

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
March 28, 2012

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

BOARD ABSENT: Ms. Tinker, 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; Teach for America Connecticut Executive Director Nate Snow, general public; staff; administrators; news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the March 28, 2012, Board of Education Workshop meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

WORKSHOP SESSION

There were no objections to Dr. Sewall's request that the agenda be modified to allow for public dialogue following Mr. Snow's TFA presentation so that questions could be directed to him. The regular order of the agenda would then be followed with an opportunity for public dialogue at the end of the meeting, as well.

Teach for America (TFA)

Dr. Adamowski began by speaking about the district's Strategic Operating Plan which is in the development stage. Talent and management strategy is one of the goals of the Plan. This strategy will provide the district with the ability to hire outstanding teachers from a variety of sources, offering greater diversity in the workforce. Dr. Adamowski explained that partnering with TFA is one element of the broad content of this strategy which will include plans to partner with other programs in order to achieve this goal. He introduced TFA Connecticut Executive Director Mr. Snow who provided an overview of TFA. Since beginning in Connecticut in 2006, the program has grown from 50 teacher placements to an anticipated 200 placements for next year. TFA teachers are presently working in New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford and Stamford. TFA recruits go through the following phases of the program before entering into a classroom. The first phase is an aggressive recruitment process where students are identified who are diverse and talented. The next phase is a very rigorous selection process that is made up of a written component, a telephone screening and a day-long interview that includes writing lesson plans, interaction in a group and an extensive one-on-one interview. All chosen recruits then attend a five-week intensive summer institute working with a mentor teacher. All TFA teachers are certified by the State Department of Education. An instructional coach works closely with the teachers once they are placed in classrooms. Once placed, TFA teachers participate in classes at Southern Connecticut State University and receive ongoing support and professional development throughout their placement. Many of the recruits remain in education at the end of their two-year commitment. Mr. Snow answered Board members' questions.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

During this Public Dialogue session, comments were made both in favor of and against the hiring of TFA teachers in Windham. Questions were answered by Mr. Snow and Dr. Adamowski.

The following people spoke: Mary Gallucci, Willimantic; Tom Drury, WFT; Mark Phelps, Windham; and Adam Johnson, Columbia.

Mr. Snow was thanked for attending tonight's meeting.

Windham Inter District Magnet School

Dr. Adamowski provided a detailed overview of the status of the STEM Academy of Eastern Connecticut regional magnet school which focused on enrollment, finance, programs, governance and next steps. The school will encompass pre K through grade eight with 400 students from Windham and 200 students from others town in the EASTCONN service area. Enrollment will be determined by parent application and a lottery will be held whenever the number of applications exceeds the number of seats available. Dr. Adamowski also reviewed financial responsibilities for building the school, start-up costs and annual operating costs. The school's program goals, features and characteristics were also explained by Dr. Adamowski. He reviewed the governance of the school that will include a Design Team which is a short-term form of governance. This team serves as the decision-making body of the school for school planning purposes until a Governance Board is formed which generally occurs once students are accepted. The duties and make-up of the Governance Board were reviewed by Dr. Adamowski. The school will operate under the policies and collective bargaining agreements of the Windham Board of Education once the period of transitional management has occurred. Dr. Adamowski concluded by reviewing the activities that need to take place within the next three to five months which include forming the design committee, designating a principal, development of the operations plan by the design committee, recruiting participating districts, developing major partnerships, and marketing the school and recruiting students. He answered Board members' questions. Dr. Adamowski and Ms. Ortiz thanked all of the people who have been involved since the very beginning of this concept.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

During this Public Dialogue session, comments were made and questions were asked relating to the Windham Inter District Magnet School by the following people: Mark Phelps, Windham; and David Walencewicz, Windham

Questions were answered by Dr. Adamowski.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board adjourn its meeting at 9:21 P.M.
On the motion: Aye, 7-0; unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary