

WINDHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
October 23, 2013

BOARD PRESENT: Chair Dr. Sewall, Vice-chair Mrs. Collins (left at 9:00 PM), Mrs. Osuba, Mr. French, Ms. Tinker, Mrs. Lambert, Dr. Switchenko, Mr. Adamo

BOARD ABSENT: Mr. Desaulniers

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper, Director Mrs. Banks, Communications Officer Ms. Markey

STUDENT

REPRESENTATIVES: Nicole Moore, Dakota Fleming

OTHERS PRESENT: State Representative Johnson, Special Master Dr. Adamowski, general public, staff; administrators, news media

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dr. Sewall called the October 23, 2013, Board of Education workshop meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Windham High School Library Media Center.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Switchenko led the Board and the public in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORKSHOP SESSION

ELL Service Delivery Models/Programs – Beth-Ann Brunet

Representative Susan Johnson attended tonight's meeting and provided the background on the creation of the English Language Learners Task Force and highlighted some of the work done by the Task Force. Ms. Brunet served on the Task Force as well. Ms. Brunet provided information on the three program choices available in the district – Bilingual Support, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Refusal of Services. She described the service delivery models at the elementary, middle school and high school levels that were available in the past and those that are available at the present time. Ms. Brunet presented details about the New Arrivals' programs which will begin this year at the elementary, middle school and high school levels. She reviewed staff and materials needed for these programs, as well as additional budgetary requirements for the Dual Language program at North Windham School and Windham Middle School. There is current, as well as continuing, systemic and comprehensive Sheltered Instruction professional development. Throughout the presentation, there was discussion and questions were answered.

(Mrs. Collins left the meeting.)

Tiered Reading Instruction – Ivelise Velázquez

Ivelise Velázquez presented information on tiered reading instruction in the district. She reviewed the vision for all Windham students, the goal of the district-wide tiered system of literacy instruction, and the guiding principles. She explained that the Common Core State Standards are rigorous and different from previous years, and the Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) is the tiered instructional model used in Windham. This is a system of tiered instruction that provides a framework for teaching and learning

with multiple levels of support and a focus on academic and social-emotional growth. Ms. Velázquez reviewed Tier One instruction components, Tier Two instruction components; and Tier Three instruction components. She reviewed options to improve instruction for all students so that fewer students require interventions. Throughout the presentation, there was discussion and questions were answered.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Mary Gallucci, Willimantic, commented that the attitude shown towards tests and test scores is inconsistent as test scores were called synthetic tonight by the Board Chair yet the evaluation of people, in particular the superintendent, is based on these test scores. Ms. Gallucci said that there are many troublesome issues when the district changes over to different testing systems. She also commented that many things are not addressed in this district, and the direction in bilingual education changed when Steven Adamowski came to the district. She asked that since we have a high level of Spanish speakers, doesn't it require we revise all of the evaluation of test scores since these students can't always show their best abilities on tests given in their second language yet so many things are based on these tests in this district. She asked why Susan Johnson came up with special master legislation when she could have done something that truly addresses ELL and put the money there. She said that the special master has increased standardized tests in English but doesn't support meaningful support and instruction to Spanish speaking students. Ms. Gallucci said that Susan Johnson talks about grants to assist with training and accreditation of teachers in bilingual and Spanish; however, Windham is spending money on TFA when this money could be used for teachers who want to come to the district to teach Spanish and bilingual. She said that with the increasing teacher turnover, it is virtually impossible to maintain and establish a teacher force, and there is no accountability and stability to realize the investment put into training provided. She asked if dual language and two-way bilingual are the same. She also asked if there are scattered dual language programs scattered across the country, how more established bilingual types of instruction can be compared. Ms. Gallucci said that to have a dual language school across the district rather than the bilingual types of instruction done before Steven Adamowski came to the district, the school would consist of 60% of the entire school population. She said that, if that is the case, she worries that there will be an increase of desegregation in the district. Ms. Gallucci said that the school-based budget where the money follows the child does not address the needs of dual language and special education students. She said that the implications to the entire district have not been taken into consideration. She also asked questioned that there would be money for the new arrivals' programs if the district saves money on one school bus. She asked the Board to be realistic about the budget.

Motion of Mrs. Lambert, seconded by Mr. French, that the Board of Education enter into executive session at 9:20 PM for the discussion of exempt documents pertaining to bargaining unit negotiations. The motion is unanimously approved.

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

ADMINISTRATION

PRESENT: Superintendent Ms. Ortiz, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Gasper, Director Mrs. Banks

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENES

Chair Dr. Sewall reconvened regular session at 9:40 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Adamo, seconded by Mrs. Lambert, that the Board meeting adjourn at 9:40 P.M.

On the motion: Motion is unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Luz Osuba, Secretary