuse. This activity was part of a month of caring activities that took place at North Windham School, as well as part of the Windham Task Force to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect initiative. The students recorded their announcements at WILI radio which were played daily on the radio station. The students were congratulated and received certificates of recognition.

Connecticut Fire Prevention Recognition Program

Ashley Soto, a grade five Compañeros student, was congratulated for being chosen as the County Winner in this year's Connecticut Fire Prevention Recognition Program. Ashley will be recognized by the Connecticut Fire Prevention Poster Committee at an awards' program. She was presented with a certificate of recognition at tonight's meeting.

Arcademics Cup

Jared Enciso Gonzalez, a grade five student at Windham Center School, participated in the Arcademics Cup, a national online multiplication competition for grades K-6 and placed first in the nation with 12,723 consecutive correct answers winning by 2,095 questions. He was congratulated for excelling in this competition which involved multiplication, dedication, hard work and perseverance in mathematics. Jared was presented with a certificate of recognition.

Barrows STEM Academy

Ms. Kiss introduced Barrows' Assistant Principal Ms. Geragotelis, and she thanked Mr. Mutch, Library Media Specialist, for putting together tonight's PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Kiss explained that the STEM theme is used in all core and non-core classes. Technology teacher, Mrs. Wheeler, explained that students worked in teams of three or four students to create two-minute movies using iMovie showing how they were learning using STEM. Overall, thirty movies were made by students with two of the movies shown at tonight's meeting. Mr. Kollegger spoke about the virtual trips taken by the seventh grade Language Art class using Smart Boards and Web Cams. He said that many interesting places have been visited by the students such as Yellowstone National Park where students had a dialogue with a park ranger. He also spoke about students conducting a dialogue with author Douglas Evans via Skype. Mr. Kollegger explained that students using this same technology have met with students in classrooms all over the world. Ms. Geragotelis presented some slides that the third grade team put together showing their work. She explained that students in all grades use Science Note Booking which connects writing and science from Kindergarten through grade seven. Also grade three students use Legos in narrative writing to design and build in different ways which then leads to stories. A fish tank is now at Barrows and third grade students are in charge of feeding the fish and gathering data. They work with grade six students who take care of the water in the tank. Ms. Geragotelis showed some slides of staff members attending and presenting at professional development trainings. She said that the MSAP grant has given teachers opportunities to attend professional development activities providing them with great resources in the areas of curriculum writing, integration and technology. Barrows' partnership with the Connecticut Science Center includes a resident scientist, who is T.J. McKenna to work with the students and school. Ms. Kiss said that the winter NWEA data is very strong in many areas. Also, the CMT fifth grade science results for last year were very good with 85% of students scoring above the state average. Students in fifth grade this year are now taking the test. Ms. Kiss explained that Barrows is still growing and will be fully enrolled next year. She invited everyone to attend this year's Invention Convention on March 25. Ms. Kiss introduced technology teacher Ms. Tomanelli and thanked her staff.

Board Member Appreciation Month

On behalf of the entire staff of the Windham Public Schools and in honor of Board Member Appreciation Month during the month of March, Dr. Garcia thanked Board of Education members and presented them with certificates of appreciation for their hard work and commitment to education.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Lou DeVivo, Windham, talked about the incorrect logo for Windham Public Schools and said that the logo should have Windham, Connecticut, printed on it, not Willimantic, Connecticut. She asked for a

printed report with administrators' names, salaries and towns where they reside. She said that there are many people who do not have computers; therefore, she is requesting a printed copy.

James Flores, Willimantic, agreed that Mrs. DeVivo should put in a Freedom of Information request for the information she requested. Mr. Flores asked that two public comments be included on the agenda because he gets out of work at 6:50 PM and cannot always arrive in time to participate in the public comment at the beginning of the meeting. He also said that he would like to comment after listening to reports and presentations made during the meeting. Mr. Flores said that if community engagement is important, public comment should not be limited to only one time during meetings. He suggested having a three-minute limit at the beginning of the meeting and a two-minute limit at the end of each meeting to total the allowed five minutes. He also said that by calling it public dialogue, it should be a dialogue back and forth and that is not the case. He would like it changed to public comment.

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that she believes that students are tested too much and take too many standardized tests. She said that a test that is never seen by the teacher and scored by a machine is invalid and should never be allowed, and major decisions are being made as a result of these test scores. Ms. Gallucci also said that the Middle School Turnaround Plan is being compromised and students are having test preparation in enrichment classes, and she hopes that this does not continue. She asked if there were parties and rewards given based on test scores. She hopes that this does not occur. Ms. Gallucci also said that there are grants and Commissioner's money funding enrichment; and if enrichment isn't taking place, it is going against what the money is to be used to fund. She asked to look at a budget. Ms. Gallucci also spoke about her concerns regarding having a substitute for the Mandarin teacher at the Middle School. She said that there are some languages more relevant to learn than Mandarin. Ms. Gallucci also said that she feels her son, who is in eighth grade at the Middle School, is not learning, which is very distressing.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS (continued)

Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers' Committee Report

Dr. Garcia introduced the following members of the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers Committee: Mr. Ryan Garvie, Mr. Brian Bonds, Dr. Jacob Easley, Dr. Xaé Alicia-Reyes, Mr. Bill Stover and Ms. Kerry Markey. The committee met several times reviewing data, current policies and best practices nationwide. At tonight's meeting, Mr. Garvie, Mr. Bonds, Dr. Easley and Dr. Alicia-Reyes presented the committee's findings and provided short- and long-term recommendations to the Board which the committee developed to yield immediate results as well as prepare for long-term success in recruiting and retaining minority teaching staff. Committee members were thanked for their recommendations.

2015-2016 School Calendar

Dr. Garcia presented the recommended proposed 2015-2016 school calendar. She thanked ad hoc committee members, Dr. Tony Gasper, Ms. Linda Handfield, Ms. Sandra Tedford, Ms. Mary Rival, Mr. Emmanuel Pérez-DeAyala, Ms. Laura Blake, Ms. Kim Begin, Mr. Alan Moger, Ms. Jeralynn Beghetto, Mr. Tim Maclure, and Ms. Dorothy Potter, for their work to develop next year's school calendar which follows, to a large extent, the EASTCONN calendar. However, some changes were made to include full-day professional development in place of early-release days and the inclusion of Three Kings' Day. There was some discussion.

High School Program of Studies

Dr. Garcia explained that the High School will offer eight new elective courses next year and provide more learning opportunities. All of the new courses are listed in the Program of Studies, along with explanations. The 2020 mandate requires twenty-five credits for graduation in place of the twenty-one credits now required. The district is moving towards the increase in credits for graduation which should be

in place for the class of 2019. Dr. Conner spoke to the structure change from twenty-one to twenty-five credits and Ms. Potter spoke to transitioning students from sixth grade to high school.

After discussion, the following motions were made for additions to the agenda:

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education add to the agenda the recommended approval of the Program of Studies for Windham High School.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education add to the agenda the recommended approval of the proposed 2015-2016 school calendar.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Smarter Balanced Schedule/Technology

Mr. Mercier provided an overview of assessments for the 2014-2015 school year which included the state required assessments, timelines, participation calculations, testing administration information and details regarding the implementation of Smarter Balanced. There was discussion and Mr. Mercier answered questions. Mr. Mercier was thanked for his presentation.

Budget Discussion and Clarification

Dr. Garcia explained that changes have been made for clarification but the budget numbers have not increased since the proposed education budget was presented at the last meeting. The Capital Improvement Plan was also provided to Board members. Dr. Garcia said that once the budget is approved by the Board of Education, it will be delivered to the Town on Friday, and it will be presented to the Town's Board of Finance on Wednesday evening, and it will be posted on the district website. Dr. Garcia thanked Mr. French for all of his work on the budget. Mr. French said that the three budget workshops were successful. He indicated that it will take some work to stay within the budget but that it can be done. He said that everyone is working very hard so that every dollar received from the townspeople is used to educate the students. Dr. Garcia said that the priorities remain the same and the budget meets the district goals.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. French reported that the committee met and is looking forward to ways money can be saved such as through insurance.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mr. Kalajian reported that the committee's work is on task and on time. At the last committee meeting, Ms. Markey provided a report on feedback received from the recent survey conducted and focus group meetings held. Mr. Kalajian also provided an update on the well projects at Windham Center and North Windham schools. He reported that the well committee heard presentations from three contractors and the process is moving forward.

Executive Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the committee met and discussed the vision, mission and theory of action.

Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Mrs. Osuba requested that the Ad Hoc Policy Committee become a regular committee of the Board of Education due to the ongoing policy work that needs to be done. She reported that policies were discussed

and will be brought forward to the Board with revisions. Some of the policies require appropriate forms and administrative rules and regulations.

ACTION ITEMS

2015-2016 Superintendent's Recommended Education Budget (Ref. 2)

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Mr. Montalvo, that the Board of Education approve a general fund budget of \$44,852,946 for 2015-2016, an increase of \$1,297,939 over the 2014-2015 general fund budget.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Personnel (Ref. 3)

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

Appointment

- Jeralynn Beghetto, position of Interim Human Resources Director effective March 12, 2015 prorated salary \$112,000. Replacement.

Resignations

- Vibian Bermudez, Cafeteria Worker at Sweeney School effective January 20, 2015.
- Ethel Carr, Paraprofessional at ECC Prospect Street effective February 4, 2015.
- Rosemary Scaglione, Teacher at North Windham School effective January 5, 2015.
- Jordan Whipple, Teacher at Windham Center School effective February 17, 2015.

Motion is unanimously approved.

Program of Studies (added to the agenda)

Motion of Mr. French, seconded by Dr. Sewall, that the Board of Education approve the recommended Program of Studies for Windham High School.

Motion is unanimously approved.

2015-2016 School Calendar (added to the agenda)

Motion of Mr. Desaulniers, seconded by Mrs. Osuba, that the Board of Education approve the recommended proposed 2015-2016 school calendar.

Motion is unanimously approved.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Kalajian gave credit to community member, Mr. James Flores, for his suggestion last fall regarding the need for minority recruitment. A committee was formed and recommendations were presented at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Desaulniers said that dividing the comment times as Mr. Flores suggested is a good idea and this should be addressed for the future.

Mrs. Lambert said that the students have arrived in Madrid. She said that the Barrows' Invention Convention takes place on March 25th. She attended the Before and After School Program at Eastern Connecticut State University and said it was very interesting. She wished Dr. Sewall a happy birthday.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board did not enter into an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Kalajian, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:20 P.M.
Motion is unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Juan Montalvo, Secretary