

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2012

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

BOARD ABSENT: Ms. Tinker

ADMINISTRATION

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

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Stephanie Quinn

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the October 10, 2012, Board of Education business meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CONSENT AGENDA

The following minutes were accepted as presented:

Board of Education September 26, 2012, special business meeting (held in place of September 26, 2012, workshop meeting) minutes (Ref. 1).

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, said that she appreciated the opportunity to ask questions and make comments at the recent school facilities meeting. At tonight's meeting, Ms. Gallucci asked about allowing Windham students to attend NFA. She made reference to a comment at a previous meeting indicating that regional educational opportunities for students are to be provided as part of the special master legislation. She said that she still does not know the criteria for that selection. She is still asking how the decision was made to offer Mandarin vs. Latin as there was no survey done at the Middle School. She commented that she didn't believe that Friar Associates has ever looked at the historic preservation of Natchaug School and recommended that the possibility of the historical value to enhance Natchaug be researched.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

SAT Waivers

Ms. Ortiz reported that thirty-nine SAT waivers have been received. An intern is working with Mr. Smalley to gather information regarding the college application process. There are six opportunities to take the SAT. A full report will be provided at the next business meeting.

Ms. Ortiz also reported on preliminary information regarding the music program. Students who have requested band at the Middle School are enrolled. Students at the High School who requested to take band are enrolled unless the time conflicts with a required class. At the next business meeting, there will be a more detailed report.

Committee Reports

Finance and Audit Committee

The committee will meet next Wednesday.

School Planning and Design Committee

Mrs. Lambert reported that the ED 049 has been forwarded to the State. There was discussion regarding grade configuration at the schools. Ms. Ortiz and Ms. England will visit elementary schools to gather information on what types of schools parents are interested in such as year round, dual language, or Montessori and will report back to the committee.

Executive Committee

Dr. Sewall reported that the committee will meet on October 30, 2012, in Executive Session to discuss the procedure for evaluating the Superintendent.

Dr. Murphy reported that on October 16th, the Town Council will discuss the proposal to replace the Natchaug School roof; and on October 17th, the Board of Finance will consider authorizing bonding for the project. At the October 16th meeting, the Town Council will propose holding a Town Meeting on November 20th which will be contingent on the Board of Finance's approval to move forward with bonding the cost of replacing the roof.

Ad hoc Transportation Policy Committee

Mr. French reported that he will try to schedule a meeting for next Thursday. Following the Thanksgiving recess, the start time at the High School will be 7:15 AM to alleviate the bus conflict with the Middle School.

Request from CABE for a Vision Survey (Ref. 2)

Dr. Sewall reminded Board members that Ms. Tinker has asked them to participate in the survey they received from CABE. There was some discussion on ways that CABE works to improve the functions of the Board of Education.

ACTION ITEMS

Board of Education Proposed Workshop Agenda Topics for 2012-2013 (Ref. 3)

Motion of Dr. Switchenko, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the following proposed workshop agenda topics for 2012-2013: October - Cohort Scores, School Performance Index, Overview of Cycle Assessment and Assessment Audit; November - STEM Magnet School Operating Plan; December - Middle School Redesign Specifications; January - Superintendent's Mid-Year Review; February - Budget; March-Plan for the Performing Arts to Develop Standards; April - Talent Strategy; May - Redesigns: Sweeney and Windham Center schools; and June - to be determined. Dr. Sewall asked for additional topics that Board members might like to have addressed at future workshop meetings.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Approval of appointments

Motion of Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board of Education approve the following appointments:

1. Anjana Tihaiya to the position of Grade 6 Math Teacher at Windham Middle School effective October 1, 2012. Replacement
2. Diejun Xu to the position of Mandarin Teacher at Windham High School effective October 1, 2012. Replacement
3. Holly Harrick to the position of STEM Coordinator at Magnet School effective September 28, 2012. New
4. Lindsie Dexter to the position of .20 FTE Music Teacher at Natchaug School effective September 26, 2012. Replacement

Mr. Adamo asked if all positions were filled. Dr. Adamowski said that applications for the Communications officer are being vetted, and Mrs. Banks and Mr. Nelson are conducting interviews for the Maintenance Director position.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Special Master's Report

Dr. Adamowski spoke about hiring a communications officer to address the need to build the district's capacity. When this position was originally advertised late last fall, there was only one candidate for consideration; however, the district could not meet the salary and other benefit requirements requested. Dr. Adamowski reported that this year the position has been re-advertised and there are fifty-six candidates who all have communications backgrounds. Staff at EASTCONN will narrow the pool and interview about a dozen candidates and then the Superintendent and others in the district will interview three to five of the top candidates prior to making a recommendation to the Board. Dr. Adamowski also spoke about proposed legislation that the Commissioner is developing to submit to the Connecticut State Legislature for the January session. One part of the proposal will be expansion of the number of districts that can have district affiliated charter schools. At this time it is limited to only three districts in the State. If there is an expansion, the Commissioner's recommendation is to include Windham which could affect district programs such as the overage/under credited program for students and the dual language program. District affiliated charter schools, which are run by the district with a major partner involved in its management such as a university or another entity, remain in the district's portfolio. Even though it is not definite at this time, this would be considered a very beneficial change and could assist Windham in building its portfolio of schools. Dr. Adamowski also spoke about a recent court decision affecting magnet schools. A number of suburban districts in the Hartford area challenged paying tuition to CREC magnet schools for preschool students to attend. These districts felt that because they don't normally offer preschool to students, they should not have to pay tuition for preschool students to attend a magnet school. The court agreed and decided that magnet schools could not charge tuition to participating districts. For the current school year, the State of Connecticut will cover the cost of preschool attendance at magnet schools, but it is uncertain and unclear what will happen in the future. Dr. Adamowski explained that there are a number of ways this may be handled in the future and there may be a recommended method to address this by the time preschool students are added to Windham's STEM Magnet School, which will occur during the second year of the enrollment plan. The Board's November workshop will focus on the magnet school. Ms. Ortiz, Ms. England and Mr. Wihbey will be soliciting surrounding school districts to become partner districts with the magnet school. Partner districts will have representation on the governance board in proportion to district participation. Up until two years ago all students who attended magnet schools were from partner districts; however, at that time legislation was passed allowing families to have universal access to magnet schools even if the school district was not a participating district. Dr. Adamowski said that Ms. Harrick, appointed tonight to the position of STEM Coordinator at the Magnet School, comes to the District from the

Connecticut Science Center where she was the Director of Education. She is a top authority on STEM education in Connecticut and will be an asset to the magnet school. As the host district of the magnet school, Windham is responsible for paying the advance salary of the principal and coordinator as they prepare for the opening of the school. In November, Tim Nee, founder of the CREC Montessori School and director of programs at CREC which runs a year-long training program for the certification of Montessori teachers, will conduct a feasibility study in Windham looking at all aspects of the feasibility of offering a Montessori program to district families.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 7:45 PM.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary